

**TOWARDS A SOCIOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR
UNDERSTANDING THE ROOTS OF VIOLENCE AND
AGGRESSION**

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Doctor of Philosophy
at the University of Leicester**

by

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Establishing a framework in the manner indicated above involves the consideration of a considerable number of potential issues. Accordingly, I have limited myself to three main considerations. Firstly, methodological issues: the manner in which social phenomena are investigated. Elias's methodological procedure is unusual, at least in comparison to other methodologies within the social sciences, in that he eschewed present-centred analyses of social and psychological phenomena in favour of a diachronic, process-orientated perspective. In other words, Elias's approach to the study of historical and contemporary events is highly distinctive and for some, highly contentious. I shall, hence, evaluate what I refer to as Elias's historical methodology – the way in which we investigate historical phenomena and the explanatory status we give to events in the past and processes that have occurred and are continuing to occur - and compare such an approach to what I believe to be the most important competing (and even in some cases alternative) perspectives to his: the perspectives of Giddens, Foucault and those associated with conventional historians. This will be the subject of Chapter Two.

The second consideration involves an evaluation of what I take to be competing 'models' of the way in which we conceptualise drives, drive-controls and trajectories and gender differences in affective behaviour, of which aggression is but one, albeit important, aspect. I believe there to be two main competing 'models' to Elias's 'model' with regard to this subject; those belonging, firstly, to Giddens and secondly, to Freud. This will be the subject of Chapter Five.

The third consideration regarding the framework that I am attempting to construct is an empirical testing of what I regard as a key concept in Elias's sociological paradigm, a concept, moreover, which is axiomatic to our understanding of the roots of aggression and violence: civilizing processes. As stated above, this will be the subject of Chapters Three and Four.

It can, therefore, be seen that this thesis is both ambitious and limited in its objectives; ambitious because I am attempting to cover a wide-ranging theoretical area and a number of important writers – Elias, Foucault, Giddens and Freud for example; and limited in that I am attempting to induce generalisations, regarding the incidence of violence over a period of six hundred years, from a limited range of primary research data. However, as I shall argue in more detail later in this chapter, such a thesis as this can be read as a reaction to what I believe to be, up to this point in time, over-specialisation and fragmentation regarding the study of aggression and violence.

It should also be added that I have sought to take a 'middle course' between examining and evaluating Elias's ideas on the one hand and producing my own independent research on the other. Hence, this thesis should not be read solely as a study of how the subjects of violence and aggression are treated in the work of Elias (for a systematic study that does this see Fletcher, 1997). Yet, of course, Elias's ideas will be introduced subject to my own interpretation. One objective of this thesis, for example, is to suggest new lines of enquiry into the subject of aggression and violence.

The term 'paradigm' as used in reference to Elias's writings, refers to an approach to a subject that involves not just a particular theoretical perspective, but a theoretical methodology: a way of studying a particular problem. If one puts aside, for the moment, the different forms of violence that can occur such as those which take place in riots, war and other collective forms as with popular recreations, then we can see that the approaches taken to this subject so far are many and varied. Dominant approaches include those that can be labelled:²biological/sociobiological/ethological and/or anthropological; psychological; psychoanalytical; sociological; historical, given that numerous historical studies have been made of collective rioting, street disorders, etc.; and lastly, approaches that are part of a public order, multi-disciplinary tradition of theorizing, as exemplified by writers such as Gurr (see for example, Gurr, 1976). However, it should also be added that not only do these perspectives differ in their approaches to the subject of violence and aggression, but also they are very much competing in terms of explanatory status. Just to take one recent example, Armstrong, in researching the phenomenon of present-day football hooliganism,

² The term biological refers to a broad category of approaches to the phenomenon of violence and aggression and basically includes any theory that assumes, implicitly or explicitly, either a genetic component as the main explanatory determinant, or where a genetic component is at least an underlying variable within the theory. Hence, within this broad category I would place biological explanations that are narrowly concerned with either chromosomemarkers or hormones as determinants alongside sociobiological and ethological approaches. Sociobiological perspectives take a more sophisticated view of the role of genetic material in explanations for human social behaviour than narrow biological perspectives do, in that biological evolutionary processes play a central role in the constitution of behaviour in their analyses. Ethological accounts give more primacy to analogies between the behaviour of humans and other animal species than sociobiologists do, but nonetheless, fundamental genetic variables play an important role in their analyses. I would also argue that both sociobiological and ethological writers have influenced other writers who do not otherwise attribute such influences to their work. Examples would include: Armstrong's anthropological accounts of football hooliganism (see for example, Armstrong and Harris, 1991); the various accounts of aggression given by Marsh, Campbell and associated colleagues (see for example, *Aggression and Violence*, Marsh and Campbell, 1982) and accounts that are held to represent a psychological school of thought, such as, famously, Anthony Storr's *Human Aggression* (1992). Reference to these particular studies (and elaboration of their ideas) will be made in the course of this chapter but for a detailed exposition of the role of biological factors in explanations for aggression and violence, see Barash, 1982.

has argued, in referring to a particular group of hooligans or gang - the 'Blades' who follow Sheffield United – that their activities are: 'Best understood through biography and anthropology rather than structure and sociology' (Armstrong, 1994, 320).

From a Foucauldian perspective, these different approaches could be said to constitute 'discourses', each discourse possessing its own conceptualisation of the subject, its own methodology and distinctive language. According to this perspective, the existence of such discourses, in a sense, proves that the pursuit of objective 'truth' about a particular subject - violence or whatever - is a chimera; each discourse creates its own criterion or criteria of validity. However, I wish to argue on the contrary that, notwithstanding the merits of any particular 'discourse', a much fuller understanding of the problem of violence can be gained by an approach that is process-orientated and which makes use of concepts across a number of disciplines. One important aim of this thesis, therefore, is to develop such a framework as a contrast to existing approaches. But, more than this, as stated above, my contention is that the existing literature on violence and aggression is over-specialized. The benefits of specialization are obvious - a particular discipline can establish a certain degree of expertise and thoroughness with regard to a specific form of violence, say juvenile delinquency, which can then further our general knowledge of the phenomenon of violence itself. And yet, over-specialization can prevent us from seeing not only the way in which different forms of violence may be interlinked in terms of characteristics, but may also result in the researcher failing to observe common underlying substantive elements within all forms of violent behaviour.³ For example, the historian, Cockburn, in an influential article that is concerned just as much with methodological issues as it is with documenting the existence of violence during England's past, cautions against the compilers of *Criminal Statistics* for 'assuming the existence of a proportional relationship between homicide and other forms of interpersonal violence' (Cockburn, 1991, 104). In other words, he seems to be suggesting that homicide statistics can only provide the researcher with meaningful information regarding the incidence of homicide in society and nothing else. The incidence of homicide cannot tell us anything about a given people's *tendency* towards committing other violent acts. Cockburn in the same article then goes on to cite Stone's

³ Cf. Marsh's statement, in referring to the many specialisms within the study of violence and aggression: 'Such divisions are unproductive, and the result is a proliferation of narrow theoretical and methodological approaches which fail because of their lack of concern for a wider perspective' (Marsh and Campbell, 1982, 2).

dictum that violence can be found in any society according to where one chooses to look for it (Cockburn, 1991, 105). However, the difficulty with this type of perspective is that it exemplifies an atomistic and *homo clausus* view of people's behaviour and hence fails to examine behaviour in the round. And yet, if one takes a more generalised perspective regarding violent behaviour in any given society, it is possible not only to establish a connectedness between different types of violence, but also to establish the manner in which people's sensibilities towards violence have changed and continue to change. The researcher is then in a position to be able to make, albeit tentatively, conclusions regarding a given people's propensity to commit acts of a violent nature. Such a conclusion is at least more likely if one chooses to examine and research more than one type of violence. This does not mean to say, however, that there will be exact correlations between different forms of violence; at the very least it is unlikely.

Moreover, Cockburn's perspective is ultimately relativistic in that, by adopting a position such as his, one's conclusions regarding the extent of violence in any given society will be dependent merely on which category of violence one wishes to study – perhaps by choosing to concentrate simply on homicide statistics rather than, say, levels of rioting. Accordingly, given that many types of violence are likely to be occurring in any particular society at any given moment in time, Cockburn's position of concentrating on just one specific type of violence creates problems for the researcher who wishes to claim that over a given period of time a society as a whole has become either more or less violent. It is, for example, popularly believed by many that the two World Wars and the Holocaust of the last century constitute evidence for a more violent European society compared to, say, a hundred years previously. However, by focusing exclusively on the two World Wars during the last century a researcher would fail to observe fundamental changes in European people's sensibilities over the course of the century as a whole as well as changes in attitudes to all forms of violence. Also, over-specialization, in particular competing perspectives, often leads to incomplete answers to particular questions or to appropriate questions not being asked at all. For example, perspectives that assume an 'interpretive' approach to the subject are invaluable in examining personal experiences and perceptions of the phenomenon. But given the theoretical orientation in question, this often leads to more 'structural' aspects of the phenomenon being ignored. For example, 'interpretive' perspectives often fail to explain where the meanings of given subjects are socially located to begin with, how they arise and how a given authority or institution comes to define behaviour as 'deviant'.

This argument would seem to suggest that a multi-disciplinary approach to the subject would be more appropriate. However, multi-disciplinary approaches, as exemplified by writers such as Gurr, lack, no doubt because of the nature of the multi-disciplinary task itself, a rigorous theoretical orientation. That is, they tend to be eclectic. My contention is that a multi-disciplinary approach *is* required in the study of aggression, but one that establishes a coherent theoretical methodology and orientation: in other words, a synthesis. The following chapters will elaborate upon this theme.

I have chosen specifically to identify and explain trends in violence in England from the late Middle Ages to the end of the Victorian era, given a working hypothesis that, following Elias, thresholds in shame and repugnance have advanced over time. No particular significance should be given to these particular time-frames as my main intention is to examine present-day behaviour through an examination of the past. In that sense, any period that is not of the 'present' will suffice although, given my working hypothesis that, following Elias, thresholds in the toleration of violent and aggressive acts are lower the further one goes back in time, then the more revealing it is to study societies that are firmly distanced from our own modern sensibilities. Moreover, by examining a considerable span of time, a researcher is given the possibility to make comparative judgements as well as to examine processes that may have occurred and are still continuing to occur.

I shall have more to say about the methodological advantages and disadvantages of researching such a long period of time in later chapters. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that my research findings are based on dividing the overall length of time into distinct periods based on discernible trends. The research itself mainly consists of a trawl through primary historical records – then-contemporary documents and court records - concerning acts of aggression such as assault, homicide, local rioting and popular recreations. My main aim, however, is not to produce a strictly quantitative piece of research but, rather, to create a portrayal of pre-industrial English society in terms of attitudes and dispositions towards aggressive behaviour and violent acts.

The term 'collective' as it is used in this thesis refers to those acts (of violence) that involve groupings of people where an element of public exposure, and even community approval, is involved. These displays can be categorised into three specific areas: popular recreations and sports, including blood sports; village and inter-family feuding; and violence associated with street gangs. These 'collective' forms can be

compared and contrasted to 'interpersonal' acts of violence, such as individual homicides: (usually) face-to-face acts of violence that are often private in nature. It must be borne in mind however, that the distinction between these two forms is actually blurred. For example, as will be shown, in pre-industrial England when the notions of a civil society and citizenship as they are understood today were still in their infancy, individual acts of homicide and assault often involved public family or village disputes. Incidents such as these tell us a great deal about the values and norms of the communities where they took place, and about the extent to which such acts were sanctioned by the public. In short, the terms 'collective' and 'interpersonal' are not meant here as categories that refer to substantive and absolutely discrete phenomena. Rather they are being used for the sake of convenience in the context of the practicalities of research.

In addition to the study of acts of violence, I am just as concerned to study changes in sensibilities as revealed, for example, by people's changing sensitivities to acts of cruelty, such as those exhibited in blood sports. The incidence and level of acts of cruelty towards animals, as well as the nature of public forms of punishment in any given society, can be utilised as social barometers or indexes of sensitivity towards open, public displays of aggression - which can be loosely equated with what Elias termed *Angriffslust* (lust in attacking) - and can therefore provide indexes of the morality, or moralities, of a given society at a particular stage in its development. This is certainly a contested argument. Writers on the subject can be divided regarding the extent to which they believe it is legitimate to use a variety of indicators as an index of changing sensibilities in any given society. For example, Cockburn criticizes Beattie's (Beattie, 1986) historical work (to be discussed in Chapter Four) on violence in eighteenth century Britain, because Beattie does put forward a number of indicators - changing attitudes towards cruelty to animals, changing judicial perceptions towards violence in the home - as a way of explaining falling levels of violence during the eighteenth century and the correlative changes in people's sensibilities. Cockburn, however, rejects this line of reasoning arguing that Beattie's suggestion, that changes in a society's attitudes towards the treatment of animals can tell us something about shifts in its cultural values, 'generally brings to mind the Spaniard who when criticized for the brutality of bull-fighting, reminded his English accuser that Spain had no need of a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children. He might well have added that the society was not founded until 1884, exactly sixty years after the introduction of a similar institution for the protection of animals' (Cockburn, 1991, 105).

Clearly, there is no logical reason as to why the incidence of cruelty to animals can be correlated, eg., with the incidence of homicide (or any other type of violence) in any given society. At the very least, a given nation's record of cruelty to animals is, in part, a consequence of its national habitus ('habitus' being the term used by Elias to describe embodied social learning); why bull-fighting has continued to exist in Spain despite growing sensitivity amongst people within Europe to other forms of cruelty against animals requires empirical investigation. However, changing attitudes towards cruelty in any given society can be suggestive of changes in sensibilities that, at a generalised level, may indicate to the researcher changes in behaviour regarding the propensity to commit violent acts. In other words, attitudes towards witnessing violent acts in public life are constantly changing. Hence, we need to recognize the existence of separate causal factors with regard to specific types of violence, and yet also recognise that changes in long-term trends and patterns with regard to all forms of violence are, or at least may be, indicative of underlying structural changes in behaviour. This does not mean to say that there is a direct correlation between acts of cruelty to animals and the incidence of human violence and aggression in any given society, but nonetheless, an understanding of changes in the incidence and intensity of acts of cruelty against animals in any given society can tell us something about the sensibilities of the members of a society. This theme will be explored in Chapters Three and Four.

Both the subject of my study, violent behaviour, and the approach taken – based on a process-orientated epistemology - are essentially contestable. Sociological understandings of violent behaviour at present owe much to Max Weber's four-fold typology of human behaviour and conduct in which an important distinction is made between affective and non-affective conduct and goals. Although I shall have more to say about this later, it is the former category that has been relatively ignored in work within the sociological canon, largely because affective behaviour appears, ostensibly, to be devoid of meaning. The sociological framework that I am seeking to construct will mainly concern, though again not exclusively, this category of behaviour. A concentration on the more affective rather than the more non-affective, goal-orientated aspects of people's behaviour does not mean that forms of violent behaviour such as seen in times of war, or to take another example, such as occurs in rioting and rebellion where the people's motives and goals may be more instrumental in character, should be ignored in any account of why violence occurs in a given society.

Nevertheless, the focus of my research is on those activities where the meaning of the behaviour is expressive and less understandable in terms of instrumental motives and goals.

Defining violence and aggression: problems of relativism

I should now like to examine the terms 'violence' and 'aggression' more rigorously than I have so far since, at the very least, such terms lack specificity. My intentions here are really two-fold: firstly to provide working definitions of these terms; and secondly, to begin an exploration of how the phenomena they refer to can be investigated and analysed which will entail, in part, an evaluation of the contribution of workers in the sociological canon to this area.

A survey of the academic literature on violence and aggression reveals a high degree of inconsistency and imprecision in the use of these terms. For example Fromm (1973) has stated that the term aggression has created confusion in the work of psychologists (as a consequence of their behaviourist thinking) in that it is used to refer not only to acts that destroy, but also to acts that either construct or protect. More particularly, according to Fromm the term aggression can be used to describe a sadist torturing a prisoner or the forward-driving impulses of a mountain climber. In a slightly different context Storr, in his influential book, *Human Aggression* (1970), fails to make an explicit distinction between aggression and violence; violence is treated as if were part of a continuum of aggressive behaviour. And yet, without a clear distinction between the terms aggression and violence, it becomes difficult for any given analyst to clarify the exact roots or 'causes' of violent behaviour. Also, unlike other psychological writers, Storr argues that aggression, despite its occasional negative or undesirable consequences, is essentially a positive aspect of human behaviour, enabling humankind to prosper in a largely material sense⁴. Part of the problem here is that both words - violence and aggression - are used in everyday speech, but the difficulty for the academic researcher is that such terms are often used in imprecise ways. It is the task of the researcher to make such terms meaningful in order to enable us to study and explain 'real' phenomena; we know intuitively that

⁴ Much of Storr's reasoning is based on evidence cited in the animal world. Whilst recognising that animals capacity for aggressive, harmful behaviour is limited - it can only subserve the interests of the species in which it is manifest - and that humans' capacity for destruction by comparison is unlimited, humans are nonetheless, according to Storr, instinctual animals. He writes: 'It is not yet possible to describe man's [*sic*] aggression in the same kind of terms which ethologists use of animal behaviour.... nevertheless it is possible to discern that, in man as in other animals, aggression serves useful functions, and to see that, if man were not aggressive, he would not be man at all' (Storr, 1992, 45).

aggression and violence occur in the 'outside' world and in ourselves but we do not all agree on which acts constitute aggression or violence.

In terms of our 'commonsense' meanings the terms violence and aggression are intuitively connected but are nonetheless, separable. The term 'violent behaviour' normally (though not necessarily) implies an element of aggressive intent, conventionally defined, but aggression does not in itself imply a violent outcome: for example, even though sportspeople often display aggressive intent violent outcomes ensue relatively infrequently. There is also a distinct tendency among social scientists to view both terms as relativist, socially constructed concepts. For example, the anthropologist, Heelas (1982), argues that it is impossible to devise an objective measure or definition of violence that can be applied cross-culturally. He cites a number of examples where the classification of an ostensibly violent act depends on the meaning given to it by the participants, rather than (social science) observers. One example is Chagnon's study of the South American Yanomamo Indians (see, for example, Chagnon, 1979) where the wives measure their husbands' concern regarding their feelings towards them in terms of the frequency of the minor beatings they sustain. Similarly, he suggests that a dentist's extraction of a tooth does not register as a violent or aggressive act on the part of the dentist given the meanings and intentions involved. Nor is a bang on the head necessarily an act of violence; it could well be a sign of endearment. This leads Heelas to argue that what is 'truly violent' only occurs in the natural world, whilst violence in the human, social world is culturally-dependent. As he puts it: 'Dependent on cognitive appraisal, the existence of violent emotions is co-terminous with what participants count as such' (Heelas, 1982,53).

Such relativistic theorizing is also to be found in another influential study of violence and aggression, Marsh *et al's* *The Rules of Disorder* (1978). The authors only recognize acts of violence when such actions involve meaning: 'Physical contact alone, however destructive, does not constitute an act of violence. Contact becomes an act if only it can be provided with a social meaning' (Marsh, Rosser and Harre, 1978, 24). In adopting such a perspective as this, it becomes difficult for the researcher of violence and aggression to establish a sense of consistency in his or her analysis. What is regarded as an act of violence by people in one time period may not be regarded as violent in another time period even though the physical action may be the same. Take Heelas's example of people greeting each other by a bang on the head. This would not, in Marsh *et al's* conception, necessarily correspond to a violent act given the nature of the meaning of the act

for, as Heelas has argued, the meaning could signify endearment. And yet, over time attitudes may change so that at a given point in time the greeting may no longer be seen as acceptable. The changed perception of the same physical act or action requires an *explanation*, but the researcher also needs, for the sake of consistency and clarity, a conception of violence that is based, to some extent, on firm criteria and not just on a given set of subjects' intentions or perceptions.

Heelas, in fact, has created two rules regarding the study of violence: a cross-cultural one for the human, social world and an absolute one for the 'natural,' non-human world. In the latter, violence occurs independently of subjective meanings given that, arguably, animals are not capable of attaching meanings to their behaviour. And yet, for humans, given Heelas's idea that people in different cultures attach different meanings to identical physical actions, an absolute conception of 'violence' is not possible. However, a problem for Heelas and writers of a similar persuasion who study human violence (such as Marsh *et al*), is that their analyses are predicated on a fallacy - a value assumption - that any violent act necessarily has pejorative consequences. But not all violent acts are pernicious: the killing of an animal that is in pain can be considered an act of violence that is benign. So can the smacking of a pre-verbal child to stop it picking up hot coals. Accordingly, Heelas confuses an *act* of violence with the meanings attached to it by the recipient and protagonist; a beating over the head may be perceived as an act of endearment just as acts of sado-masochism can be perceived as pleasurable by both subject and object. Nonetheless, regardless of whether the act is benign or pernicious in intent it is still, I would argue, an act of violence if physical force and harm are involved. As Dunning *et al* (1992) have argued, what we as members of society at large, *perceive* to be a violent act depends upon social and cultural context. For example, many street fights centuries ago were perceived as brawls by the participants and by the authorities, not as acts of assault. But what this really amounts to is that the *toleration* of violent acts, what is and what is not acceptable, depends on the cultural and temporal context. As we have become less accepting of displays of open aggression which result in injury or death, our terminology for labelling such displays changes, so that what would have at one time been referred to as 'brawls' in our society today, are often perceived to be acts of 'violence'. Similarly, at the present time the innocuous term 'smacking', when describing the action of a parent on a child, has been replaced, in some quarters, with the more threatening, pernicious sounding term, 'violence'.

There is a further problem in linking meaningful actions to the intentions of the subject: it is, as stated above, not uncommon to come across views today in England that the smacking of a small child is a violent act and hence should be legislated against (it has been legislated against in a European Community context). But what if the child does not recognise this as a violent act at the time, but does so in hindsight, later in life? Are both views - both meanings - compatible? Accordingly, in order to escape from the problems associated with relativism, I wish to provide a working definition of violence that is anchored in physicality. I shall elaborate on this later.

If, from what has been said above, the definition offered by Heelas (and other writers of a similar persuasion such as Marsh *et al*) merely results in what Fletcher has called an 'unproductive relativism' (Fletcher, 1997, 47) then, equally, a restrictively specific definition of violence must result in analyses that ignore the manner in which forms of violence tend to change over time. For example, it is perfectly legitimate to discuss newer forms of symbolic and psychological violence in modern sport that were not perhaps so evident at the turn of the twentieth century. In this connection a number of writers, in fact, have described the emergence of different types of violence. To take one example, Jennifer Hargreaves (Hargreaves, 1996) argues that gender itself embodies a symbolic form of violence (as with say a male's muscular body representing dominance by force) and that, in the 1980s and 1990s, psychological and emotional types of violence came, to an extent, to replace violence based on physical force. One should, therefore, attempt to arrive at a working definition which, as Fletcher has argued, avoids both a 'restrictively specific' and a 'uselessly abstract general category' (Fletcher, 1997, 47). My 'working conception' accordingly relates violence to physicality. In other words, the meanings we attach to violent acts are important if we are to make sense of them, but what we consider to be a violent act depends on the properties *intrinsic* to that act: violent behaviour, I would argue, in itself implies that someone has either caused, or intends to cause, *physical* harm to someone or something. Accordingly, any act of violence - an action involving physical harm - can be classed as a violent act regardless of the meaning involved. This conception, though, needs to be separated from the term aggression.

Again, there is a distinct tendency among social scientists to view aggression in relativist terms. Take the definition of the psychologist, Eibl-Eibesfeldt. He argues that behaviour is aggressive 'if it leads to another party's being hurt (injury or destruction). This includes not only physical hurt but any kind of hurt,

including annoyance, taunts, or insults' (quoted in Heelas, 1982, 49). There are a number of difficulties here. Firstly, by relying on hurt as a central element in the definition, it becomes difficult to separate the term aggression from an act of violence. For example, we can talk of someone behaving aggressively without actually committing any violent acts. It is much more difficult to describe someone as acting violently without having, or intending, to commit a violent (that is, a harmful) act. Secondly, such a definition fails to recognise the almost contradictory nature of the properties contained within aggression, for I wish to argue that aggression refers to a set of feelings (at least in the first instance), a state of mind and a set of intentions. Feelings of aggression may be experienced in response to many different situations, usually, but not necessarily, through the provocation of others. We can imagine someone being provoked to aggress – of displaying their aggressive feelings – as a result of the aggression of others, but equally, we refer to some people exhibiting an aggressive 'state of mind': sportspeople who display an aggressive orientation even when not provoked. And yet, the feeling for aggression is not in all instances acted out. As I will show with reference to my research in Chapter Three, in pre-modern England people required only the slightest provocation to lose control over their feelings and aggress by acting violently. In comparison, today, in Western European societies, people exhibit greater self-control over the same feelings; they do not act out feelings of aggression in the same impulsive manner as their pre-modern counterparts. And yet, it is also possible to view aggression as something that embodies not just a state of mind, but a set of intentions as when in political discourse it is said that a 'nation-state was held to have acted aggressively' by perhaps, attacking another nation-state's people. What is of significance in such a statement as this and other similar statements, is the use of the adverb 'aggressively' rather than the term 'violently,' to describe such an action, for the former term seems to encapsulate better a set of intentions that are indicative of the depth of feeling felt in the first instance. The adverb 'violently' however, does not capture the same sense of intent and state of mind of the aggressor.

This does not mean to say that all acts of aggression necessarily result in violence. The problem for the researcher then becomes one of accounting for incidents and aggressive forms of behaviour that spill over into socially unacceptable violence. The problem here, as Fromm has noted, is that if aggression refers to both positive and negative outcomes – for example to acts that either destroy or construct - then it is not possible to infer a common underlying cause for both types of behaviour: both characteristics cannot share

the same cause. Fromm's own conceptualization attempts to resolve this dilemma through his distinction between what he calls 'benign' and 'malignant' aggression. The former term refers to behaviour, which is shared between humans and the rest of the animal kingdom, that is defensive and benign, or to put it more explicitly: 'A phylogenetically programmed impulse to attack or flee when vital interests are threatened' (Fromm, 1997, 24). 'Malignant aggression', on the other hand, refers to acts of cruelty and destruction that serve no purpose (for the survival of the species) apart that is, from a satisfaction that is purely lustful. These acts are specific to the human species and virtually absent in most mammals according to Fromm.

Nonetheless, it is possible to go further in conceptualizing aggression regardless of whether a particular aggressive act gives rise to violence, for whether acts of violence ensue from acts of aggression depends, for example, on whether people have access to the means of violence such as weapons. However, in order to make clearer the distinction between the two concepts, 'violence' and 'aggression', the researcher also needs to consider acts of violence in the context of a series of actions.

It is useful to consider violent acts as part of a continuum consisting of chains of action so that, at one end of the continuum, in face-to-face acts of violence the chain of actions is immediate and only involves the combatants. Conversely, in the firing of nuclear weapons the chain of actions is long, involving, in all probability, an enemy that cannot be seen. The push of a button gives rise to a series of actions in which both intended and unintended acts of violence may ensue. And yet, is this an act of aggression in the way that I have conceptualised it earlier? My contention is that this latter example constitutes an act of aggression in its intent; clearly physical force has not been demonstrated in the act itself, that is to say, the mere act of pushing the button, but the intent is aggressive: to unleash a phenomenon of physical force that, on this occasion, will result in harm for masses of people. Such an act may well also take place involving people who are emotionally calm and self-controlled and will probably require self-control of a very high order.

Both of the definitions that I have offered may seem to be overly reliant on the physicality of the body, but it is physicality rather than, say, intent, that provides both terms with an anchorage that they might not otherwise possess if viewed in relativist terms. To say this does not imply however, that the term violence can necessarily be treated as one that is exclusively limited to acts involving the use of physical force. Writing in relation to a slightly different subject, Norbert Elias argued that forms of non-physical violence

have always existed, but hitherto have been fused with physical force; he went on to argue that the two types have (in the modern era) become separated. Moreover, he talks of types of 'economic' violence as an example of 'a whole set of means whose monopolization can enable people as groups or as individuals to enforce their will upon others' (Elias, 2000, 369). Used imaginatively, these concepts can illuminate our understanding of violence in society.

CONCEPTUALISING VIOLENCE: THE WEBERIAN LEGACY

A related problem that confronts the researcher in this field is that the theoretical conceptualization of acts of violence that are predominantly 'emotional' or 'expressive' is weak, whether they are collective or interpersonal in nature. Although many studies can be found on certain forms of collective violence, such as juvenile delinquency, football hooliganism, and in a slightly different context, collective rioting, there is little theoretical conceptualization whenever conduct and behaviour of predominantly an affective nature are involved. In context, Max Weber's methodological concepts provide an important basis for an effective understanding of violent-affective behaviour (although Weber was not centrally concerned with violent or aggressive behaviour) as well as the rules which guide the researcher's investigation into such phenomena. However, although Weber's contribution is important, it is nonetheless flawed. Furthermore, it has influenced present-day sociological thinking within this area in a number of unhelpful ways. My main contention is that Weber's ideas on rationality, meaningful conduct and affective behaviour have been unduly influenced by what Elias terms a *homo clausus* model of behaviour (a 'closed person') - as opposed to a *homines aperti* ('open people') and process-orientated model, which has led to misleading present-day analyses of violent and aggressive behaviour, particularly when it is of an expressive or affective type. Let me elaborate by discussing Weber's ideas, and their legacy, in some depth.

Weber's contribution in this context lies primarily in his distinctions between meaningful and non-meaningful behaviour, affective and non-affective social conduct, and rational and irrational behaviour. Weber makes a distinction, firstly, between behaviour that is meaningful and that which is merely responsive. Meaningful behaviour is simply the subjective meaning 'attributed to a hypothetical actor in a given type of conduct' while any form of responsive behaviour is simply that which is reactive and subjectively not meaningful. That is to say, it involves a person whose behaviour shows no intent or

purpose; a reflex action would be an example here. Furthermore, conduct for Weber is only social if it is meaningfully orientated towards the conduct of others; thus a collision between two cyclists is in itself merely an isolated event; it only becomes meaningful if for example, the incident leads to a brawl or a discussion of responsibility or involves other people. To put this another way, what Weber calls 'action' (meaningful human behaviour) is social in so far as the acting individual's subjective meaning regarding an action takes account of the behaviour of others and is 'thereby orientated in its course'; otherwise, action is 'either overt or purely inward or subjective' (Weber, 1947, 88). Weber gives as examples of non-meaningful behaviour: 'Psychic or psychic-physical phenomena such as fatigue, discipline and memory' (Weber, 1962, 34). It would perhaps be more appropriate to regard the meaning of Weber's concept of responsive behaviour as, in essence, referring to behavioural and physical reflexes, but he further adds that meaningless behaviour refers to those 'processes and phenomena which act as stimuli or effects and they either encourage or inhibit human conduct' (Weber, 1962, 33). In other words, any form of behaviour that necessitates the release of emotional tension or that acts as a stimulus (that is, the creation of tension) is meaningless. Despite the valuations which were arguably inherent in Weber's formulation such a distinction serves a useful purpose. It provides an analytical reference point for investigating, sociologically, certain social phenomena whilst discarding others, that is to say, behaviour that does not appear to be 'subjectively meaningful'. Yet, it is precisely what Weber regards as meaningful that is problematical, particularly where affective behaviour is involved. Does this mean, for example, that conditions which stimulate behaviour in an impulsive manner, say fighting at a football match where a section of the crowd have been provoked, cannot be regarded as subjectively meaningful? In other words, in terms of Weber's conceptualising, is such behaviour little more than reflexive and reliant on a stimulus – the provocation of the crowd for example – and consequently without meaning? It is, however, Weber's four-fold typology of action that has had a profound impact on present-day studies of violence – an impact that has had both positive and negative consequences for such studies.

Weber usefully provides a typology of action which differentiates between types of action that are: firstly, rational and goal-orientated; secondly, rational and value-orientated; thirdly, affective; and lastly, traditional. It is the distinction between the first three forms that is especially useful for my argument. The first type of conduct refers to any behaviour that necessitates the positing of an established goal and its

pursuit by the most rational means. Hence rational conduct of the goal-orientated kind considers the ends, means and secondary effects of any future conduct, whilst weighing up alternative choices. Given the centrality of the concept of rationality in Weber's *oeuvre*, it is surprising that he does not define rationality explicitly. Yet it is clear that an important aspect of rationality for Weber involves individuals assessing the consequences of their actions and thereby modifying them in pursuit of a goal. In other words, individuals constantly modify their actions in order to achieve their desired goals in the most effective and systematic (rational) manner. 'Value-related rational conduct', however, refers to situations where decisions are made about the best ways of achieving deeply held values, ie., the courses of action are treated rationally but not the values. It is, therefore, rational only in its means. Weber is not merely suggesting that people's behaviour is influenced by values; rather, he is suggesting that people, in this context, do not question or evaluate their overall goals in any systematic manner. That is to say, it involves: "Commands" or "demands" to the fulfilment of which the actor feels obligated' (Weber, 1962, 116). Given Weber's conception of rationality, value-related action often involves degrees of irrationality, that is to say, the more people orientate their action to that of an absolute value (beliefs based on 'unconditional demands'), the more irrational the corresponding actions, or to put this another way, the less the consideration that will be given to the consequences of their actions. Conversely, the less absolute are the values used in orientating people's action, the more instrumental and rational are the means used in pursuing a given set of beliefs.

The third type of orientation, affective action, is defined by Weber in terms of impulses and tensions. It is the kind: 'Which demands the immediate satisfaction of an impulse regardless of how sublime or sordid it may be in order to obtain revenge, sensual gratification, complete surrender to a person or ideal, blissful contemplation, or finally to release emotional tensions' (Weber, 1962, 60). Of particular importance is the notion that both value-rational and affective action possess a common element. In both cases the meaning of the action does not necessarily lie in the achievement of a result ulterior to it (or put it another way, an instrumentality of means to ends), but in carrying out the specific type of action for its own sake.

It can be seen that *prima facie*, many violent acts can helpfully be subsumed within these categories. But what precisely are the implications of Weber's typology for present-day studies of violence?

Weber's typology helps to make possible distinctions between acts of a violent or aggressive nature that fall on a continuum between high and low instrumentality. Such distinctions have been usefully developed

by contemporary writers with regard to analysing displays of modern-day violence. For example, Eric Dunning has adapted Weber's typology of action in constructing his own typology for the study of violence⁵ (Elias and Dunning, 1986) whilst Jon Fletcher has applied a slightly revised version of this model to his own work (Fletcher, 1997). Other writers have also used the distinction in an effective manner in applying it to modern forms of violence such as football hooliganism (see, for example, Dunning *et al* 1988). Furthermore, the rationalistic, instrumental aspects of Weber's typology have surely influenced many contemporary studies of rioting (see for example, Rude, 1981 and Thompson, 1971) where, in such studies, the 'mob has been rescued from history'. That is to say, many forms of rioting are now seen as purposeful, ritualistic and rational in their characteristics. However, I do not wish to pursue these ideas in the present context. Rather, I shall develop my argument concerning the negative legacy of Weber's conceptualization, by articulating the importance – for contemporary research – of Weber's rational/affective distinction.

Whether one is analysing soldiers fighting for a cause or rioters demonstrating for an improvement in, say, working conditions, it can be seen that both groups display a motivation that is essentially goal-orientated even though the goals are governed by values - the destruction of an enemy in order to liberate a country, for example, or the establishment of social fairness and justice in trying to improve conditions of pay. In Weberian terminology, the means are goal-orientated or rational in purpose, whilst the desired outcomes are influenced by values. Such conduct can also become affective in that the participants may enjoy the excitement of the fighting or demonstrating for its own sake. The point to be made is that these forms of violence involve, to some extent, definable shared motives and goals, which can accordingly be examined by the researcher in a relatively straightforward manner. However, motives are not so evident where an established goal - or a belief system that would justify the ends - is absent in terms of Weber's typology. To put this another way, where the action is of an affective type, meaningful purpose, in Weber's sense of the term, no longer exists. As Weber states: 'All processes or conditions remain meaningless if they cannot be related to a meaningful purpose either as means or ends, that is they operate as stimuli, either releasing or inhibiting such behaviour' (Weber, 1962, 33). As a result, it is difficult for the researcher to be analytical in his or her examination of motive. Take football hooliganism, for example. It could be argued

⁵ See, for example, page 226 of *Quest for Excitement*, where the rational/expressive distinction is the eighth element in the typology.

that there are discernible goals - the dominance over a rival outfit for example - and a set of values that orientate the actions of the hooligans: excitement and pleasure. Conversely, excitement and pleasure may be considered as goals in their own right. However, the actions are not influenced by *ulterior* results in that the pleasure gained from the excitement of the fighting is enjoyed for its own sake. Dominance of the rival outfit is not an ulterior goal (at least of a long-term nature), as this could conceivably be achieved by, say, using guns, thus pre-empting the excitement of the skirmish. Nor do the hooligans pack up and go home once they have achieved domination for, again, that is not the overriding goal. Pleasure, although an end in itself, has no discernible *end product* in the same way that, for example, the liberation of a country from an invading army is an end product or an assassin accomplishing his or her mission. To put this another way, there is no distinction, in this instance, between the means and the ends⁶. Means and ends are effectively fused. Furthermore, although the pursuit of pleasure and excitement may well characterize the behaviour of hooligans, it is difficult to conceptualize this orientation - the pursuit of pleasure - in terms of a set of absolute values, for although the hooligans are motivated by the pursuit of pleasure, the activities of hooligans constitute only one type of pleasure or excitement (in Weberian terms, hooligans, by and large, do not devote themselves to the fulfilment of a set of obligations or an ideal).

Weber's concept of affective conduct, however, does usefully encapsulate the aggressive behaviour of football hooligans involved in a melee where the behaviour may have arisen as a result of a release (or creation) of tension and may be characterized by enjoyment for its own sake. In other words, unlike both value and goal-orientated conduct, affective conduct is characterized by a non-instrumental orientation; it is neither goal-orientated in its choice of means or ends (there are no ulterior goals), nor is it governed by a belief in absolute values. The problem here, for present-day studies of violence, is that different analysts, I would argue, have sought to impose a rationale for explaining expressive forms of violence by imposing goals and means that are instrumental in nature and which are, implicitly, believed to be influenced or

⁶Of course, in practice, hooligan-type behaviour may contain elements of both instrumental and expressive conduct. See for example, *The Roots of Football Hooliganism*, Dunning, Murphy and Williams, 1988, pp 236, where it is argued: 'Violence takes an "instrumental" form when it is rationally and dispassionately chosen as a means for securing the achievement of a given goal. It is "expressive" when it is engaged in as an emotionally satisfying and pleasurable end in itself or when it takes place under the impact of a powerful negative emotion such as frustration and/or anger'. Although the authors acknowledge the influence of Weber in this conceptualizing, they avoid any notion of the dichotomy which is implicit in Weber's ideal-type conception. Rather, the authors conceptualize such ideal-types - for example, the instrumental/expressive distinction - in terms of 'balances between interconnected polarities'.

sustained by shared, collective values on the part of the participants themselves. Meaningless behaviour is now made to appear meaningful. An example of this is the series of studies on juvenile and hooligan-type violence by the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. Although their collective work is comprised of an assortment of studies, it is nonetheless unified by a theoretical model which is based on Gramsci's concept of hegemony. One of the Centre's most important conclusions relates to the 'skinhead' style and is articulated by Clarke as follows. 'We might', he says, 'finally see the intensive violence connected with the style as evidence of the recreation of the community being indeed a "magical" or "imaginary" one, in that it was created without the material and organisational basis of that community and consequently was less subject to the informal mechanisms of social control characteristic of such communities' (Clarke, 1976, 102).

In other words, the rationale for such violent behaviour is said to be, in a sense, of an instrumental kind: to recreate (albeit symbolically) communities that have disappeared. It is a useful and important analysis but one which seems constrained by the need to find (and impose) means, ulterior goals (the re-establishment of the community) and even absolute values - the sense of a loss of community implies that the hooligans were influenced by a particular set of beliefs or value system. They are, in effect, fighting to restore the values of the community. To put this another way, the affective behaviour of the hooligans can only be made meaningful if such expressive behaviour is imbued with rational-instrumental purposes and either ulterior goals or absolute values. These elements are further highlighted when Clarke *et al* argue (in terms of their theoretical model) that the existence of such delinquent sub-cultures is evidence of an opposition to the hegemonic values of the dominant class(es) in British society. To put this more simply, the behaviour of people in such sub-cultures is made meaningful by the researchers imposing an instrumental rationale: such behaviour is held to constitute a form of opposition or protest movement against the dominant values of that society. More than a hint of such theorizing is also to be found in those studies of juvenile delinquency that were influential during the 1950s and 1960s in the USA and that I shall label as 'functionalist-type' accounts. The authors (see, for example, Matza 1964, Cloward and Ohlin 1960, Merton 1957, and Cohen 1955), in their various ways, seek to discover the existence of ulterior goals and shared values by analysing delinquent behaviour in terms of, say, conflicting value systems (for example the values of a subculture coming into conflict with the dominant ones of mainstream society), status conflict, etc. In effect they seek

to explain delinquent behaviour by showing that the juveniles possess ulterior goals - status is a common one - rational means, and a set of coherent values that justify their actions⁷. A similar strand of 'functionalism' - again predicated on Weber's concept of means/ends instrumentality - is also present in psychological, ethology-influenced accounts of violent behaviour as exemplified by such writers as Marsh *et al.*⁸ The authors make a distinction between 'ritual aggressive action' (what they call 'aggro'), constituted by elements of 'symbolic' or 'metonymic' violence, and any form of physical violence that is directed in an aggressive way towards another human being. The former idea, 'aggro', is conceived of as a means of coping with 'real' aggression; it serves a distinct function that is again, as a means to an end: 'If we ask why we have ritual aggro in society, we can point to its function of containing aggression. Fights are orderly because this enables them to have a symbolic and social force, thus ensuring the survival of the species' (Marsh, Rosser and Harre, 1978, 130; for a more detailed critique of their work, see Dunning *et al* 1988, 21).

⁷ In these studies it is argued that delinquent behaviour must be examined in terms of sub-cultures in which the delinquents' behaviour is either a response to a failure to achieve the goals of the dominant culture such as material success, status or prestige (Merton and Cohen) or merely reflects a distorted version of the same dominant values (Matza). The main differences between them lie in a) the extent to which delinquent behaviour centres around material gain as opposed to non-material gain, and b) the extent to which sub-cultural values (fighting, anti-social behaviour in general) are in opposition and a response to the dominant culture or a modified (distorted) version of those values. Either way, instrumental goals and means are imposed by the researcher as a way of understanding such behaviour, or, it is assumed that their values, goals and means are instrumental in nature: they value status, material success, etc. That is to say, affective or expressive behaviour, although often rational, cannot be explained solely by recourse to instrumental goals and coherent belief systems. Such perspectives stand in contrast to those which examine behaviour in terms of, on the one hand, the balances between cognitive and emotional factors within the psyche and habitus, and, on the other, the balance between internal and external constraints.

⁸ It can be seen that these studies and the two perspectives, comparative ethology and sociobiology, have had a profound impact on Marsh *et al.*'s work. For example, both Marsh and Campbell in their assorted writing together and independently, argue that there is a predisposition for aggression and for rituals of appeasement: both are the product of evolutionary processes. In *The Rules of Disorder* (1978) it is argued that football hooligans engage in harmless rituals of appeasement in which few people get seriously hurt because rules are established which, perhaps unconsciously, do not allow real fighting to take place. They argue that 'ritual fighting or aggro' is 'by no means a novel invention of Western societies' and the fact that 'something very similar is present in the majority of other species of animal lends weight to the idea that the orderliness of aggression derives from a natural process which ethologists refer to as the *ritualization* of aggression' (Marsh, Rosser and Harre, 1978, 127). However, the authors do not wholly agree with the idea that aggression is innate, only that it is: 'One contemporary social means available to man [*sic*] for coping with aggression' (Marsh, Rosser and Harre, 1978, 128). A corollary of this argument is that once hooliganism and its rituals are displaced or eradicated by law-making authorities, then the predisposition to 'real' aggression occurs without the ameliorating effects of appeasement rituals. Similarly, the contemporary anthropologist, Armstrong, argues that although there are not clearly defined and universally observed 'rules of disorder', nonetheless, hooligan encounters are ritualistic in nature (although the nature of these rituals is open to 'negotiation') and in essence, metonymic: 'When all is said and done, there are far more words spoken than punches thrown; this is the essence of hooliganism' (Armstrong, 1997, 321).

The idea that affective behaviour can only be made understandable through recourse to a concept of ulterior goals or absolute values (in Weberian terms, rational purposive and value rational conduct respectively) is, I believe, a legacy of Weber's approach and, as argued previously, stems from his *homo clausus* model of behaviour. It is typically *homo clausus* in its theorizing in the sense of assuming the existence of a rational ego at the core of every human. But it is further assumed in such studies that the level of emotional control for individuals within different class sub-cultures is identical to the rest of the population. Emotional controls and their expression, or lack of expression, do not require commenting on in this context. And yet, if we take a purely instrumental approach as with, say, Clarke's study (cited above), then the question must be raised: why does not opposition to an hegemonic structure take on different forms, for example, that of a political critique? Likewise, there does not appear to be any consideration of emotional controls and differing levels of control amongst different social strata in Marsh's account. However, before I unpack this argument further, the concept of rationality requires further examination within Weber's typology as this, I wish to argue, is another legacy that has had negative implications for present-day studies of violence.

Weber's valorization of rationality and rational behaviour needs to be examined within the context of his methodology. In essence, according to Weber, any form of scientific analysis has to be guided by the concept of ideal-types. Weber defends this position by arguing that his concept of the ideal-type, which shows how behaviour would occur if it took place on a strictly rational basis, unaffected by errors or emotional factors, does not betray a rationalistic bias, but is rather, just an heuristic device.

As we have seen, Weber's concept of rationality is not defined in explicit terms but two elements that characterise it are meaningful purpose and secondary action. An effective example of this is Weber's own example of a man firing a gun to release pent-up emotion (Weber, 1962, 35). One can contrast this to a person being ordered to fire the gun. In the former situation the man is acting irrationally in that firstly, the action is without meaningful purpose in that he is reacting to an impulse or stimulus. Secondly, he does not, by implication, take into account the consequences of his actions, for again, in Weber's model, his actions are guided by emotions - the release of pent-up tensions. In the latter example, meaningful purpose is shown - it is no longer expressive behaviour that is involved - and in addition the person weighs up the consequences of his actions; to disobey the orders would result in his own death, for example. In short,

Weber has established a formula in which affective conduct is equated with meaningless, irrational behaviour: 'It is convenient to represent all irrational, emotionally conditioned elements of conduct as deviations from a conceptually pure type of goal oriented behaviour' (Weber, 1962, 32). Once again, modern writers researching violence and aggression have, perhaps unconsciously, equated affective behaviour with irrationality and have accordingly sought to distance themselves from analyses which are expressive. One can see this, for example, in the way that Willis, in studying delinquent school behaviour, qualifies his statement concerning (expressive) violence: 'It should be noted that despite its destructiveness, anti-social nature and *apparent irrationality* violence is not completely random, or in any sense the absolute overthrow of social order' (Willis, 1977, 35) [My italics]. It would seem that Weber's presence still casts a shadow and that *homo clausus* modes of thinking remain widespread.

Weber's ideas on rationality will be examined in further detail in Chapter Four. The argument that I want to pursue at present is that Weber's distinction between action that is rational and goal-orientated, and that which is affective and irrational, is false. Two points can be made here. Firstly, Weber analyses rationality and processes of rationalization in terms of the development of European capitalism and religion from the sixteenth century. Rationalization referred to the systematic way in which rational principles - instrumentality of means and ends, the application of science and calculation, accounting, double-entry bookkeeping etc. - were pursued in everyday life. For example, the bourgeoisie's pursuit of financial profit and gain and the cash nexus itself, represent Weber's ideal-type of rational action or purposeful, goal-orientated conduct. Accordingly, those instances of behaviour that we typically describe as affective or expressive are seen as deviations from the ideal-type. And yet this is, at the very least, a limiting type of analysis insofar as Weber only conceives of non-economic behaviour, for example, religious behaviour, as value-rational. Weber's problem seems to originate from the fact that his conception of rationality is largely confined to the principles that underlie - and made possible - western capitalism. And yet an alternative paradigm, such as Elias's (Elias, 1978), provides the framework for a much broader application of the concept. In essence, Elias's concept of rationality refers to foresight and the concomitant control of impulses. At any given point in time rational behaviour will take place whenever people show foresight as a consequence of external and/or internal constraints; for example, whenever individuals within a class feel constraints on their behaviour from classes above and below them. For example, in *The Court Society*

(1969), Elias argued that individuals who belonged to the court of seventeenth century France often faced bankruptcy or indebtedness as a result of seemingly gratuitous (conspicuous) consumption. However, what would appear to be irrational behaviour from a present-day standpoint was, in fact, rational given firstly, the external constraints on those involved in the spending and, secondly, their motives: acts of excessive spending were necessary if a courtier wanted to maintain or improve his or her status among his or her peers. In short, Elias's conceptualising can be applied to a wide variety of behaviour (although it still invokes Weber's means/ends notion of rationality) and not just to forms of behaviour that seemingly obey the rules of economic calculation. The methodological point to be made here is that rationality can only be understood in relation to the intentions and motives of people caught up in interdependencies. So, for example, taking Weber's example of a man firing a gun to release pent-up emotion, this would be a rational act if the person intended to release his emotions in the manner described but less rational if the gun were picked up and fired on impulse with no attempt at conscious control. Another example is that of my own research to be presented in Chapter Three, where I will show that, in pre-industrial societies, much violent behaviour issued from impulsive temperaments. Nonetheless, although the impulsiveness of such people can help to explain their behaviour, much of it did appear to be rational in that the intent was to hurt or kill another person.

Weber is also unable to present a sociology of emotions in which emotional behaviour and cognitive processes are examined, not as fixed, static entities that are, within his ideal-type, methodology conceptually separated from each other, but as phenomena that are linked to each other as processes. Hence, in examining violent behaviour of a predominantly expressive nature, one should examine the psychic balance of individuals at the particular point in time at which the violence takes place and investigate the pattern of interdependencies and constraints within which the individuals involved are located. The balance between expressive behaviour and more detached reality-congruent behaviour – both in the life-course of individuals and in that of societies or groups - changes over time according to any number of factors to be described later. The point here is that, in studying violent-aggressive behaviour, the researcher requires a model that examines cognitive processes and emotions as interrelated aspects of the psyche and habitus; not as, *pace* Weber's ideal-types, static elements that are conceptually separated from each other. Otherwise, one may be led into projecting rational goal-orientated motives and means onto behaviour that may be predominantly

expressive in its nature. In short, Weber's conceptualising is achieved within an *homo clausus* model of behaviour as opposed to a *homines aperti*, process-orientated one; that is to say, Weber's conceptualising is the product of a particular form of theoretical dualism in which the subject and an 'external' object - as well as the 'mind' and the 'body' - are ontologically separated.

A further related argument to the above is provided by the historian, Lyndal Roper, who has criticized the notion of rationality in both Weber's and Elias's works (Roper, 1994). Although Roper focuses on Weber's *Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904), the essence of her argument is relevant to my own discussion, for she argues that the rise of rationality and the historical modern subject leaves no room for the recognition, let alone the analysis, of the unconscious in pre-modern and early modern European society. As a result, the psyche is neither understood nor used (in the form of psychoanalysis) in explanations of affective behaviour. This ties in with my own comments on Weber's dismissal of the study of the psyche as largely irrational and unscientific. Roper's argument will be detailed later on, yet the point I wish to make now is that it is precisely this neglect of the unconscious and the psyche in the tradition of Weber, for the understanding of behaviour, that has resulted in narrow, limiting explanations not only of early modern phenomena, but of affective behaviour generally.

Roper develops this point further when she argues that, due to the influence of both Weber and Norbert Elias we tend to see subjectivity in pre-modern society as being collectively mediated and irrational; subjectivity - the idea that individuals possess their own internal psyche and see themselves as individuals - only occurs in the modern era. In short, according to Roper, there is a tendency to see pre-industrial behaviour as merely the product of collective rituals which are also in essence, irrational. I shall have more to say about this in the next chapter.

Let me conclude these arguments. Weber's thoughts on social action and behaviour provide a basis for the examination of violent and aggressive behaviour *via* his concepts of social action and subjective meaning, but these are nonetheless misleading in their application. And yet, of the classical sociologists, Weber offers, perhaps, the most systematic analysis of affective behaviour. This typifies the real legacy of sociological thinking regarding the problem of studying present-day affective behaviour such as aggression. We possess, thanks to Weber, a way of categorising affective behaviour, and methodological procedures (ideal-types, for example) for studying it, and yet we still lack concepts that would help us to understand the

nature of any behaviour regarded as emotive; in part, this may be because it is difficult to describe emotions adequately - envy, anger, euphoria, etc., - beyond bodily and physiological processes, and hence we are left with a catalogue of studies on juvenile delinquency in which aggression and violence are related, in abstract and 'functionalist' terms, to the goals and values of society, but in which as Downes (Downes, 1982) has observed, the nature of aggression itself is not analysed.

Alternatively, there are those studies, largely concerned with juvenile delinquency, which have explored an ontology of emotions in which the meanings of the aggressive behaviour of the participants are made explicit (Willis's *Learning to Labour* for example). And yet we still lack what can be called an epistemology of emotions, sociology of knowledge in which cognitive processes and emotions are not conceptually and ontologically separated, and in which emotions are not simply analysed in functional terms.

An outline of the thesis

It can be seen from this brief outline that the historical assumes a primacy in my thesis. Yet once again, 'the historical' - or more precisely the exact reading of what we take to be historical - is a contestable issue. In this respect I am concerned with four possible readings of what the 'historical' can mean *viz*: firstly, a developmental or process-orientated interpretation based on the work of Norbert Elias; secondly, a post-structuralist influenced reading based on the work of Michel Foucault; thirdly, a discontinuist interpretation based on the work of Anthony Giddens; and lastly, what I shall call a contingency view of history. As stated, these four differing accounts have a profound bearing on any work that professes to be historical in its methodological approach to a given subject. This will be the subject of the second chapter. However, it is perhaps appropriate at this point to give a summary of my intentions and objectives in this thesis as a whole.

Chapter Two will be concerned with the aforementioned debate regarding the epistemological and ontological implications of enquiries using an historical methodology, and why I feel that, by implication, the Eliasian approach in particular is appropriate to this thesis. Chapters Three and Four are specifically concerned with my research findings: identifying, cataloguing and describing incidents of violence, with the intent of discerning trends over lengthy periods of time from, it must be said, a limited range of data. One of my objectives is to test Elias's concept of civilizing processes as applied to a European context. Chapter Four, in particular, is concerned with the implications of civilizing processes for changing sensibilities and

the way in which the mechanisms of social control held to be implicit in civilizing processes, differ from those conceptions put forward by, firstly, Marxist writers who adopt a class-based model of social control based on notions of suppression, and secondly, the historian Lyndal Roper, who adopts a Foucauldian type of methodology for examining social control in early modern Europe. In other words, I shall be examining alternative and competing models of social control to that put forward by Elias. Moreover, the task I have set myself here, is to research public order proclamations and statutes which, I believe, can provide us with insights into people's sensibilities, and the manner in which a more disciplined figure emerged over the time periods selected for discussion.

In Chapter Five, I am attempting to examine Elias's concepts of drives, drive-controls and trajectories and gender differences in emotional controls which I take to be important aspects of the Elias's sociological paradigm concerning the roots of aggression and violence. Specifically, I shall compare his analysis with the analyses of Freud and Giddens regarding these issues. In Chapter Six, I shall discuss how Elias's concepts can account for both rising and falling rates of violence in any given society, before developing the sociological framework detailed over the course of this thesis in an attempt to explain rising rates of violence in contemporary England. Although this particular time-frame is outside my chosen time-periods for research, nonetheless, I wish to apply the aforementioned framework to this period of time and suggest further lines of inquiry. In doing so I shall make reference to two contemporary studies that, arguably, fit into an Eliasian framework: they are the works of James (1997) and Gilligan (2001). In my final chapter I shall put forward a number of conclusions regarding our understanding of the roots of aggression and violence.

The above summarises the main issues addressed within the thesis and provides a basis for exploring what I shall refer to as theoretical methodological issues. This will be the subject of the next chapter.

Chapter Two: The 'Historical': Theoretical Methodologies for Exploring Historical Processes.

My objective in this chapter is to flesh out in detail the theoretical and methodological issues involved in the historical research of violent, aggressive behaviour and affect-based expressions of behaviour in general. Specifically, I would like to argue the case for a process-orientated or developmental approach to the problem partly because, as I have already stated, such an approach needs to be argued for and not just assumed. However, it is also the case that such a research orientation forms an important element of the framework that I am seeking to construct. In particular, historical processes assume an important role in my thesis not simply because what happened in the past is of mild interest regarding what happens in the present, but rather because 'the historical' takes on an explanatory status as regards our understanding of the present.¹ Given that my interest lies mainly in researching the propensity to commit violent acts of an expressive nature, I am especially interested in the links between changes in affective behaviour and changes in the psyche and habitus over a time series. As a result, one's particular reading of 'the historical' becomes paramount and hence a number of essentially ontological questions need to be raised. For example: what is the relationship, if any, between people's psyche and habitus and diachronic social change - is it (the psyche) contingent on specific, unpredictable events as with, say, the unleashing of the 'collective id' during the world wars of the early and mid-twentieth century, or is there an underlying process or dynamic here, a correspondence even between diachronic social change and people's habitus and psyche? Is a truly developmental interpretation of history possible in other words?

Moreover, any account of 'the historical' requires a conceptualisation of the temporal: is history the unfolding of events in a chronological time sequence or does it refer, as structuralists and post-structuralists have argued, to patterns and forms that underlie events and do not correspond to such a sequence? This raises a further question as to the primacy of actors in creating history as opposed to Foucauldian-type

¹ Cf. Abrams's statement: 'Historical sociology is not, then, a matter of imposing grand schemes of evolutionary development on the relationship of the past to the present. Nor is it merely a matter of recognising the historical background to the present.' He then goes on to define historical sociology in terms of the agency/structure debate: 'It is the attempt to understand the relationship of personal activity and experience on the one hand and social organisation on the other as something that is continuously constructed in time.' (Abrams, 1982, 16)

'discourses' which seemingly dispose of subjectivity. It also raises the question as to whether history is continuous or reveals discontinuities whether seen in terms of events, structures, processes or time.

One aim of this chapter, therefore, is to examine a number of competing interpretations of 'the historical' seen in terms of theoretical methodologies. This term 'theoretical methodologies', as applied to the study of historical processes and events, refers to more than just the research methods employed in examining the past or the interpretation of particular events in the past; rather the term refers to the conceptualisation of how the past evolved and the implications of this for explanations of the present.

My immediate concerns are two-fold. Firstly, I wish to provide a brief overview of four historical models of affective behaviour in which relations are posited, directly or indirectly, of affective behaviour and the propensity to commit violent acts over time. Secondly, each overview will be followed by a detailed examination of the particular author's or authors' reading of 'the historical'. In each model I will discuss the inherent weakness of that reading, and yet it is not simply the case that one model is necessarily superior to another. There are, as it were, different shades of validity; my own position, to anticipate my conclusions, is that each position has something to offer in the examination historically of aggressive behaviour even though my own preferences will become clear. The four competing models are as follows: Norbert Elias's developmental model of the psyche, habitus and social change; Anthony Giddens's model of the self and (pre-)modernity; Michel Foucault's discontinuist paradigm of punishment, discourses and extra-discourses; and lastly, a conventional view of historical social change and affective behaviour as 'contingent', as put forward by social historians. I shall start with the work of Giddens.

GIDDENS: A DISCONTINUIST INTERPRETATION OF HISTORY

In his more recent publications, Giddens has provided what is in effect a new explanatory model for the study of affective behaviour in present-day societies. However, there are certain themes that inform all of Giddens's work and which provide links between, say, *The Nation-State and Violence* (1985) and *The Transformation of Intimacy* (1992). For example, the implications of the state monopolisation of the means of violence for the development of the self and concomitant changes in affective personal relations, is arguably, a persistent theme in his writings. In other words, Giddens's concerns are similar to my own: how historical social change at a macro-level has had substantive implications for changes in the psyche and

habitus of individuals at different points in time - what Giddens refers to as the self - and hence, affective, interpersonal relations. Moreover, Giddens, I would argue is, in his more recent writings, putting forward an account of people's behaviour in modernity that is held by Giddens to be different from the accounts provided by both Foucault and Elias. Furthermore, as I shall make clear later on in this chapter, Giddens's ideas have been formulated as a counter to those of Elias's. Hence, if Giddens's formulations are correct, then by implication, Elias's interpretations would be found to be wanting.

My immediate concern, however, is to provide an overview or summary of these changes (in the self) but rooting it in Giddens's own methodological interpretation of the historical process, what Giddens himself has labelled a 'discontinuist view of history'. I will eventually go on to evaluate this particular historical methodology.

In his work dealing with modernity and its impact on the self, Giddens argues for a discontinuity in history that is rooted in the sixteenth century. It was during this time that the seeds of modernity were planted, essentially institutions that were, according to Giddens, to all intents and purposes without a history prior to this. Giddens's concept of modernity itself can be approached from a number of perspectives. On the one hand, it can be viewed as a clustering of four particular institutions that correspond to the rise of the nation-state, the advent of what we now call modern societies. These four institutions are firstly, the development of capitalist enterprise; secondly, industrialism, whereby the natural world underwent wholesale transformation resulting in what Giddens calls created environments - environments that are moulded by people; thirdly, surveillance - that is the control of information and the superintendence of the activities of groups by the state, at least initially; and lastly, the state's control or monopolisation of the means of violence. These four institutions, for Giddens, possess roots in society prior to the sixteenth century that are at best weak. As Giddens argues: 'The modes of life brought into being by modernity have swept us away from all traditional types of social order, in quite unprecedented fashion' (Giddens, 1991b, 4).

Viewed from another perspective, modernity can be equated with what Giddens calls the project of the 'reflexivity of the self' which at its simplest refers to the advent of institutions that possess internally referential systems, that is to say, institutions which rely on forms of knowledge and power that are no longer located in the 'outside' or external natural world. Modernity, in other words, refers to activities that

are determined by principles internal to themselves. The origin of internally referential systems is made clear by Giddens when he states: 'To the degree that social life is organised according to tradition, taken-for-granted habit or pragmatic adjustment to exogenous nature, it lacks that internal referentiality fundamental to modernity's dynamics' (Giddens, 1991a, 145). In this model, Giddens equates pre-modernity with traditional, taken-for-granted forms of knowledge and power that are derived from external referents. These are, variously: the natural world which remained unconquered or uncontrolled by humans; metaphysical religious beliefs; and lastly, biology itself as people had yet to create the technical advances that would one day allow them to control, within defined parameters, reproduction itself.

Depending on its degree of reality-congruence, an abstract model such as this has a number of important consequences for any theory that seeks to make connections between change in the habitus and psyche, historical social change over a time series, and affective behaviour and experience. First of all, Giddens's work presents a view of the self that is influenced by wholesale changes in the historical transformation of society. In societies subject to modernity, a dialectic is said to occur in which the actions of individuals are influenced by the stock of knowledge gathered by institutions; these institutions in turn modify their information in a consistently reflexive manner (for example, the gathering and publication of divorce statistics has arguably had an influence on people's attitudes regarding sexual-social relationships)² the result of which, in part, is the aforementioned internally referential social system of modernity and the creation of a self that is reflexive and inward looking. Secondly, in this model the reflexive self of modernity is contrasted with the largely unchanging self of pre-modernity in which behaviour and actions only possess meaning insofar as they are constituted by external referents as determined by tradition and the natural world. Hence, in this sense the self of modernity is a product of the institutions that are unique to modernity, which of course implies a conception of the self in pre-modernity that experienced different ways of feeling and different ways of reacting to particular events. But to grasp this implication fully we need to refer to another important concept which explores the moral consequences of the movement from pre-modernity to modernity: the sequestration of experience.

Giddens's concept of the sequestration of experience, which adapts some of the ideas of both Elias and Foucault without acknowledging his sources, refers to the shifting of some forms of moral experience from

² An example used by Giddens in a lecture at the School of Education, Leicester (May, 1997).

what one can call the public sphere to the private sphere whereby the latter refers to (in the main) institutions that are somehow separate from the locus of the community. To put this another way, certain social activities and events become hidden from view, 'pushed behind the scenes' and thus become internally referential and reflexive. Hence, for example, quoting the work of Philippe Aries (Giddens, 1991a, 161), Giddens argues that death itself is no longer contained as a ritual within the family; it has been sequestered to other institutions and hence no longer exists as a familiar, public communal event. Similarly, illness no longer remains the responsibility of the family while sexuality has been privatized within modernity; that is to say, sexual relations are no longer conducted in full sight of other members of the family. Private, intimate relations are conducted, literally, behind closed doors. Sexuality has become the domain of private intimate relations and emotions (Giddens, 1991a, 164).

These concepts are not, as I have alluded, particularly original; what is original perhaps is Giddens's language, the way he has used these terms to map out a psychological and sociological portrait of modern society and by implication, pre-modern societies. In particular, he argues that in modernity the sequestration of experience and the advent of internally referential systems have resulted in the gaining of ontological security which refers to the confidence that most human beings have in the 'continuity of their self-identity and in the constancy of the surrounding social and material environments of action' (Giddens, 1992, 92). That is to say, the fear induced by such physical and metaphysical externalities as natural disasters and superstition is held to recede in modernity, creating a more assured self-identity. This new self-identity is further buttressed by the routinization of life that again characterises modernity. Yet modernity is bought at a price: what Giddens calls 'institutional' - as opposed, crucially, to psychological - repression. These are concepts that I shall elaborate upon later in Chapter Five, however. For the moment, suffice it to say that Giddens again makes a contrast between behaviour that is constituted by tradition - habitual, taken-for-granted behaviour, bound by normative regulations - and behaviour that has in a sense become liberated from what are in effect external constraints. Hence people in modernity possess greater control of their own identities and yet no longer possess the moral guidelines that used to characterise traditional day-to-day life. In short, morality evaporates from everyday life and where routines are broken, moral and existential crises ensue. It is as if we have displaced moral and existential decision-making onto institutions that remain outside the scope of everyday life. In this version, shame (modernity) displaces guilt (pre-modernity) so that

Freud's model, in which psychological repression is equated with increased guilt as civilization advances (and is a pre-condition for civilization), is in a sense turned on its head. Again, this theme will be taken up in far more detail later.

A number of important affective, psychological consequences flow from this model which I believe can help us, to some extent, to explain displays of affective behaviour in contemporary industrialised societies and given the connections between the self, the psyche and habitus, and affective behaviour, can ultimately help us to understand changing patterns in the nature of violence and aggression in pre-industrial and modern industrial societies. For it is these conceptions of the self - the inward looking reflexive self of modernity and the habit-conditioned self of traditional society (pre-modernity) - that have implications for changes in affective behaviour. In other words, according to Giddens, as the guilt complex of the pre-modern self recedes, a new figure emerges, an embodied self that displays different ways of engaging with the world and different ways of releasing emotions; a self that is in a sense liberated from the Freudian tyranny of guilt even though important moral and existential decisions have been sequestered to modernity's institutions. In short, Giddens's model can, I think, be summed up as a liberationist model of modern affective behaviour in which it is held, behaviour and experience in modern Western societies are less constrained by externally derived norms and sanctions than used to be the case formerly. It also encapsulates a dynamic psychological model of human behaviour, one in which individuals are psychologically 'freer', less constrained by the guilt complexes of the superego.

Moreover, Giddens's thesis regarding social change has implications for our understanding of violence in modernity. For Giddens argues that the institutional changes held to have taken place in modernity have resulted in a transformation in levels of violence. As I have stated earlier, state monopolisation of the means of violence is, for Giddens, but one aspect of the changes occurring in modernity and is, in an argument that would appear to be highly influenced by Elias but not acknowledged, bound up with processes of internal pacification. If, however, Elias's concept of state monopolisation of the means of violence and taxation provides the framework for Giddens's analysis, he nonetheless adapts the ideas of both Foucault and Marx to explain transformations in levels of violence in modern European societies. Giddens's assertion is that, in the context of European societies, 'the monopolisation of the means of violence in the hands of the state went along with the extrusion of control of violent sanctions from the class relations in emergent

capitalism' (Giddens, 1987, 174). These processes began to occur in European societies at different times, but regarding Britain Giddens implies that processes of internal pacification began to occur during the late eighteenth century. He argues that the bourgeoisie's commitment to freedom of contract, which was part of a broader set of ideological claims to human liberties, meant the expulsion of sanctions of violence from the newly expanding labour market. Although, according to Giddens, this is not to say that the bourgeoisie were willing to forgo the use of direct sanctions of violence against the workers (for example, a volunteer force raised in England in 1794 consisted mainly of gentry, shopkeepers, and employers on horseback and operated partly to discipline recalcitrant workers), nonetheless, according to Giddens, the wage-contract or what Marx referred to as the 'cash-nexus,' and improved forms of what Foucault referred to as the 'disciplinary power' of the institutions of the state of which surveillance within the workplace is but one example, allowed the possibility for the extrusion of violence from the workplace. As Giddens sums it up: 'Violence is no longer a display, a spectacle, sanctioning power through its very display. Violence, as controlled by the state authorities, becomes an underlying sanction – a hidden but available threat – while control is sustained primarily through the disciplinary power of surveillance' (Giddens, 1987, 176). I shall, however, explore these issues concerning surveillance and 'disciplinary power' further when discussing Foucault's work as a whole.

The concept of discontinuity in the work of Giddens

The issue that now needs addressing is that of the extent to which this model is adequate as an interpretation of historical change, based as it is on positing a change in the composition of the psyche that is said to have occurred *circa* the sixteenth century; a discontinuity that presaged the advent of what Giddens calls 'modernity'. For what I would like to argue here is that the reality-congruence of the model depends on its theoretical and empirical treatment of historical change over a time series. In other words, just how adequate is this discontinuist version of history?

In a number of different of writings Giddens makes it clear that he seeks to separate his discontinuist view of history from what he calls 'evolutionary' accounts, those accounts that argue for the existence of continuities in human history or incremental and directional processes of development. Durkheim, Comte, Spencer and Elias are cited as exponents of these positions (Giddens, 1985, 31). This is in contrast to those views (which are still evolutionary accounts) that see history as a process of struggle in which disjunctures

occur between different developmental stages. Historical materialism and Social Darwinism are cited as examples. Giddens objects to both these versions on the grounds that they equate history with social change which Giddens argues is 'logically mistaken' and 'empirically wanting' (ibid.). If history is the temporal constitution of events, then it is false to identify it with change; in other words, stasis characterises much of our world history. This, in a sense, forms a pre-condition for arguing for discontinuity; more particularly for a period of marked and rapid social change that began some four hundred years ago. However, according to Giddens, this period has not been characterised only by rapid change: 'The advent of modernity is not just an accentuation of previous trends of development. In a number of specifiable and quite fundamental respects, it is something new' (Giddens, 1985, 33).

It is his views on the nature of the discontinuities which separate modern social institutions from traditional social orders that make Giddens's ideas distinct from those of other theorists who are also concerned with how the past has shaped the present; what I have referred to collectively as historical methodologies. In particular, Giddens identifies three distinct discontinuities which separate modern social institutions from traditional social orders. Firstly, the sheer pace of change in modernity (the development of technology is cited as an example); secondly, the scope of change, that is to say, the globalizing tendency of modernity; and thirdly, the intrinsic nature of modern institutions. Thus, some modern social forms are not found in prior historical periods. Examples are: the nation-state; the dependence of production upon inanimate power sources; the commodification of products including wage labour. Other social forms, such as the phenomenon of the city, have only a specious continuity with pre-existing social orders. Modernity, then, is distinguished according to Giddens by rapidity of change and institutions that are unique to the latest phase in humankind's history even though, as Giddens admits, neither traditional society (pre-modernity) nor modernity is cut of whole cloth (Giddens, 1991b, 4).

On one level, this version of discontinuity is quite innocuous, if not highly relativist. Thus, if 'discontinuity' merely refers to quite sudden or dramatic change, then the notion becomes quite arbitrary. If, for example, our perspective is the last one thousand years then an event such as the First World War can be seen as just one more example of human barbarity, but if viewed from a perspective of, say, the last seventy years or so, then it becomes something of a discontinuity, a dramatic event with unique characteristics *relative* to the rest of the twentieth century. And yet Giddens seems to be saying something more profound

than this. Such are the changes or transformations in modernity, particularly in their 'intentionality' and 'extensionality' [*sic*] (ibid.), that our knowledge of pre-modern societies is simply inadequate in helping us to understand the consequences of modernity. How convincing is this?

Giddens's implicit dismissal of explanations that assume continuities in behaviour stretching back to pre-modern societies would be more convincing if he could show what the explanatory dynamic is that could account for the changes held to be taking place in modernity. That is to say, despite the plethora of concepts in Giddens's work, the reflexive project of the self can be seen as little more than a description of changes in post-sixteenth century society. In other words, Giddens fails to explain exactly why these changes occurred, why institutions and activities began to become internally reflexive around that particular time, thus heralding the arrival of the reflexive self. To fully understand the issue involved, we need to detail what I see as the crucial underlying ideas in Giddens's concept and account of discontinuity.

In Giddens's account, there are really three discontinuities that separate pre-modernity from the dynamism of modernity: the separation of time and space - what Giddens calls the problem of order; the disembedding of social systems; and, the reflexive ordering and reordering of social relations. However, it is the first element that really underlies and makes possible the other two aspects. It is to this element that I now want to turn.

Giddens argues that in pre-modern cultures time was linked with place, so that, for example, the time of the day was linked to 'socio-spatial markers' such as the position of the sun in the sky. However, the invention of the mechanical clock in the sixteenth century, followed later by the world-wide standardization of calendars, allowed time to be separated from space (Giddens calls this, somewhat metaphysically, the 'emptying of time'). This in turn was a pre-condition for the 'emptying' of space, that is, the separation of space and place (Giddens, 1991b, 17). Place refers to the idea of a locale, a geographical physical setting for a social activity. In pre-modernity, place and space coincide, but modernity tears space away from place by fostering relations between 'absent others'. Places are shaped by influences distant from them. Giddens's main argument, however, is not just that modernity leads to a separation of time and space, but that, in a dialectical process, they recombine - Giddens cites the example of the modern train timetable which

reorganizes space and time together³. This recombination is important because it allows variously, the 'disembedding' of social life to take place; it serves as a pre-condition for globalization; and, it allows for the 'radical historicity' of institutions to take place. The first idea refers to: 'The "lifting out" of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space' (Giddens, 1991b, 21). For example, money is a symbolic token. It can be passed around without regard to the characteristics of the individuals or groups that handle it at any particular juncture. Time-space distancing also allows reflexivity to become all-pervasive in society. It is not that reflexivity is a new characteristic of modernity, but that within modernity it pervades all aspects of life including technological intervention: 'What is characteristic of modernity is not an embracing of the new for its own sake, but the presumption of wholesale reflexivity - which of course includes reflection upon the nature of reflection itself' (Giddens, 1991b, 39).

Implicit in this analysis is a certain scientific and technological determinism in which, *via* the take-off in science and technology (*circa* the 1600s), the natural world is subordinated to human dominance. What is implied here is that people have broken free from the strait-jacket of tradition simply through conquering nature by means of scientific and technological development. And yet Giddens is at pains to stress that it is nature and not just social systems that becomes subject to internally referential systems of knowledge. Humans do not only intervene, as it were. They also instigate a new system of principles that is used to govern the natural world. Technology thus becomes yet another element of society that is reflexive in nature.

Giddens's conception of modernity, then, is ultimately based on the notion of time-space distancing. It is this connection which allows him to separate his ideas on historical change from evolutionary-type views where there is a problem of conceptualizing the transition from the traditional to the modern world in terms of: 'Differentiation or progressive inner diversification' (Giddens, 1991b, 21). These conceptions are problematical according to Giddens, because, firstly, no attention is given to the 'boundary problem', that is to say, pre-modern societies were not bounded. For example, they depended far less on frontiers than do societies in the modern world. Secondly, the consequences of time-space distancing, as described, are not

³ This conceptualizing, the reordering of time and place *via* the modern timetable, involves, as I shall elaborate on later, a reification of the concept of time. What Giddens should be arguing is that the modern timetable involves a change in people's perceptions of time.

addressed. Furthermore, Giddens's own conception allows him to recontextualise the concept of 'history' and to separate it from his concept of 'historicity'. The latter term is bound up with modernity and means the use of knowledge about the past as a means of breaking with it. Giddens gives the example of a standardised dating system, for it made possible the appropriation of a unitary past. The term historicity in fact combines, and in a sense synthesises, the different threads in Giddens's arguments for it summarizes the manner in which history - the past - helps us to understand the present. As Giddens states: 'In addition, given the overall mapping of the globe that is today taken for granted, the unitary past is one which is world-wide, time and space are recombined to form a genuinely world-historical framework of action and experience' (Giddens, 1991b, 21).

Giddens's discontinuist version of history can provide a useful and constructive way of analysing changes in modern society and the repercussions of these changes on individual experience and behaviour. A psychological map can be drawn in which changes in the psyche, dating from the early modern period, become predicated on a discontinuity that dates from that era.

Yet there are severe limitations to this model. These concern Giddens's concept of time; the exact nature and antecedents of his notion of discontinuity; and the problems associated with the conceptual dichotomy of tradition and modernity. Let me take Giddens's notion of time first.

It is clear that in Giddens's analysis the concept of time assumes a pivotal place and it is a notion that, in part, separates his historical methodology from evolutionary methodologies. That is to say, for Giddens, evolutionary theorists confuse history with historicity where history simply refers to the passing of time, whilst historicity can be equated with social change (rather than stasis) and the appropriation of time that is itself predicated on time-space distanciation. This assumes a discontinuist interpretation of history in that, prior to the discontinuity, social change and the appropriation of time were not possible: stasis characterized pre-modernity whilst social change only takes place within the period of modernity. And yet, Giddens's analysis of time is uncritical and assumed, and paradoxically, given the centrality of the notion of reflexivity in Giddens's work, highly unreflexive. In short, Giddens tends to reify the concept rather than treating it, as Elias does, as just a symbol. 'Time' itself as a 'real' entity does not exist; rather, 'time' is: 'A symbol of a relationship that a human group – that is, a group of beings biologically endowed with the

capacity for memory and synthesis – establishes between two or more continua of changes, one of which is used by it as a frame of reference for the other (or others)' (Elias, 1984, 11-12).

Giddens's concept of historicity seeks to show how the past has been appropriated in order to make sense of the present and the future. And yet, a process-orientated approach to the concept of time would demonstrate how, in the 'past', time has been fought for and fought over. The means by which time is measured is something that a number of competing groups in the past have attempted to appropriate. It is only in recent centuries, for example, that time has been regulated in the manner that it is today. However, this is a line of reasoning that I will not pursue further in the context of this thesis.

Giddens's notion of discontinuity is also treated by him in a non-analytical manner. Underlying it, as we have seen, is Giddens's concept of time-space distancing, the separating of time from space that is said to have occurred from the late sixteenth century. This idea further underlies Giddens's notions of disembedding, historicity and reflexivity. Taken together, they distinguish modernity from traditional social orders. But what, one may ask, made time-distancing possible in the first place? In answering this question Giddens refers to the technological invention of the clock in the fifteenth century. However, it is unlikely that Giddens would be content with such a narrow technological criterion as an explanation for the genesis of modernity. For technology itself, according to Giddens, is reflexive (within modernity that is) and in any case, technological breakthroughs only occur when particular social, economic and political conditions make them possible, as the history of science demonstrates. Furthermore, Giddens seemingly fails to see and appreciate the fact that the invention of the clock was predicated on previous technological discoveries. In other words, this particular 'discontinuity' followed a series of interconnected scientific discoveries. This implies the occurrence of continuities in psychological (and social) change in the pre-modern period; the discovery of the mechanical clock would have arisen from a number of chain-like reactions and decisions and would have been consistent with a particular psychological temperament and outlook towards the natural world. What is, therefore, problematic in Giddens's account are his crude, dichotomic notions of continuity and discontinuity. Change involves discontinuity, by definition, but change can also be continuous. I would also argue that Giddens simply underestimates the cumulative impact of continuities in pre-modernity. This has quite pronounced implications for the analysis of such phenomena

as aggression and violence. It also has implications for Giddens's interpretation of historical 'progress' and for 'evolutionary' accounts of history. It is these issues that I shall now address.

As previously stated, Giddens rejects evolutionary accounts of history partly because they imply the idea of progress which, for Giddens, involves the supposition of normative assumptions and Western ethnocentricity in particular. Although Giddens is not entirely clear on this point, such statements imply that, for Giddens, the term 'progress', when used in those sociological accounts that stress evolutionary change, is based on a model of Western development in which progress is equated with economic advancement and 'cultural' superiority. He also denies that modern societies are more complex than pre-modern ones in anything other than their material conditions (Giddens, 1985, 241). However, evolutionary accounts are also characterised by the following according to Giddens: the concept of adaptation to the environment; a conceptual link with biological analogies; and, a mechanism which allows social change to take place from the simple to the complex, such as, for example, technology. Evolutionary accounts belong to what he calls theories that presume the 'unfolding of time', based as they are on a biological analogy. So for example, a plant carries within itself the basis for growth; it 'unfolds' or grows over time in a predestined or teleological manner. It can only have, as it were, one outcome. However, Giddens's own conceptions regarding social change can be said to be based not on conceptions of 'progress', but rather, on the idea of progression in social and psychological behaviour. For example, in his accounts Giddens implies that knowledge of the past can shape the experiences and behaviour of people in the present; this is grounded in his notion of historicity. Social and psychological change are also implied in his accounts in that people within modernity, in contrast to people in traditional societies, are held to be characterised by feelings of shame rather than guilt. People within modernity are held to be emotionally liberated and less repressed in a Freudian sense than their counterparts in traditional societies. Hence, the evolutionary criteria discussed above cannot reasonably be said to be characteristic of Giddens's schema: the idea of discontinuity precludes increased differentiation from the simple to the complex in a gradual manner, whilst his account is arguably devoid of teleology (a predetermined outcome in history) and Darwinian analogies.

Yet Giddens's schema is not an example of 'historical contingency' theory either. I shall elaborate on this concept in the final section of this chapter. Suffice it to say, for the moment, that the notion of historical

contingency theory refers to the way in which social historians, to a greater or lesser degree, research and study history: history is held to occur in a random fashion, contingent on events and decisions that do not fit a pattern, except in the most generalised sense. Long-term psychological change or progression do not occur. However, by way of contrast, Giddens sees not only the advent of shame replacing guilt in the constitution of individuals' sensibilities, but various other changes in affective behaviour (the internally reflexive self, etc.), being made possible by the changes brought about by modernity. It is unlikely that social historians who adopt contingency-like explanations would be in agreement with the sweeping nature of Giddens's schema.

My contention, however, is that Giddens, in trying to avoid both evolutionary and contingency accounts of history, merely incorporates the traditional/modern dichotomy to be found in many evolutionary approaches within the social sciences, and yet does not possess a concept of a 'mechanism' for social change(s) or any other way of explaining processes of this kind. As I have already argued, there are no conceptions of continuities in Giddens's account. This means that, in such a dichotomous approach as this, problems are created for the researcher of history. For there is a distinct danger - as the historian of early modern Europe, Lyndal Roper, has observed - of portraying the people of pre-modern society as a bunch of 'rustics tricked out in ruffs and codpieces' (Roper, 1994, 11), in other words, as a people that did not individually possess a psyche or a sense of self. But one can go further than this. As a consequence of assuming such a dichotomy, continuities are theorized out of history. One might, for example, hypothesize that the concept of a traditional society equates with a type of violence that is substantively different from what one might find in modernity. Equally however, given the existence of continuities in behaviour, it is more likely that several substantive forms of violence will have emerged in the traditional period. Forms of violence that correspond to the psyche and habitus of a fifth century European warrior will be different from those engaged in by the fourteenth century European urban poor.

In short, Giddens creates a valuable theory of psychological and social 'liberation' based, as it is, on assuming a discontinuity in history. Discontinuity is a useful concept in the social sciences if it is used in its weak sense: a disruption, a rupture. However, when used in a substantive manner, as it is in Giddens's work, it creates problems in that it involves the theorization of continuities out of history and exaggerates the degree to which the institutions of modernity are unique and concomitantly, the degree to which

behaviour changed from that in pre-modernity. The changes that Giddens documents were taking place over a considerably longer period than he seems to allow. More accurately, there is a correspondence, no matter how ill-defined, between the psyche and habitus and ongoing social movements in society. Let me now turn to the work of the writer who seems to have had the most influence on Giddens's application of the concept of discontinuity: Michel Foucault.

MICHEL FOUCAULT: PUNISHMENT, DISCOURSES AND EXTRA-DISCOURSES

Michel Foucault's later work, principally *Discipline and Punish* (1975) and the *History of Sexuality* (1976) studies, constitutes what might be referred to as a paradigm for analysing the concepts of power and knowledge. In these particular studies, Foucault seeks to apply the aforementioned concepts to punishment - or rather the transformation in forms of punishment, which, he claims, took place in some European societies at the end of the eighteenth century - and sexuality. Like Durkheim's study of suicide, the subjects, punishment and sexuality, are merely used by Foucault to convey his theoretical ideas, or to put this another way, to demonstrate his methodological procedure in the study of a given subject. Not only this, but Foucault's work presents a rich array of concepts and ideas that, like Giddens', is not only historically informed but can also illuminate our understanding of violence in modern society by an examination of violent practices in the pre-industrial era. And yet, like Elias, Foucault eschews 'present-centred' histories of the past (see Foucault, 1991, 31) in favour of writing - with regard to the subject of punishment - a 'history of the present' (ibid.). But, Foucault's reading of history is one that is primarily discontinuist in the sense that it was conceived as a counter to what he claims to be traditional and evolutionary accounts of history. It was Foucault's intention to provide a version of historical processes - what I shall refer to as a methodology - that was a counter not only to the view, believed by Foucault to be held by historians in general, that (European) history is constituted by 'humanistic progress' but also to Marxist versions of historical processes in which, according to Foucault's interpretation of Marx's writings, economic determinism is made manifest (to be discussed later on in this chapter). In fact, considered as a methodology, Foucault's ideas have influenced other historians who are interested in the nature and causes of violent behaviour and the response of state legislators to this phenomenon in the pre-industrial era. Lyndal Roper for example, has eschewed what she labels as Weberian and Eliasian perspectives in

understanding the role of state legislators in curbing aggressive tendencies in early modern Germany in favour of a perspective, or what I shall call a methodology, that is influenced by Michel Foucault (Roper, 1994, 145). I shall defer a consideration of Roper's findings and conclusions to Chapter Four, however.

Foucault's work is of immediate relevance to this thesis for three reasons. Firstly, Foucault's findings and conclusions regarding those transformations in European modes of punishment that were held to have taken place from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, have direct implications for any account that seeks to analyse transformations in violent practices over this period of time. Although Foucault is mainly concerned with those aspects of violence that are limited to bodily forms of punishment, in effect he produces a social control-type explanation for changes in violent practices and behaviour in the last three hundred years. Secondly, Foucault's analysis of sexuality constitutes an alternative perspective on the historical transformation of affective behaviour in the modern era; alternative that is, to what one may term conventional historical accounts (for example, Stone's account of changes in affects in the last 500 years or so in England. I shall return to Stone's thesis later on in this chapter). This again has a direct bearing on the arguments presented in this thesis and will be explored in Chapter Five: how affects have been expressed and channelled within any given society. Thirdly, as stated, Foucault's writings on punishment and sexuality involve the application of a distinctive historical methodology in its own right: a distinctive way of studying and interpreting events of the past

Moreover, Foucault's historical methodology is of particular interest in that it differs substantively from the other historical methodologies described in this chapter. For example, Foucault's 'genealogical' studies – genealogy being the name used by Foucault to describe his historical methodology – were conceived of as a direct counter to what he referred to as 'traditional' historical writing (which can loosely be equated with what he claims to be evolutionary and teleological accounts of historical processes) and yet, as I shall demonstrate later in this chapter, contained within Foucault's own writings is an implicit critique of developmental accounts of history.

Foucault's historical writings, in fact, have been described by various commentators as being examples of either post-structuralist or structuralist theorizing. Such interpretations are highly contentious. For example, Sturrock chooses to categorize the whole of Foucault's body of work as post-structuralist (Sturrock, 1986, 64) whilst Harland argues that his earlier work is neither clearly structuralist nor post-

structuralist in influence or content; according to Harland, only Foucault's later work can be identified as an example of post-structuralist thinking (Harland, 1987, 3). Spierenburg (1984) on the other hand, argues that Foucault's writings on punishment – part of his genealogical *oeuvre* – are structuralist in influence. Obviously, these differing conclusions arise from conflicting interpretations regarding the exact meanings that these authors give to the terms 'structuralism' and 'post-structuralism'. However, although this particular debate is not crucial for my purposes, nonetheless, a working conception of these terms is required in order to establish a framework for discussing Foucault's ideas.

Although there does not appear to exist either agreement regarding the origins of structuralist thought, or even a school of writers unified by the same structuralist ideas,⁴ the basis of structuralist theory, according to some commentators, lies with European and American linguists writing in the 1920s, and one writer in particular: Ferdinand de Saussure (1904). And yet, once again, opinions are divided as to what extent, if any, the principles laid down by Saussure can be applied to the social sciences. This is a debate that I shall not attempt to pursue in the present context, however. Suffice it to say, for now, that using Saussure's ideas schematically, as no more than a framework, I shall argue that at least four general principles govern structuralist thinking, or at least can be said to influence any writing held in its theoretical underpinning to be 'structuralist'. Let me take each principle in turn. Firstly, the term structuralism implies the creation of a unified system or 'structure' (or, at the very least, an attempt to unite seemingly disparate elements) in which the *relations* between a system's components become the dominant characteristic of that system. So, for example, Saussure presented a unified system of language in which the meaning of words could only be understood in terms of their relations with other words. More formally, Saussure distinguished between 'signs' and 'referents': a referent corresponds to an existing object in the world whereas a sign is an abstract object⁵, something that has both sense and sound (though in their written form, signs need be neither pronounced nor heard). Hence, according to Saussure, signs are 'arbitrary' in the sense that there are many signs to be found in a variety of languages that all refer to the same referent. For example, the sign, 'horse',

⁴ Although a 'school' of writers does not exist unified by the same ideas, most commentators agree that the significant structuralist writers are (apart from Foucault): the Marxist philosopher, Louis Althusser; the psychoanalyst, Jacques Lacan; the anthropologist, Claude Levi-Strauss; and, the linguist, Ferdinand de Saussure.

⁵ More technically, a 'sign' combines the idea of a 'signifier' (the symbol in question), and the 'signified' (the meanings attached to the symbol).

has no inevitable or logical connection with a particular form of animal. The important point here, however, is that for Saussure, a sign obtains its meaning from what is absent; for example, the sign 'day' is only meaningful in terms of the properties of its opposite sign – those that characterize the sign, 'night', and *vice versa*. That is to say, it is the relations between signs that are of importance; not the intrinsic properties of individual signs or words *per se*. Saussure's model is unified to the extent that he sought to provide an underlying logic to what appear to be, in relation to written or spoken 'words', disparate and arbitrary representations.

Secondly, but perhaps as an implication of the first proposition, the theory of structuralism implies a search for underlying structures that would explain surface manifestations. Hence, structuralist writers put much more emphasis on synchronic analyses than they do on diachronic ones; that is to say, structuralists search for 'structures' that would make sense of surface phenomena regardless of the time period in which they are held to occur. For example, Saussure not only made a distinction between diachronic and synchronic axes of language-study, but made a distinction between *langue*, the elements within a language and the rules for their combination (in a sense, the language codes that any speaker internalises before making an utterance), and *parole*: the use which people make of the resources of the language that they are born into and come to acquire. That is to say, the actual utterances of people in their everyday speech. Hence, for Saussure, while *langue* can only be understood through an approach that examines individual events (*parole*), a study of *langue* is required to make sense of people's utterances. To put this another way, it is *langue* – the totality of language – that Saussure was most interested in studying rather than the surface manifestations of language – written or spoken words that do, however, change their meanings over time. This is not to suggest that diachronic analyses are of no relevance to structuralists but the effect of a structuralist methodology is that any given researcher can study structures or systems, that are said to underlie surface manifestations, regardless of the time period in which these surface manifestations are held to occur.

Thirdly, structuralist writers do not ascribe agency to people in their accounts of behaviour. For example, Saussure was not interested in a given individual's or individuals' usage of language, or how a given individual comes to experience and internalise language. This is because for Saussure, *langue* is the social side of speech: 'Outside the individual who can never create or modify it by himself [*sic*]; it exists

only by virtue of a sort of contract signed by the members of the community' (Saussure, 1983, 14). Moreover, this kind of theorizing appears to be a characteristic of structuralist accounts *per se*. For example, within the writings of the philosopher, Louis Althusser (see, for example, *For Marx*, 1969), people merely become bearers of social forces ('*Trager*') rather than being treated by Althusser as autonomous, voluntary agents capable of choice.

As I shall argue shortly, Foucault's later work does ostensibly contain elements that are structuralist in essence: his writings on power are focused on relations – not between people as one might expect in conventional sociological writings – but between seemingly abstract 'forces'. And, as I shall document when providing a critique of Foucault's ideas, his methodology lacks a conception of agency. However, the extent to which Foucault is attempting to search for underlying 'timeless' structures or a totality composed of relations between individual parts, and hence the extent to which his work can be described as synchronic, is debatable. Arguably, Foucault does consider ideas diachronically: in this instance, how particular ideas and ways of thinking emerged during particular time periods. For example, his analysis of the emergence of ideas relating to incarceration in nineteenth century France (to be analysed later on in this chapter) does, arguably, distance Foucault's ideas from a more conventional structuralist analysis. And yet, to anticipate my conclusions, my interpretation of Foucault's ideas broadly equates with Sturrock's summation: 'He is a post-Structuralist [*sic*] in his adherence to the principle of dispersion as against the principle of unification (Sturrock, 1988, 67)⁶. What Sturrock meant here is that Foucault does not attempt to synthesise or look for unity in his writings; unlike more conventional structuralist writers, Foucault's ideas are not embedded within a unifying system, such as that of Saussure, in which underlying structures account for surface manifestations. And it is this rejection of a unifying system in favour of a commitment to 'divergence' and 'disparity' that, according to Sturrock, characterises 'post-structuralist' accounts. I shall not in this context attempt a systematic analysis of post-structuralist theory, but later on in this chapter I shall examine what I take to be one consequence of post-structuralist assumptions in Foucault's work: a commitment to ontological relativism.

⁶ I am aware that, in many commentaries on Foucault's work, Foucault's emphasis on power in his later writings, rather than his former concern with language in his earlier writings, marks the transition to post-structuralist concerns. However, there are a number of problems with this simplification – see, for example, Sturrock, 1986, 5.

Conceptualizing the 'historical': competing conceptions of historical change

I shall now proceed by outlining Foucault's theoretical concerns regarding what he terms 'traditional' history before commenting on his own conception of 'genealogical' history. I shall then apply the principles of genealogical history to his study of punishment in eighteenth and nineteenth century France by focusing on what is his most important genealogical work, *Discipline and Punish*. This particular study also documents Foucault's central ideas concerning how violence practices, such as bodily forms of punishment, were transformed during this period. Furthermore, I shall make reference to his genealogical studies of sexuality as they concern another important theme of this thesis: the conceptualization of affects and how they are channelled in any given society.

Foucault's genealogical history was conceived as a counter to what he terms traditional history and in particular, the idea of progress, which he feels, has influenced the writings of, it would appear, European historians in general. Foucault, in his essay, *Nietzsche, Genealogy, and History* (Foucault, 1991b, 139) does not actually refer to specific authors by name, only to what he implicitly sees as the great body of European historical work. For example he refers at times to the 'emergent history' (or historiography, the term used by some writers to describe the actual writing of historians as opposed to the actual process of history itself) of the nineteenth century with regard to Europe (Foucault, 1991b, 93), but at other times he makes reference to various writings and ideas that emerged from the European Enlightenment (one of Foucault's essays is in fact entitled *What is Enlightenment?* 1991b, 33). In abstract terms, he criticizes traditional historians on a number of counts: that they produce accounts which are teleological; that they create, and adhere to, a notion of continuity; and finally, that they pursue methodologies that are 'objective' in only an illusory sense. Foucault's own writings, what he calls 'effective history', serve as a counter and a contrast to this tradition of writing.

Let me examine his first argument. Foucault argues that historians have sought, albeit erroneously according to him, to discover fundamental truths – such as liberalism and humanism – that have both an origin and an ultimate end-point. In Foucault's interpretation of their writings, historians have merely traced the development of such 'truths' so that they become self-evident to the contemporary observer. For example, in studying then-contemporary accounts of punishment and incarceration in eighteenth and

nineteenth century Europe⁷, Foucault dismisses (what he believes to be) an inherent teleological underpinning to such writings. He asserts that, in these writings, the development of incarceration in Europe at the turn of the nineteenth century was held to have been a consequence of a developing humanism within European society. Foucault argues that historians have imposed a notion of continuity onto events in the past in the sense that one event or a series of events is seen to influence a later series of events in a progressive manner. For example, according to Foucault, in the work of then-contemporary writers such as Beccaria, the advent of penal institutions in early nineteenth century France represented the continuous and incremental triumph of a growing humanism within European society. This is what Foucault means when he asserts that the past does not actively exist in the present (Foucault, 1991b, 81); to argue otherwise, according to Foucault, is to imply a teleological interpretation to events, in the sense that the present merely becomes the culmination of events in the past.

Consequently, given such approaches, Foucault seeks, in his own work, to present histories that are based on a notion of discontinuity; this idea is in turn based on his ideas (or possibly Foucault's interpretation of Nietzsche's ideas) of *Herkunft*, the equivalent of descent, and *Entstehung* (emergence). With regard to *Herkunft*, Foucault argues that the aim of the 'genealogist' should not be to study events in terms of their progress or continuity but to 'maintain passing events in their proper dispersion; it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations' (Foucault, 1980, 146). That is to say, 'descent' refers to the idea of reassembling elements of history that do not form a continuity with past events – according to Foucault, the advent of penal incarceration in the nineteenth century, from the point of view of then-contemporary writers, as we have seen, was held to have been the culmination of a particular continuity i.e., a growing humanism within society. And yet a methodology based on Foucault's idea of 'descent' would reveal the advent of penal incarceration in European societies to have been influenced by motives concerning social control or domination – an assertion that I will detail later on in this chapter. Suffice it to say, for now, that, according to Foucault, it is only by examining penal institutions without reference to events that preceded them - to eradicate continuity - that one can recognise this discontinuity.

⁷ Two principal writers and works quoted by Foucault are: Beccaria, C. de, *Traite des delits et des peines*, 1764, and Bentham, J., *Works*, 1843.

On the one hand, the term 'emergence' is used by Foucault to describe the process by which traditional historians have accounted for the emergence of fundamental truths over time: 'As it is wrong to search for descent in an uninterrupted continuity, we should avoid thinking of emergence as the final term of an historical development' (Foucault, 1991b, 83). Again, this idea is but a variation on the previously discussed idea of 'descent': more humane societies (at least with regard to European societies), Foucault seems to be saying, did not (and do not) 'emerge' at some final end-point in history. Foucault, however, uses the term emergence within his own methodology to describe forms of domination and how they consistently emerge in any given society, in any given time period. For, although it is not clear as to whether he is referring to humanity in the past tense or humanity *tout court*, he states that: 'Humanity does not gradually progress from universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination' (Foucault, 1991b, 85).

These 'rules' are 'empty in themselves' but can be bent to any purpose by new rulers who impose their own system of domination. In other words, Foucault is arguing that what constitutes the 'reality' of history is, in effect, how one group of rulers is usurped by another in order to impose their own system of domination. To put it more explicitly, the role of the genealogist is to record the different 'interpretations' recorded in the historical process, where 'interpretations' refer to the violent or surreptitious appropriation of a system of rules (Foucault, 1991b, 86). It is the task of the genealogical historian to show the exact nature of any particular form of domination and how, over time, one group usurps another group's power. Furthermore, genealogical history is concerned with the happenings and events that did not emerge to become dominant aspects of social, historical comment and that would contradict the 'traditional' historian's idea of progress.

Foucault's final critique of traditional history is that traditional historians have pursued a methodology that is 'objective' in only an illusory sense. For example, he states that: 'Historians take unusual pains to erase the elements in their work which reveal their grounding in a particular time and place, their preferences in a controversy – the unavoidable obstacles of their passion' (Foucault, 1991b, 80). He then contrasts this position to Nietzsche's historical perspective – a perspective that he approves of – stating that Nietzsche's version of historical sense 'is explicit in its perspective and acknowledges its system of injustice' (ibid.). In other words, the final trait of 'effective' history is its affirmation of 'knowledge as

perspective' (ibid.). Foucault seems to be suggesting that 'traditional' historians have made an error in attempting to suppress their own prejudices and biases in writing history, for the task of the genealogist is to recognise that the existence of 'objective' or value-neutral forms of knowledge is but a chimera. There are two related ideas here that require unpacking.

Firstly, Foucault seems to imply that historians – or even writers who comment on that which is contemporary – are producing writings that are based in a particular time and place. With regard to historians specifically, Foucault argues that the values of the present inform their interpretations of the past. Secondly, underlying Foucault's thoughts on value-neutrality are interrelated ideas of knowledge and power. Here, Foucault seems to classify all forms of knowledge (or at least within the social and medical sciences) as 'discourse' which refers to a shared way of speaking and the way in which objects are perceived by any given group of scientists/writers. For example, according to Foucault, pre-Cartesian medical practitioners investigated the body in a certain manner – they did not open corpses in recognition that death represented a finality to further investigation, and hence practitioners created their own type of language to describe their practices and objectives. And when discussing the humanistic disciplines of the nineteenth century, Foucault suggests that, in the space of only twenty-five years, the discourse of medicine completely changed, not only in the conventional sense that it broke with the old 'true' propositions (such as, for example, not dissecting dead bodies) but also: 'More profoundly, with the ways of speaking and seeing, the whole ensemble of practices which served as supports for medical knowledge' (Foucault, 1980, 112). In other words, the task of the genealogist, according to Foucault, is not to document new 'discoveries' in knowledge, but to document and highlight new regimens in discourses - ways of seeing and describing the world - that have not been, so far, commented on by traditional historians. Foucault seems to be suggesting that traditional historians, in the mistaken belief that they are discovering some 'truth' about history, or what Elias would refer to as more reality-congruent knowledge, are merely commenting on discourses that became dominant within society at some point in time. Moreover, according to Foucault, whilst a given discourse is not inferior or superior to any other discourse in terms of its validity, or again what Elias would refer to as its relative reality-congruence, knowledge itself can never be value-free or neutral in its *consequences* for, according to Foucault, all knowledge implies power relations: 'We should admit rather that power produces knowledge (and not simply by encouraging it because it serves power or by applying it

because it is useful); that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations' (Foucault, 1991b, 27). In other words, power and knowledge are not held by Foucault to be interconnected in a Marxist sense in which knowledge functions as class ideology. That is to say, where, in Marxist discourse, knowledge/ideology is held to be epiphenomenal to class relations. To illustrate Foucault's argument in this context, I shall refer to his *Discipline and Punish* study and although for Foucault the concepts of knowledge and power are interconnected and integral to each other, I shall defer an analysis of his conception of power until later.

According to Foucault in his study of the transformation in European modes of punishment, the body can be subjected to ideology, violence and knowledge. This last example refers to the plethora of specialist subjects (held by Foucault to have arisen during the nineteenth century) through which people sought to understand and analyse the body in its broadest sense, but which in reality, according to Foucault, merely objectified the body before creating subjects such as the 'deviant', the 'criminal', the 'insane', etc. For example, with regard to the emergence of the discipline of psychiatry during the nineteenth century that was to be utilised by magistrates and criminologists working within the judicial system in France, Foucault questioned the validity of psychiatry as an 'objective' science that enabled its practitioners to become more knowledgeable of their subjects. For he argued that: 'At the very beginning of its history, psychiatric expertise was called upon to formulate "true" propositions as to the part that the liberty of the offender had played in the act he had committed; it is now called upon [during the nineteenth century] to suggest a prescription for what might be called his "medico-judicial treatment"' (Foucault, 1991a, 22). In Foucault's perception of historical events, the psychiatrist was not, and is not, an impartial observer but rather, was a symbol of power who allowed his or her subjects to be 'subjected' to power, for 'he [*sic*] is not an expert in responsibility, but an advisor on punishment; it is up to him to say whether the subject is "dangerous", in what way one should be protected from him. How one should intervene to alter him. Whether it would be better to try to force him into submission or to treat him [*sic*]' (Foucault, 1991a, 22).

What Foucault, rephrasing Nietzsche, calls the 'will to knowledge' always involves power relations in the sense that forms of knowledge create 'subjected' people. It would appear that in Foucault's writings knowledge or discourse only exist to subjugate and repress individuals who find themselves subject to these

various forms of knowledge. This idea helps explain Foucault's dismissal of the pursuit of 'objectivity' within the social and medical sciences for, in Foucault's view, there is no such thing as 'disinterested' knowledge; the very proposition that knowledge implies power relations seems to preclude the attainability of 'objective' research. I shall, however, return to this particular idea later on in the chapter.

The technology of power and its application to punishment and sexuality

I shall now examine Foucault's application of genealogical theorizing by examining his ideas on power and their application to punishment and sexuality. For it is Foucault's conception of power that underlies and constitutes his methodology, his way of understanding and interpreting history. It should also be stated that one of Foucault's prime intentions is to present a concept of power that is superior to Marx's (so-called) economic conception⁸. I shall return to this interpretation later. Not only that, but Foucault is also attempting in these studies to present histories that involve an alternative to the traditional historian's practice of researching history. For example, with regard to historical accounts of punishment based on events in eighteenth and nineteenth century France, Foucault is sceptical of those historians who merely study archival sources, such as ordinances, in order to discover a 'truth' about society. As Foucault has stated with regard to studies of pre-modern forms of punishment in France: 'If one confined oneself to the [study of the] evolution of legislation or of penal procedures one would run the risk of allowing a change in the collective sensibility, an increase in humanization or the development of the human sciences to emerge as a massive, external, inert and primary fact' (Foucault, 1991a, 23). Instead of investigating ordinances, Foucault's preferred method of researching history is to search out and analyse 'technologies of power', that is, as Foucault himself describes it: 'To make the technology of power the very principle both of the humanization of the penal system and of the knowledge of man' [*sic*] (Foucault, 1991a, 23). But before addressing his idea of 'technologies of power', let me just take up the concept of power itself in Foucault's writings.

It is, above all, the notion of relations of power that is, for Foucault, the principal explanatory concept in understanding history, and to emphasise the point Foucault uses the metaphor of warfare to describe how

⁸ Summarizing the Marxist conception of power thus, he says: 'Power is conceived primarily in terms of the role it plays in the maintenance simultaneously of the relations of production and of a class domination which the development and specific forms of the forces of production have rendered possible' (Foucault, 1980, 88). In this view, then, the historical *raison d'être* of political power is to be found located in the economy.

history can, as it were, be dug-up. He writes: 'The history which bears and determines us has the form of a war rather than that of language: relations of power, not relations of meaning. History has no "meaning", though this is not to say it is absurd or incoherent' (Foucault, 1980, 114).

And yet the concept of power in Foucault's work, as the following quotation demonstrates, is not easy to concretize: 'But in thinking of the mechanism of power, I am thinking rather of its capillary form of existence, the point where power reaches into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives' (Foucault, 1980, 39). Foucault deliberately avoids any discussion on the nature of power and where it originates and who possesses it, for he is concerned from the outset with *how* power is transmitted. For Foucault, power is not something that is either appropriated or possessed and it is: 'Neither given, nor exchanged, nor recovered, but rather *exercised*, and it only exists in *action*' [my italics] (Foucault, 1980, 89). The nearest Foucault gets to specifying the nature of power is when he states: 'It is above all a relation of force' (Foucault, 1980, 89).

If Foucault fails to define, exactly and explicitly, what power is, he is more concrete in his application of the concept of power to the transformations in punishments and sexuality that were taking place in eighteenth century France. But before analysing how he has actually made use of his concept of power in his studies of punishment and sexuality, let me just summarize what were, for Foucault, the key events in the transformation of punishment which took place in conjunction with the formation of industrial-capitalist modernity.

By the end of the eighteenth century what Foucault calls the 'spectacle of punishment' was dying out: the *amende honorable* was first abolished in France in 1791, then again in 1830 after a brief revival; the pillory was abolished in France in 1789 and in England in 1837; the public exhibition of prisoners was abolished in France in 1848; branding was abolished in France in 1832 and in England in 1834. By the end of the century, only flogging remained in a number of penal systems - Russia, England and Prussia. Foucault does not claim that the spectacle died out in a uniform manner across all nations, merely that in a span of about one hundred years there was a considerable change in the characteristics of punishment; not just the disappearance of the spectacle but a slackening of the authorities' hold on the body. According to Foucault, 'conventional' explanations for this transformation, as we have seen, stressed the rise of a growing

humanism within society. But, as stated above, Foucault's preferred methodology is to examine underlying 'technologies of power'. What, then, does Foucault mean by 'technologies of power'?

The concept of technologies of power refers to two important interconnected ideas: mastery over the forces of power, and knowledge/discourse. Integral to the interconnection is his conception of the body so that, for example, punishment was analysed by Foucault in terms of what he calls 'the political economy of the body'. This refers to the idea that power resides in mastering the productive 'forces' of the body. He claims that the body is a 'force' in the sense that it can be utilised, made docile or made to submit. Hence power relations can: 'Invest the body, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs' (Foucault, 1991a, 25). Regarding the idea of the productive power of the body, Foucault separates two epochs historically: the medieval era and its political technology of sovereignty and the modern era that, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was characterised by disciplinary power.

During the first period power functioned through signs and levies - signs of loyalty to the king *via* rituals and ceremony, and levies in the form of taxation and tithes. The king's physical presence was necessary for the functioning of the monarchy: rituals functioned to maintain the 'corporeal integrity' of the monarch. However, in the late eighteenth century a new form of power emerged, one based on extracting production from individuals. In this new system, access had to be gained to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, gestures, and modes of everyday behaviour. This new 'technology of power' was administered through what Foucault calls a system of surveillance (Bentham's Panopticon being the definitive symbol or representation of this). Whereas in European societies broadly up until the nineteenth century punishment was effected by the 'semio-symbolic' technique of torture and inflicting pain on the body, in modern society punishment was effected by disciplining the body, by taking control of the soul -in effect the psyche - in which all aspects of bodily processes - gestures, mannerisms etc., were subject to surveillance. And yet it is not just power relations that are important here; as we have seen Foucault claimed that a plethora of discourses - forms of knowledge - flourished during the modern era that (in a statement that personifies abstractions) sought to master the soul and thereby the body. It is in fact this interconnection between power and knowledge, as we have seen, that is of crucial importance in Foucault's theory.

This is a decisive and crucial step in Foucault's analysis, for he argues that humanistic concepts and social science discourses are not the correlatives of humanistic progress, but rather, are yet more

mechanisms for creating a subjected person. This notion of subjection, together with the idea of a mastery of the forces of the body, constitutes what Foucault refers to as the political technology of the body: 'That is to say, there may be a "knowledge" of the body that is not exactly the science of its functioning, and a mastery of its forces that is more than the ability to conquer them: this knowledge and this mastery constitutes what might be called the political technology of the body' (Foucault, 1991a, 26).

As can be seen from the above, Foucault's work has implications for an understanding of violence and its diminution that was supposedly occurring during the last two hundred years or so in Europe. According to Foucault, new mechanisms of power gave rise to new forms of control in which physical violence, used as a form of punishment, was gradually losing its significance. The replacement of punishment based on torture of the body by a mode of punishment in which the body is disciplined, represents a transformation of violence. It is not just confined to prisons either. The nineteenth century represents for Foucault the advent of disciplinary societies in Europe in which modes of surveillance reached out to all aspects of society. Here, in other words, is a particular theory of social control, a characteristic of which is that violence is held to be controlled, not just by repressive legislation, but by disciplinary forces that arise, as I shall elucidate later on in this chapter, to meet 'local problems and needs'. Foucault seems to be saying that an examination of Europe's recent history demonstrates the successful creation of more effective forms of social control rather than the victory of a 'progressive humanism'; by the end of the eighteenth century in Europe a more lenient system of punishment had emerged, but more than this, disciplinary regimens had encompassed the whole of society, creating the phenomenon of docile (pacified) bodies that, one would presume, were less aggressive and violent in their behaviour than had been the case formerly.

AN EVALUATION OF FOUCAULT

The strengths of Foucault's perspective can now be briefly stated. The main strength of Foucault's historical methodology is that he has highlighted the manner in which historians have ascribed, what Foucault takes to be, an artificial continuity onto events in the past with the result that social and behavioural change appears to the observer as 'progressive' in a teleological sense. That is to say, for any given historian, Foucault seems to be saying, the values and beliefs of the present inform the historian's study of the past to the extent that the researcher actively seeks, and artificially constructs, a sense of continuity and progress

onto events in the past. An example that can usefully illustrate Foucault's argument is provided by the historian Simon Sharma (although writing in a different context to that of Foucault) when he comments on the way British historians in the 1940s and 50s actively looked for the existence of continuity and a sense of ineluctable progress in Britain's past. For example, with reference to Winston Churchill's historical work, *A History of the English Speaking Peoples* (1956), Sharma notes how Churchill assumed that Britain (that is to say British legislators) in achieving certain outcomes held by Churchill to have been desirable - the expansion of the Empire to large areas of the globe by the 1930s, the adherence to democratic government in much of its (the British State's) modern history, etc - must necessarily have had a history that was not only 'unique' but one that was based on continuity and progress (Sharma, 2000, 14). How else could Britain have prospered, economically, politically and socially - from Churchill's point of view - during his own lifetime? Certainly not by conflict, disruption and upheaval is the sub-text to this particular type of historiography, Sharma seems to be suggesting. He implies that, in researching Britain's past, Churchill sought to impose his own contemporary beliefs and values regarding the notion of progress onto the *reality* of Britain's past. One can, therefore, also understand why Foucault challenges historians (in general) for not making explicit their own prejudices and values: they ascribe an 'objectivity' to their research when in reality, Foucault seems to be saying, they allow contemporary values to influence their perceptions of the past. However, the problem for Foucault here is that his own solution to this problem is to pursue a methodology that effectively eradicates any notion of people, as voluntary agents capable of choice, as its subject, for fear, I would argue, that he would be pursuing a way of writing history, such as Churchill's for example - based on chronicling the deeds of 'great men', or simply a history that chronicles the achievements of people in general. At the very least, writing histories that are concerned with how subjects experienced the world would, Foucault seems to be implying, lead to accounts of history that emphasise progress and continuity. This, of course, is the very type of historical study that Foucault rejects. I would argue it has led him, in his own writings, to replace the idea of subjectivity- how agents experience and perceive other people and events- with the notion of subjection. Let me elaborate on this.

It is this de-centring of the subject in history and the eradication of the voluntary agent that is a major problem for Foucault. Moreover, I would suggest that these problems stem from his structuralist and post-structuralist theorizing. Arguably, as with other post-structuralist and structuralist writers, Foucault does

not possess a theory of agency according to which people exercise a degree of choice. Although 'subjection' is a constant theme in his writings – how people are subjected to either forces of power and/or discourses - both are disembodied concepts devoid of references to or implications of thinking agents capable of choice.

For example, in discussing the 'problem' of how subjects are constituted, Foucault states:

I do not believe the problem can be solved by historicizing the subject as posited by the phenomenologists, fabricating a subject that evolves through the course of history. One has to dispense with the constituent subject, to get rid of the subject itself. That is to say, to arrive at an analysis which can account for the *constitution* of the subject within a historical framework [my italics] (Foucault, 1980, 117).

In other words, Foucault's analysis of power betrays its structuralist origins: power/discourses *subject* individuals: 'The individual is one of the prime effects of power in that power identifies and constitutes individuals' (Foucault, 1980, 98). Furthermore, it would appear that subjects are constituted through subjection: 'We should try to discover how it is that subjects are gradually, progressively, and materially constituted through a multiplicity of organisms, forces, energies, materials, desires, thoughts, etc.' (Foucault, 1980, 97). It is this notion of subjection that is misleading in Foucault's work. Foucault's notion of subjection is devoid of any notion of subjectivity. In fact, Foucault, arguably, reconstructs another version of philosophical Idealism in which, in his version, objects and people are constructed by discourses and the forces of power. The subject, as cited previously, has been de-centred from history. The subject is either *constituted* by, say, discourses or subjected to various 'forces' (that is to say, by power). The (structural) determinism that characterises the epistemologies of other structuralists and post-structuralists (for example, Althusser's *For Marx*, 1969) would appear to be present in Foucault's work

Foucault, it would seem, in responding to what he claims to be teleological accounts of history, has through his own writings sought to create a methodology which is based on highly abstract concepts of power and knowledge. It is Foucault's theorizing on power that underlies and constitutes his historical methodology, and yet the problem here is that Foucault has produced a concept of power that is not only highly abstract, but one that is almost metaphysical. For example, Foucault's failure to locate power in either structures or the properties of agents who can exercise a degree of choice, has led to a reification of the concept. The following passage demonstrates clearly the ambiguity in Foucault's usage of the concept of power and how, as a result, it has been reified. Power, he argues, leads to a desire of one's own body:

But once power produces this effect, there inevitably emerges the responding claims and affirmations, those of one's own body against power, of health against the economic system, of pleasure against the moral norms of sexuality, marriage, decency. Suddenly, what has made power strong becomes used to attack it. Power, after investing itself in the body, finds itself exposed to a counter-attack in the same body (Foucault, 1980, 56).

One may ask, what is actually invested in the body? Time? Energy? Is not empowerment a possible *result* of such investments of time and energy?

To be more precise, the main difficulty with Foucault's usage of the idea of power is that the origins of power and the exact nature of what power is, remain obscure. This is because power is not located in either *actual* structures (for example, a person may occupy a *position* of power through ownership of the means of production or the means of violence), or in the characteristics and properties of individuals - an individual possessing power over another individual by virtue of being, for example, physically stronger or by possessing something that another individual wants.

This point regarding Foucault's inability to locate the origins of power can be illustrated by reference to his attempt to create a theory of power that is not economic in a Marxist sense. As has been stated, Foucault seeks to replace Marxist conceptions of power with a theory that avoids the economic limitations of such theorizing. The problem for Foucault, however, is that, on the one hand, any form of social change is held to take place through changes in power-knowledge transformations, but on the other hand, these transformations do not appear to possess any antecedents (for a Marxist or perhaps an ex-Marxist) other than ones located in the economy. In *Discipline and Punish*, for example, Foucault makes it clear as to why and how changes in political technologies - in power relations involving punishment - occurred. His clarification is as follows.

The rationale behind disciplinary power in the eighteenth century, according to Foucault, was that it allowed time and labour rather than wealth and commodities to be extracted from bodies. This extraction in turn was a response to local needs and conditions. In the eighteenth century new social problems arose: a population explosion, a new criminality based on property and a recognition that the old tyrannical system of punishment based on the king had grown unworkable, inconsistent and ineffective. Drawing on secondary materials from England and France, Foucault argued that in the eighteenth century the internal organisation of delinquency altered. The great gangs of malefactors (looters, small armed units, groups of smugglers, disbanded soldiers, deserters) broke up. They were either tracked down or forced to work.

However, attacks on property replaced attacks on the body. In part, in a passage that echoes Elias, 'violent impulses' were controlled (Foucault, 1991a, 76). Furthermore, crime became less violent before punishment became less severe. Throughout the eighteenth century both in France and England, there was an increase in the severity of the law and a concern with crimes of property. In France, for example, laws on vagabondage and theft were far more severe than in the seventeenth century. It is against this background that we can locate the new technology of power and its administration: discipline and surveillance. Although, according to Foucault, the first attack on punishment by torture was conducted through a 'humanitarian' discourse (Bentham writing in England, Beccaria in France), Foucault hypothesizes that the new disciplinary regime arose from a number of specific problems and inconsistencies. Firstly, the old tyrannical regime was an example of a 'bad economy of power': different legal systems existed side-by-side in an arbitrary fashion: for example, the laws and statutes of the king, the nobility and bailiffs. Hence the new system had its mission not to punish less but to punish better: 'To punish with an attenuated severity.....to punish with more universality.... and necessity' (Foucault, 1991a, 49). Secondly, in the second half of the eighteenth century, the bourgeoisie could no longer tolerate popular illegalities such as the claimed and tolerated rights of the peasantry. In an age when absolute property rights were paramount, the tolerated rights of the peasantry such as pilfering were now regarded as theft.

For Foucault, then, the rise of the *capitalist mode of production* was of decisive importance in explaining why in the nineteenth century a new disciplinary technology of power arose. However, this analysis does not equate with the following statement made by Foucault in one of his essays: 'This new type of power, which can no longer be formulated in terms of sovereignty, is, I believe, one of the great inventions of bourgeois society. It has been a fundamental instrument in the constitution of industrial capitalism, and of the type of society that is its accompaniment' (Foucault, 1980, 105). This statement contradicts the analysis put forward in *Discipline and Punish*. Let me unpack this argument.

In a reversal of the Marxist theorizing on power Foucault attempts, in *Discipline and Punish*, what he calls an 'ascending' study of power: beginning with 'the base' of a society and working 'upwards'. Whereas Marx(ists) argued that the state (or any other aspect of the 'superstructure') should be analysed in terms of its role in serving sectional class (economic) interests, Foucault begins his analysis of power with how power is transmitted at the level of the base: how 'bodies' in the context of the workplace, prisons etc, are

subjected to, and transmit, power. In other words, Foucault seeks to avoid a Marxist analysis of power where power relations are construed as being epiphenomenal consequences of economic property relations. Hence, Foucault rejects the notion that, in the nineteenth century, deviant forms of sexuality, delinquency and madness were either banned or repressed because they were not useful to the needs of the economy. On the contrary, it was the mechanisms of power that became useful to the bourgeoisie in terms of their political and economic utility: 'The bourgeoisie could not care less about delinquents, about their punishments and rehabilitation, which economically have little importance, but it is concerned with the complex of mechanisms with which delinquency is controlled, pursued, punished and reformed etc.' (Foucault, 1980, 102).

It would seem that either power constitutes the economy in the sense that the new form of disciplinary power which arose during the nineteenth century was useful to the bourgeoisie - in effect, it was a form of social control - or that (as put forward in *Discipline and Punish*) changes in the economy: the emergence of absolute property relations, the sanctity of private property itself, constituted the new power relations of surveillance and discipline. Hence the contradiction: Foucault, in both conceptions, is asserting a causal relationship between power itself and changes in the economy but he puts forward directly opposing views of the direction of causation.

Ontological relativism: Foucault, a post-structuralist?

This now brings me to my final criticism of Foucault's work. It involves a weakness that arguably underlies Foucault's whole historical approach. It is my contention that Foucault's assertion of 'knowledge as perspective' (Foucault, 1980, 156) has created a distinctive form of theoretical relativism – what I shall refer to as an ontological relativism – and that he has created a radical but problematical approach to the study of events in the past. To put this critique in context I shall first of all refer to Spierenburg's critique of Foucault's methodological approach to the study of punishment in pre-modern and modern France.

In a persuasive critique of Foucault's study of prisons, Spierenburg (1984) in presenting his own 'counter-paradigm' to Foucault's work, argues that the weaknesses of Foucault's study stem from his structuralist theorizing: 'From his structuralist perspective he is describing a system and it is irrelevant to him which particular point in time one picks to investigate that system' (Spierenburg, 1984, 188). What Spierenburg is arguing here is that Foucault's work on prisons is 'unhistorical' because of his attachment to

structuralist theorizing in which, as we have seen, surface manifestations can only be understood in terms of a particular atemporal system or underlying structural 'forces'. Hence, Spierenburg argues that Foucault, due to his reliance on structuralist theorizing, simply dismisses archival sources as an irrelevancy in his research and consequently, presents an inaccurate account of the transformation of prisons and punishment within eighteenth and nineteenth century Europe. For example, Spierenburg argues that the transition from punishment of the body to a disciplinary regimen was not as rapid as Foucault suggests: public executions survived in most European nations into the 1860s and yet the disappearance of serious mutilation in the early seventeenth century ushered in a change in direction of the physical element within punishment. Moreover, during this time imprisonment was slowly being introduced. According to Spierenburg, Foucault also speaks of the political danger immanent in executions as the cause of their eventual disappearance. Spierenburg, however, is critical of this assertion, arguing that if public justice did trigger real turbulence it was largely confined to the execution of rebels. Besides, according to Spierenburg, prior to the nineteenth century the authorities could not be seen to be giving in to public agitation as public punishment was conceived as a deterrent in societies that were still politically unstable and where state-formation had not resulted in effective monopolies over the means of violence. When, in the nineteenth century, the authorities did, as it were, give in to the rebels, it was because the authorities' conception of public justice had changed. The methodological point to emphasize here is that Spierenburg is using archival sources in order to establish the correct chronology of changes in punishment over a particular time period, whereas Foucault bases his research on publicists writing in the second half of the eighteenth century. Hence, what I take to be the main implication of Spierenburg's critique of Foucault's work is that Foucault arrives at the conclusions that he does, not as a result of archival or primary research, but rather, as a consequence of an adherence to structuralist conceptions of synchronicity. Spierenburg seems to be suggesting that Foucault's conclusions are the product of a set of theoretical ideas that can be applied to any given society regardless of its stage of development. However, although I would accept the conclusions of Spierenburg's critique of Foucault's work - that his findings with regard to prisons and punishment during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are unreliable - I would disagree with the logic of Spierenburg's critique. For example, if Foucault's work on prisons is based on a structuralist system, it is difficult to find evidence in *Discipline and Punish* as to what this system is: the system that purportedly underlies and

makes sense of surface manifestations. Furthermore, I would argue that Foucault's work is diachronic, not synchronic in its analysis, in that he is not simply searching for 'underlying structures' that would govern any society regardless of its particular stage of development. He is interested in how, for example, one form of punishment was replaced by another over a specific period of time and how it was that ideas regarding incarceration and surveillance arose within European societies during the nineteenth century. However, if Foucault has not produced a conventional structuralist study of punishment, nonetheless I would argue that Foucault has attempted to establish a methodology that owes a great deal to post-structuralist theorizing with regard to his concepts of knowledge and power. And yet these concepts remain highly problematical in Foucault's work. As stated earlier, when Foucault refers to knowledge, he seems to mean 'discourse'. For example, with regard to the development of medicine, as we have seen, a particular discourse based on pre-Cartesian notions of the body, was at some point in time replaced by another discourse of the body in which corpses were dissected before they were analysed. Moreover, according to Foucault, individuals are 'subjected' to discourses and thereby constituted by them. It is as if Foucault is asserting that what we take to be the reality of existence, our everyday living, has been created by those discourses that became dominant. One implication of this theorizing is that what one might term a humanistic, progressive analysis of affective behaviour, of affects in general, will need re-conceptualising if indeed Foucault's analysis is correct. For example, if we take Foucault's ideas on sexuality, desire and control as applied to events in the nineteenth century, the main thrust of his argument (to be found in the *History of Sexuality* studies) is that various repression theses (ascribed by Foucault to such writers as Freud, Reich and Marcuse), in which it is held that sexuality in all its forms was repressed in nineteenth century Europe relative to previous periods in its history, are wrong. Foucault in fact, inverts this argument, arguing that (in a statement that personifies abstractions) power itself created desire: discourses on sexuality proliferated during the nineteenth century, the effect of which was an extension of the surveillance system (power mechanisms in other words) on people's lives.

One can see how discourses (that are of course the product of thought-processes of human beings) *do* influence people's behaviour in the sense that our thoughts and feelings may be influenced by discourses, prevailing ideas or dominant ideas in existence at any particular time, but this simply ignores the fact that human behaviour is based on cumulative experience. Our thoughts and feelings, etc., are guided by our

interactions with other people. Hence, individuals, in their everyday behaviour, may ignore dominant discourses. For example, Giddens (1992, 170) has plausibly argued that the so-called dominant discourses of sexuality in the nineteenth century, inscribed in the journals and textbooks of medical practitioners - doctors, surgeons etc., did not influence or alter people's everyday experience of sexuality. He claims that such writings rarely filtered down to the masses (although of course, they may well have filtered through to the middle classes). Alternatively, discourses may act as ideologies which justify existing everyday modes of behaviour and thoughts. For example, dominant medical discourses in academic textbooks may merely justify the sexual attitudes of men and women in their everyday situations.

And yet, Foucault seems to be saying more than that discourses constitute subjects, for he seems to imply that the materials that historians have to work with, archival sources for example, are themselves 'discursive'. He seems to be implying that archival documents can only tell us about the values and social circumstances of the authors who produced them. For example, as we have seen, in *Discipline and Punish* Foucault is critical of historians' usage of legal ordinances in the study of punishment, for such usage will invariably lead to historiographies concerned with sensibilities and progress. This is not to say that Foucault does not use archival sources in his research but in *Discipline and Punish* there is little reference to them. Moreover, in this study there are few references to the subjective experience of people in his account of how modes of punishment changed. For example, it is difficult to imagine Foucault producing the sort of statement that is quite typical of Spierenberg's writings: 'By the end of the eighteenth century some of the audience could feel the pain of delinquents on the scaffold' (Spierenburg, 1984, 184). This statement, inferred from his own study of archival documents and concerned as it is with the affective behaviour of the people of that society, is not typical of Foucault's writings in *Discipline and Punish*. Such a statement as Spierenburg's would probably only be valued by Foucault as an example of a 'humanitarian' discourse. It is if Foucault is unwilling to use archival sources in order to re-create a *mentalite* of the people he is studying for fear of producing an account that would not allow him to draw the conclusions that he would prefer.

In other words, my reading of Foucault is that, as researchers, we cannot possess a knowledge of a given people's behaviour since Foucault's theorizing seems to imply that progress, in the limited sense of an incremental accumulation of knowledge, does not take place. As researchers with regard to the study of any

given society we can only possess a knowledge of competing discourses or perspectives. It is doubtful for example, that Foucault would recognize modern medicine as being the product of accumulated, incremental knowledge based on medical discoveries; it is merely just another discourse or sequence of discourses on the body. How, then, are we to grasp the meanings of people's behaviour in past societies if we cannot discover a knowledge of the ways in which they actually behaved? It is this ontological relativism, the idea that we cannot discover meanings in past societies, only a knowledge of competing discourses none of which are 'superior' or 'inferior' with regard to the establishment of reality-congruent knowledge, that underlies Foucault's study of punishment and his whole methodological approach. Arguably, it is this relativism that is a characteristic of all post-structuralist writings (see Sturrock, 1986, 67, for further elaboration on this theme). Furthermore, I would argue that Foucault's whole approach to the study of punishment is based on a false dichotomy to begin with.

Foucault assumes that historians have the choice of either documenting the inexorable rise of humanistic thought within society or the emergence of new forms of social control. That is to say, with regard to the subject of punishment, newer, more effective forms of punishment are held by Foucault to have come into being in nineteenth century Europe because they were more efficient in controlling the population within the new exigencies of nineteenth century capitalism. This assertion is contrasted to his interpretation of conventional accounts of the transformations in modes of punishment, whereby it is held that newer, less brutal forms of punishment were the product of a more humanistic, caring age. Foucault is unable to square this latter version with the idea of a continuing subjection of European people to newer forms of power and knowledge. But as Spierenburg has argued, Foucault's claim that the European nineteenth century reformers were not in fact interested in humanitarian concerns, but rather, that their concern was with the prevention of crime, is based on a false contrast. As Spierenburg states: 'An increased sensitivity toward executions is not at all incompatible with the wish to establish more control over law-breakers' (Spierenburg, 1984, 184). And as Spierenburg further observes, the desire to control among the reformers was always there, even in the sixteenth century. According to Spierenburg, Foucault's mistake is in using the category 'humanitarianism' to describe the mentalities of the nineteenth century reformers. The term 'humanitarian' is simply an inadequate term for describing the changing sensibilities of these reformers. However, I would argue further that *both* sets of changes (changes in sensibilities and social control

mechanisms) are the product of the same underlying causes: social and psychological change at the micro and macro levels. Historically, new forms of control, where the impulse is for improved efficiency (or a new conception of efficiency) and changes in people's sensibilities, often take place at the same time and are predicated on the same underlying movements or developments in society. Let me take a modern example: the debate in present-day England concerning the abolition of blood sports.

Many of the arguments against and for cruel sports in present-day Britain, such as the hunting of foxes and deer with hounds, are conducted in the language of rational efficiency - hunting is either an inefficient means of controlling numbers or it is an efficient means. It either creates jobs or prevents other jobs from being created, etc. Even moralistic arguments regarding cruelty itself are couched in terms of science, such as studies that purport to show that animals and fish physiologically experience pain. These arguments are used along side emotive ones that use the language of morality. For example, arguments that portray the hunting of deers and foxes in a modern society as a 'barbaric' anachronism or, conversely, that it (hunting) upholds the sanctity of the principle of liberty within modern societies: individuals make their own decisions (for example, whether to hunt or not to hunt) according to their conscience. Rational efficiency arguments are also used as much as ethical ones to give strength to the abolitionists' cause. For example, it is often argued by abolitionists that hunting itself has little effect on the control of the fox population. However, I would argue that changes in sensibilities (in the sense that people today are far more sensitive to cruelty against animals than in the past, see Chapters Three and Four) and the need for arguments based on the criterion of efficiency or rationality, are long-term consequences of a society that has empowered its citizens in a number of ways. In short, the disciplinary regime of punishment during the nineteenth century owed its creation to both changes in sensibilities *and* a desire for more rational modes of punishment: they were two correlative facets of Victorian society

In conclusion, I would argue that Foucault's historical methodology is based on a false dichotomy with regard to the way in which historians study the past, a dichotomy based on the perspectives of 'traditional' historians and their concern with progress and teleology at one extreme, and his own theorizing which can be seen, I think, as an example of an extreme form of 'contingency theorizing'. For in rejecting continuities within history, that is to say, by not examining events in terms of what preceded them, Foucault implies that events take place randomly and can only be understood in relation to that which was then contemporary.

For example, this statement – which reifies ‘forces’ operating in history - summarizes in what in many ways is the contingent nature of Foucault’s historical methodology: ‘The forces operating in history are not controlled by destiny or regulative mechanism, but respond to haphazard conflicts. They do not manifest the successive forms of a primordial intention and their attraction is not that of a conclusion, for they always appear through the *singular randomness of events*’ [my italics](Foucault, 1991b, 88).

The dichotomy that this perspective represents, however, is false in the sense that a processual or developmental perspective, such as Elias’s, is neither teleological nor attributes randomness to events. I shall explore this particular idea later however, when discussing Elias’s ideas. Furthermore, Foucault has confused, implicitly, processual or developmental accounts of history with historical perspectives that are not only – from his point of view - teleological and progressive but ones that are based on a notion of continuity. It is as if Foucault regards teleological perspectives and perspectives based on the idea of continuities in history as synonymous. That is to say, Foucault, in rejecting the historical perspectives sketched out above, seems to have dismissed out of hand the idea that behavioural and social change can be examined in a processual and developmental manner that neither implies teleology nor the existence of progress in people’s behaviour. Foucault, in effect, constructs a false dichotomy within the social sciences: teleological histories based on a supposed continuity of events at one extreme, and Foucauldian histories based on discontinuities and the seeming rejection of the possibility of social and behavioural change at the other extreme. And yet it is possible to construct a developmental study of history, *viz* Elias, which can establish continuities in behavioural and social change without implying the idea of progress in a teleological sense.

ELIAS: A DEVELOPMENTAL PERSPECTIVE

The analyses of Giddens and Foucault share some characteristics: they both apply the idea of discontinuity to their treatment of historical events; they are both concerned with historical transformations regarding violence, and yet neither writer goes so far as to create a theory of psychological change that is explicitly rooted in continuous historical change. A writer who arguably presents a more adequate perspective than both these writers is Norbert Elias. At this stage I am not concerned with all of the implications of Elias’s ideas; rather, at this juncture I shall concentrate on Elias’s understanding of historical processes: his

particular methodological approach and his concept of power. As with discussing Foucault's work, I shall quote extensively from original sources in order not to mislead the reader.

Elias's historical method seeks to explore interconnections between changes at a social developmental level, as expressed primarily by state-formation and the growing complexity of the division of labour and increasing chains of interdependency, with change in the structure of the habitus and personality structure of people. It is a way of studying history that emphasises the interrelationships between people and the tensions that are duly created in an almost dialectical fashion but one in which the plans of people tend to produce unplanned or 'blind' results.

Elias's methodological approach ⁹can best be described as developmental or process-orientated. Essentially, as described in *The Civilising Process* (1939), Elias seeks to explore the relationship between social change at a macro and micro-social level and changes in the psyche and habitus of individuals, making a distinction between the individual and the social habitus. For Elias, the problem of historical change is that it is neither rationally planned nor random. It is Elias's concepts of interdependencies, pacification and state-control that help us to explain how and why social change takes place, whether the change in question arises from people's intended actions or arises as a result of the unintended consequences of such actions. The main point to emphasise here, however, is that the unintended consequences of people's actions stem from individuals acting interdependently. In this respect the term 'figuration' is used by Elias to capture the dynamic quality of interdependencies. To illustrate this idea Elias uses the analogy of a card game involving four players (Elias, 1978, 130). Not only are their actions in the game interdependent but the course of the game is relatively autonomous from each player although this does not mean to say that the game exists independently of the players. That is to say: 'By figuration we mean the changing pattern created by the players as a whole - not only by their intellects but by their whole selves, the totality of their dealings in their relationships with each other' (Elias, 1978, 130). Elias also uses the analogy to develop the bases for a sociological theory of power. Interdependencies involve power relations at a number of different levels, for example, those that occur between legislators within a state and

⁹ The application of the term 'methodological' to Elias's work is only being used by myself for the sake of consistency in this chapter (I have used the term methodology in relation to both Giddens's and Foucault's work) but in fact Elias denied having a 'methodology'. In conversations and personal correspondence with Eric Dunning, Elias argued that methodology, ie. a so-called science of method, is a philosophers' creation and, as such, worthless.

their citizens, or between individuals in a family unit, and are usually asymmetrical in nature. An examination of historical processes can reveal to us the development of these interdependencies or 'figurations': 'At the core of changing figurations – indeed the very hub of the figuration process – is a fluctuating, tensile equilibrium, a balance of power moving to and fro, inclining first to one side and then to the other. This kind of fluctuating balance of power is a structural, characteristic of the flow of every figuration' (Elias, 1978, 131). How Elias's developmental historical approach works in practice can perhaps be best conveyed by examining a theory that is axiomatic to this thesis: civilizing processes.

Elias's controversial theory of civilizing processes has been open to a number of (mis) interpretations and not surprisingly, can be formulated in a number of ways. In *The Germans* (1996) Elias reduces what he calls the key problem of any civilizing process as follows. It is, he says: 'The problem of how people can manage to satisfy their elementary animalistic needs in their life together, without reciprocally destroying, frustrating, demeaning or in other ways harming each other time and time again in their search for satisfaction' (Elias, 1996, 31).

Put another way, the theory of civilizing processes can be viewed (although this is not the only interpretation) as an example of a developmental theory of social control that does not have a zero starting point. 'External' influences, say, for example, the actions of law-enforcing authorities in curbing people's impulsive behaviour, become relatively less important as over time as people gradually develop internal self-restraints to curb their own behaviour. People's increasing dependency on others as chains of interdependencies lengthen, leads to a stricter internal control of impulses; gradually the need to quell individuals' impulses through external pressure or force is reduced as individuals within particular social groups or 'figurations' come more and more to discipline themselves.

Civilizing processes, then, refer to how external constraints are transformed over time into internal or self-constraints. And yet, what exactly is meant by the term 'external constraints', and how is it possible to observe, in distinct historical time periods, transformations taking place between external and self constraints?

I would argue that Elias refers to external constraints ('*Fremdzwang*') in two slightly different senses. The first sense refers to the lack of choices involved when people are subject to physical compulsions: people are constrained from doing what they want to do – by hunger, physical threats etc. (and into doing

what they do not want to do). The threat of the sword and the existence of famine do not effect a long-term change in behaviour, in which people develop less impulsive ways of reacting to events, in the same way that socialization processes do. For example, Elias compares two hypothetical people: a wealthy merchant who does not need to work and a peasant who only works when threatened. The peasant refuses to work when the threat is removed in contrast to the merchant who works for reasons, of, say, prestige and status (Elias, 2000, 382-383). Threatening the peasant in the first instance does not realise a long-term change in his or her behaviour.

The second sense can be summarized by reference to this definition taken from *The Germans*: [external controls refer to] ‘the constraints which people exercise over each other in the course of their social lives’ (Elias, 1996, 32), that is to say, they refer to constraints based either on the fear of others or on the *pressure* of others. The important point to be stressed here is that external constraints, when referring to the pressure or influence of others, describe situations where an individual’s behaviour does change over the long-term, thus allowing the possibility for internal self-controls to emerge. The various ways in which external controls can operate is summarized by Elias in the following example taken from *The Germans*:

Let us consider a child who is often hit by its angry father whenever, in his view, it has been naughty. Such a child will learn to avoid disapproved behaviour out of fear of its father. But its self-constraint apparatus will in this respect develop only partially. In order to be able to restrain itself, it remains dependent on others’ threats. Its capacity to restrain itself could develop more strongly if the father were to make the child avoid the disapproved behaviour of its own accord, through persuasion, reasoning and signs of caring. But the child who is often hit does not learn to restrain itself independently of an external constraint, without the threat of paternal punishment and is accordingly also to a great extent at the mercy of its own impulses of hatred and hostility (Elias, 1996, 33-34).

However, according to my interpretation of Elias’s writings, it is not clear as to whether we should regard physical compulsions, including the threat of the sword, as proper external controls precisely on the basis that they do not allow self-controls to take place. For example, in *The Civilizing Process* Elias makes it clear that compulsions of ‘a direct, physical kind, the threat of physical pain or annihilation by the sword, poverty or hunger do not induce a stable transformation of constraints through others, or “external” constraints, into “self”-restraints’ (Elias, 2000, 382). In other words, according to my interpretation, he seems, following the above illustration, to treat physical compulsions and external constraints as separate concepts. Moreover, he was in *The Germans* to clarify the distinction between external constraints and physical-type constraints for, he argued that humans are subject to four types of constraints in all phases of

their development. Thus, in addition to his distinction between external constraints – pressure or fear of others - and self-constraints, he makes a distinction between constraints imposed on people by the characteristics of their animal nature, for example the imperatives of hunger or the sex drive, and constraints arising from dependence upon ‘non-human natural circumstance’; for example, the need for humans to seek food (Elias, 1996, 32).

That said, by what means do external constraints become internalised, transformed into self-constraints (or what Elias refers to as ‘*Selbstzwang*’)? Different mechanisms it would appear have existed at different stages of a society’s development. For example, in seventeenth and eighteenth century European court society: ‘Stricter control of impulses and emotions was first imposed by those of high social rank on their social inferiors or, at most, their social equals’ (Elias, 2000, 116). Only later, when the bourgeoisie became the upper, ruling class, did the family become the primary and dominant institution for the instilling of drive controls. It was from this point onwards that the socialization processes of children, their dependence on parental figures, became an important mechanism for the moulding of impulses and emotions. Concerning these *individual* civilizing processes, Elias cites, by way of illustration, a child learning to eat with a fork: ‘The social standard to which the individual was first made to conform from outside by external constraint is finally reproduced more or less smoothly within him or her, through a self-restraint which operates to a certain degree even against his or her conscious wishes’ (Elias, 2000, 109). However, external constraints are gradually transformed into self-constraints only when the threat of external violence starts to recede. For example, in medieval warrior society the danger was from:

direct external physical threat, habitual fear predominantly takes the form of fear of external powers. And as this fear is less stable, the control apparatus too is less encompassing, more one-sided or partial. In such a society extreme self-control in enduring pain may be instilled; but this is complemented by what, measured by a different standard, appears as an extreme form of freewheeling of affects in torturing others (Elias, 2000, 373).

Hence, in summary, one could say that, internalization of constraints is more likely to occur in those societies in which.....

the division of functions is more or less advanced, in which the chains of action binding individuals together are longer and the functional dependencies between people greater. Here the individual is largely protected from sudden attack, the irruption of physical violence into his or her life. But at the same time he is himself forced to suppress in himself or herself any passionate impulse urging him or her to attack another physically. And the other forms of compulsion which now prevail in the pacified social spaces pattern the individual's conduct and affective impulses in the same direction (Elias, 2000, 370).

What the above analysis suggests, then, is that the theory of civilizing processes refers to how external constraints are transformed into self-restraints, but, crucially, it is the balance between extremes of behaviour that, Elias argues, is transformed over time. That is to say, displays of emotions become less discontinuous, as this statement suggests:

Similarly, in certain sectors of medieval society we find extreme forms of asceticism, self-restraint and renunciation, contrasting to a no less extreme indulgence of pleasure in others, and frequently enough we encounter sudden switches from one attitude to the other in the life of an individual person. The restraint the individual here imposes on himself, the struggle against his own flesh, is no less intense and one-sided, no less radical and *passionate* than its counterpart, the fight against others and the maximum enjoyment of pleasures [my italics] (Elias, 2000, 373).

It is the passionate manner in which some groups within medieval society pursued asceticism that is important here, as it distinguishes this type of affective behaviour - a form of self-restraint - from the habitual and automatic self-restraining behaviour of people in modern Western societies. Compared to people in modern Western societies, people of the medieval era displayed their emotions in an obvious and impulsive manner, even when they were in pursuit of goals of an ascetic nature. Also, unlike people in modern societies, the extremes of behaviour, say, characteristic of earlier societies, were often manifested in the same individual.

It is now appropriate to ask two questions: how can we observe these transformations in constraints taking place, and what exactly instigates these transformations?

Elias seeks to demonstrate how these transformations have occurred by describing and analysing, predominantly in medieval and early modern European societies, changes in manners regarding affect-related forms of behaviour such as eating at table, performing toilet functions and sexuality. Elias observed how people's *experiences* of shame, embarrassment and repugnance have changed over time. Elias was able to conclude that thresholds in shame, embarrassment and repugnance have been raised over time, in turn demonstrating how external constraints became transformed into self-restraints. I shall evaluate Elias's analysis of shame in Chapter Five, but the bones of Elias's argument can be outlined here.

Shame is analysed as a social function that is moulded according to the social structure. It is held by Elias to be reproduced in an individual by force of habit and is linked to the influence of others - in this case superiors - in shaping an individual's behaviour. It is a kind of anxiety, displeasure or fear that arises when an individual fears he or she is lapsing into inferiority when in the presence of superiors. By way of example, Elias cites Voltaire's mistress, the Marquise de Chatelet, who before bathing showed herself naked in front of her servant. The servant is cast into confusion but she herself does not feel shame in this act (Elias, 2000, 118). Yet, this is an act that would not be attempted in front of her equals or superiors, for fear of shame. Only later, when superiors become more dependent on inferiors - as interdependencies and the division of labour lengthen, do superiors feel shame in front of their subordinates.

Elias goes on to demonstrate how the above thresholds concerning shame have risen, especially since the Renaissance. For example, thresholds in shame have risen with regard to sexual behaviour. Shame in the modern era has become linked to the experience of adults talking to children about sex, prostitutes and brothels in comparison to, say, Erasmus's era, when it was acceptable to talk about these things. Similarly, in the modern era, the sexual function has been privatized, made intimate and private. In short, it is by examining these changing thresholds in shame and repugnance that one can demonstrate that civilizing processes have occurred, and are occurring. But what actually instigates these changes?

In one sense, an answer has already been given in the above analysis. For it is changing interdependencies that instigate, in an unplanned manner, these changes. Put in slightly different terms: 'Plans and actions, the emotional and rational impulses of individual people, constantly interweave in a friendly or hostile way.... It is this order of interweaving human impulses and strivings, this social order, which determines the course of historical change; it underlies the civilizing process' (Elias, 2000, 366).

Nonetheless, the initial question that was posed can be answered at a number of different levels. Firstly, at a generalized level it is the growing complexity of interdependencies, as suggested in the above quotation, that explains how transformations in constraints occur. And yet, at what one may refer to as an institutional level, various institutions, principally the family (once the bourgeois classes had become the upper class), and personnel within the state apparatus at certain points in history, are responsible for instigating (planned and unplanned) changes in affective behaviour. So, for example, in his analysis of early medieval Europe, Elias argued that the division of functions was low, the organs of society unstable and liable to

disintegration. Centrifugal tendencies, that is to say the tendency for the power of ruling factions to be dispersed, were slowly neutralized and a more stable central organization with a firmer monopolization of physical force was established. It was this monopolization of the means of violence and taxation by the rulers within European states that helped to create pacified spaces and was hence another element in affecting the habitus and psychological behaviour of individuals within a European context.

In his historical research, Elias tries to avoid a schematic treatment of class change, but nonetheless, his research tends to centre on the warrior classes of early feudalism, the aristocrats of court society, and the bourgeoisie of absolutist Europe. Initially, within a European context, upper classes impose restraints on those below them, but as the division of functions becomes more complex, external constraints take on an automatic, habitual form as the inferior class becomes more like the dominant class. For example, in referring to the advancing threshold of repugnance, Elias argued that the feeling for embarrassment, '*this delicatessen*,' was, first of all, a distinguishing feature of small courtly circles and then, secondly, of court society as a whole. He then went on to argue: 'In conjunction with a quite specific social situation, the structure of feelings and affects was first transformed in the upper class, and the structure of society as a whole permitted this changed affect-standard to spread slowly'. (Elias, 2000, 98). Eventually, the social or 'alien' constraints of court society were replicated far more effectively within the bourgeois class (once it assumed power) by the constraints of the market, the division of labour and the impositions of business life.

Nonetheless, the transformations in affective behaviour did not occur in any simple, linear manner for Elias links these changes with changing balances in power, that is to say, the manner in which, over time, the balance of power between different classes changed. More specifically, Elias's concept of power is applied through his conception of functional democratization which describes the processes involved in changes in the social distribution of power. Throughout Elias's writings, power is conceived of as a set of relational phenomena and is tied up with his concept of function: 'When one person (or a group of persons) lacks something which another person or group has the power to withhold, the latter has a function for the former' (Elias, 1978, 78). Thus, whenever there is a functional interdependence between people, however great the inequality, a balance of power always exists. For example, referring to the power relationship between a slave and his or her master, Elias argued that the slave has power over the master in proportion to

his or her function for the latter. Hence, balances of power are always present whenever there is a functional interdependence between people (Elias, 1978, 74).

Elias went on to argue that there has been, in Britain's recent past, a reduction of power differentials between governments and the governed and between different strata in society (Elias, 1978, 65). For example, in referring to the extension of the franchise in Britain in the nineteenth century, Elias argued that this extension was the manifest institutional consequence of a latent shift in the distribution of power towards broader strata (Elias, 1978, 66). Seen from a long-term perspective, the chances of the governed to control or exercise control over governments became greater than they had been before. Central to these social transformations have been impulses towards growing specialization or differentiation in all social activities. Hence, because of their particular specialized functions, all groups and individuals have become more and more functionally dependent on more and more others. As groups have seen their functions for other groups increase they have seen an increase in their power potentials; conversely, some groups have seen a fall in the scope of their functions and consequently a loss in their power potential (Elias, 1978, 67). Consequently, there has been a transformation of all social relationships in the direction of a greater degree of reciprocal, multi-polar dependence and control. Moreover, the trend, within at least a European context, has been a lessening of power differentials between all groups and strata including those between men and women as well as parents and children. Elias's historical-methodological approach can now be summarized

More than anything else it deals with (as in all of Elias's work) processes, not static entities. That is to say, history¹⁰ itself must be conceived of as a process:

One cannot, *de facto*, clearly recognise the connections between - whatever it is - 'society' and 'culture', 'state' and 'individual', 'external' and 'internal' steering mechanisms, unless one conceptualises them as something in movement, as aspects of social processes which are themselves processes, indeed as functionally interdependent processes involving varying degrees of harmony and conflict (Elias, 1996, 336).

¹⁰ The word 'history' is used by Elias for what is written about rather than the writing itself – for Elias observes that writers of history create confusion by failing to distinguish between the two meanings. It should be added that Elias also makes a distinction between history, social development and evolution. This is an idea that I shall pursue later on in this chapter, in a different context. Suffice it to say, for now, that Elias notes that historians adopt a notion of history based in the belief that events are unique and unrepeatable; social development on the other hand can be characterized, in a sense, by its speed of change: figurations composed of quickly changing and unrepeatable individuals, which appear to such individuals, as more or less unchangeable. Biological evolution, however, is even slower moving (from the point of view of people within figurations) and, unlike social development, cannot be reversed.

From this perspective more conventional approaches to history are found wanting. For example, according to Elias analyses of Germany after the First World War and during the Nazi era have lacked just such a process-orientated perspective and hence created static models which have failed to do justice to the subjects studied. One example of this, in Elias's eyes, would be the optimistic belief that democratic institutions could be made to set roots in Germany after the First World War simply by means of a constitutional change in setting up a parliamentary democracy. As he expressed it: 'It was one of the more fantastic expressions of the ahistorical rationalism of this century that people then supposed (as many still do today) that a democratization of attitudes, beliefs and convictions would follow in the footsteps of the establishment of democratic, parliamentary institutions' (Elias, 1996, 337).

It can be seen that in the Eliasian paradigm two important ontological ideas are at work. Firstly, the individual as a concept cannot be theoretically separated from the concept of the social as implied in the term 'society'; hence processes of psychological change cannot be understood separately from underlying changes in the social structure, although as the above example demonstrates, there is no neat correspondence between the two: attempts to change political and civil institutions in Weimar Germany had out-paced changes or developments in the habitus of German individuals. On the other hand, separating, conceptually, the 'individual' from the 'social' merely re-invents an ahistorical, static and dichotomous model. For example, Elias rejects what he sees as two extreme positions in this debate: Freud's individual who projects his or her conscience into society (Freud's psychological model of individuals is also presented as an ahistorical self that does not change from one century to another); and Durkheim's constraining social rules which project themselves onto individuals and hence correspond to a reification of society. Both these extreme positions create for Elias ways of thinking that reduce the study of society to static conceptions that lack any sense of movement and temporality. In effect, conceptions of humans become ahistorical. How, then, does Elias's paradigm differ from the writers so far considered and exactly what sort of contribution can Elias's theoretical ideas make to this area of research?

Elias's historical methodology can be contrasted with both Giddens's and Foucault's methodologies. Unlike these two writers, Elias's interpretation of historical change is based on the idea of a systematic but unplanned relationship between continuities and 'discontinuities'. The study of processes implies the existence of continuities in the examination of history whereas both Giddens and Foucault argue, in effect,

from a zero starting point at some point in time (a discontinuity) in which an understanding of events before the discontinuity is of limited relevance for an understanding of the present. That is to say, the concept of discontinuity is not present in Elias's work in the same manner as it is in Giddens's and Foucault's work. This is not to imply that 'discontinuities' in the sense of upheavals or disruptions may not be present in history. Disruptions or upheavals certainly occur, but the idea of an absolute discontinuity held to have occurred around the sixteenth century according to Giddens, and the nineteenth century according to Foucault, do not exist within Elias's paradigm. Foucault attempts to create a methodology that is based on his own radical idea of discontinuity: the idea that one set of events does not influence a later set of events. This idea effectively does away with the usual practice of some historians of trying to discern patterns or trends in the past in order to see how one set of events came to influence another set of events later on in time. The point here is that a writer such as Elias, who uses a developmental methodology, assumes the continuing occurrence of social and behavioural change to the extent that it is possible to make statements to the effect that, the psyche and habitus of European medieval people was different from, say, those of twenty-first century European people. Elias was attempting to locate *both* discontinuity and continuity in people's behaviour. For example, we can make the observation that, at a generalized level, violence has been one form of continuity in humankind's history. And yet some periods are marked by disjunctures, periods of increased violence (what others might refer to as discontinuities) such as the two World Wars during the last century. However, the observation that people, over considerably lengthy periods of time, have taken more and more control over their aggressive impulses, implies the existence of another continuity in people's behaviour. Perhaps another way of describing Elias's methodology would be to suggest that Elias is concerned with both integrating and differentiating elements in people's behaviour, a theme that I shall examine in more detail in Chapter Six when considering Elias's analysis of the Nazi era in Germany's history. Nonetheless, Foucault, by contrast, in arguing for a radical conception of discontinuity, effectively dismisses the idea of incremental social and behavioural change. For example, we have already seen that Giddens – who applies Foucault's idea of discontinuity to his own writings – argues that present-day European society cannot be successfully analysed by a consideration of people's behaviour in pre-sixteenth century Europe. In other words, according to Giddens, an absolute discontinuity was held to

have occurred *circa* the sixteenth century, rendering redundant historical explanations of social phenomena in contemporary European societies that invoke continuities with pre-sixteenth century societies.

Also, whereas Giddens's schema posits change taking place at an institutional level involving a movement away from tradition and other 'externalizing' forces, it is conceived of in terms of a once and for all change. The institutional changes described by Giddens that were said to have occurred starting from the sixteenth century, imply that transformations in people's behaviour since the sixteenth century have been sudden. But more than this, Giddens's theoretical paradigm is left incomplete in that the antecedents of the institutional changes he refers to are never explicitly stated. Elias's account differs in a number of respects. According to Elias, the European civilizing process involved the emergence of a more detached, scientific view of the world. A change in the transformation of restraints allowed people to become more detached. For example, people only develop a more long-sighted view of nature to the extent that:

Advancing division of functions and their daily involvement in long human chains accustom them to such a view and a greater restraint of the affects. Only then is the veil which the passions draw before the eyes slowly lifted, and a new world comes into view - a world whose course is friendly or hostile to the individual person without intending to be so, a chain of events that need to be contemplated dispassionately over long stretches if their connections are to be disclosed (Elias, 2000, 400).

A view of the processes by which cognition and affective behaviour are interconnected allows Elias, in contrast to Giddens, to create a model of the psyche that is constantly undergoing change over time; a change in the psyche does not just occur after a discontinuity as it seemingly does in Giddens's work.

Elias's historical approach, then, can be summarized as follows. As interdependencies lengthen (or shorten) new tensions arise between and within classes and other social groups as a particular group's position in the social hierarchy changes. In short, Elias's interpretation of history can be summarized as an account of how power is constantly in a state of flux. However, in contrast to Foucault's analysis of power, Elias conceives of human beings as voluntary agents who are involved in countless interdependencies. The question of adequacy can now be posed: to what extent does Elias's historical method allow the discovery of reality-congruent knowledge and what implications does it have for the study of aggression?

Numerous criticisms have been made of Elias's concept of civilizing processes elsewhere, and although they are usually directed at Elias's account of violence and aggression in contemporary society, they are, in

effect, criticisms of Elias's historical methodology. One set of criticisms¹¹ concerns the developmental aspect of Elias's theory. Thus various writers accuse Elias of adopting either a unilinear or an evolutionary and teleological view of history. In these accounts, the question is raised as to how supposedly increasing rates of collective and interpersonal violence in the late twentieth century and events such as the Holocaust, can be accommodated in a theory that is held to imply diminishing rates of violence as aggression becomes muted over chronological time. A further variation of this theme is that Elias's conceptualization of historical processes is held to involve increasing levels of rationalization (Roper, 1994, 5). Implicit in all of these arguments is that Elias's conception of history is one of progress and that it is teleological.

On a generalized theoretical level, the charge of teleology in Elias's historical method can be refuted by a return to the original question asked at the beginning of this account: how exactly, does history take place when interdependencies develop in an *unplanned* but not random manner? This does not thereby rule out causation or determinants in Elias's paradigm as causation can be observed in hindsight. For example, the manner in which state monopolization of the means of violence and taxation in Western Europe during the Middle Ages contributed to the pacification of large geographical areas, and as a consequence, made possible a shift in the balance between external constraints and self-constraints in favour of the latter, ie., self-constraints, is illustrative of how determinants can be identified in retrospect. The unplanned nature of historical change suggests that Elias's methodology is neither teleological nor unilinear. For example, the essential fragility of human conduct is summed up by Elias in this passage:

We scarcely realise how quickly what we call our "reason", this relatively farsighted and differentiated steering of our conduct, with its high degree of affect-control, would crumble or collapse if the anxiety-inducing tensions within and around us changed, if the fears affecting our lives become much stronger or weaker or, as in simpler societies, both at once, now stronger, now weaker (Elias, 2000, 441).

This argument also anticipates Elias's idea of decivilizing spurts which I shall develop further, in the final chapter, by examining the theoretical implications of decivilizing spurts as discussed in *The Civilizing Process* (1939) and *The Germans* (1996), and by relating them to putative increases in violence in England since the Second World-War.

A related argument, as highlighted above, concerns rationality in Elias's writings. According to Roper, a rationalistic bias creeps into Elias's view of Western Europe - as it does with Weber's - as people in early

¹¹ These criticisms largely belong to Giddens (1985); Curtis (1986); Leach (1986); Taylor (1987); Horne and Jary (1987); Giulianotti (1989); Bauman (1988); and Williams (1991).

modern England are held to have been the product of 'rationalistic forces' sweeping through Europe whilst the people of the late medieval period and before are deemed to be irrational by comparison. In other words, modernization and progress are held to be the legacies of the Renaissance, creating a rationalistic society peopled by folk who now possess a sense of a self. In Roper's interpretation of Elias, it is only a matter of time before psychoanalysis arrives on the historical scene (see Roper, 1994, 4-8).

Roper illustrates this point by referring to her own studies which include the study of witchcraft in Germany during the early modern period. The problem is, she argues, that the period which is designated as an era that first saw the nascent rise of the enlightened, modern self - the early modern period of sixteenth century Europe - is also the period which marks the acme of witchcraft trials, the very embodiment of all that is supposedly irrational and unenlightened.

A number of consequences follow from these criticisms. One concerns the fit between psychological change and changes in the actual structure of society; changes on both levels are, for Elias, developmental or process-orientated. However, according to Roper, the complex tools of psychoanalysis are never applied by Elias to history and historical change; psychoanalysis is not used for example to flesh out the motivations and conduct of, say, rioting medieval peasants or of the usurped knights of the sixteenth century. Roper has drawn attention to what she calls Elias's 'identikit' conception of psychological change: 'Whereas psychoanalysts can show the infinitely varied, imaginative use individuals can make of the materials of their predicaments, creating their own symbolic language and symptoms, psychogenetics of the Elias type proposes a historical, but identikit kind of psychology in which individual psychic creativity has little place' (Roper, 1994, 9). Here, Roper argues, Elias is identifying a collective psychology rather than an individual one. Roper herself, in an attempt to reshape the historical method, has made use of Freudian psychoanalytical techniques to unravel the motivations and experiences of those people in the early modern period who were accused of witchcraft. Whether or not she has succeeded is not the issue here. Rather, her point is that Elias did not go far enough in asserting a psychological perspective within his historical method, and more specifically, did not apply the tools of psychoanalysis to the study of pre-modern people. Arguably, however, what she has done, perhaps unwittingly, is reduce Elias's historical analysis to a discontinuity and a dichotomy: ones that are centred around the sixteenth century when, it is held by Roper in her interpretation of Elias's writings, a more rationalistic, repressed individual emerged in Europe.

The idea that Elias did not use psychoanalytic tools to account for variations in individual conduct is an insightful observation but theoretically weak. For Roper is guilty of *homo clausus* theorizing in which a subject/object dichotomy is reinstated. That is to say, by stressing the subjective, psychological experiences of individuals she is reasserting an interpretive perspective to the study of social and psychic phenomena rather than analysing subjectivity – people’s subjective experiences – in the context of people’s interdependencies with each other. But what is even less convincing is Roper’s teleological projection of a notion of rationality onto Elias’s historical method. Let me therefore turn to this aspect of Roper’s critique.

Roper’s critique is based on the assumption that Elias’s writings involve a teleological concept of rationality in terms of which historical change in the West implies more and more rational behaviour. For example, in her critique of Elias’s ideas, she starts off by describing the way in which Elias’s paradigm incorporates the irrational: ‘Elias’s narrative of the rise of civilization seems at first to offer greater respect to the irrational and to those areas of human experience which elude the familiar categorisation of historical narrative’ (Roper, 1994, 5). But she then goes on to say, in discussing various historians’ treatment of the irrational, that ‘this psychoanalytical incorporation of the irrational, derived as it is from Elias and others, is essentially Weberian in form: it harnesses the rise of the modern subject to the rise of the rational, the “adult”, tying subjectivity to the rise of the modern’ Roper, 1994, 7). What I think she means here, is that Elias equates ‘the irrational’ with pre-modern societies and the rise of ‘the rational’ with ‘modernity’, implying a progressive and teleological conception of rationality. However, the concept of rationality that Roper claims Elias adheres to is not the same as Elias’s application of the concept. For Elias, rationality is analysed in terms of balances and relationally. It is, he argues: ‘An expression of the direction in which the moulding of people in specific social figurations is changed during this period. Changes of this kind, however, do not “originate” in one class or another, but arise in conjunction with the tensions *between* different functional groups in a social field and *between* the competing people within them’ (Elias, 2000, 412).

For example, according to Elias, the rational behaviour of the people of seventeenth century European court society, if examined from the point of view of their motives, manifested itself in a different way from that of the rationality of, say, the nineteenth century bourgeoisie. Clearly, this does not imply a ‘progressive’ view of rationality, for in Roper’s interpretation of Elias’s writings, we would have expected the behaviour

of the nineteenth century bourgeoisie to have been more rational than that of the court aristocracy who chronologically preceded them in time. Elias's concept of rationality in other words, does not adhere to a view of history as progress. It does not follow a linear pattern either.

The above arguments suggest that Elias's historical methodology does not lead him to a teleological, unilinear or evolutionary view, and yet, there is a direction or progression evident in Elias's work regarding European civilizing spurts. Over a considerable period of time measured by centuries, there has been a tendency for European society in general to become less accepting of aggression, and by implication to experience a fall in the rate of violent incidents. Greater intolerance of violence does not necessarily imply a reduction in violence *per se* but it is difficult - as I shall argue later - to avoid the conclusion that in many important respects people in European society are today less tolerant of certain forms of aggression compared to four hundred years ago. Moreover, with regard to the trajectory of sexual behaviour in modern Europe, a certain sense of 'progress' is implied in the following statement which refers to the trajectory of the sex drive in early twentieth century Europe:

Regardless, therefore of how much the tendencies may crisscross, advance and recede, relax or tighten in matters of detail and from a short-term perspective, the direction of the main movement - as far as it is visible up to now - has been the same for the expressions of all kinds of drive. The process of civilization of the sex drive, seen on a large scale, has run parallel to those of other drives, no matter what sociogenetic differences of detail may always be present (Elias, 2000, 158).

The term 'progression', as opposed to the term 'progress', is perhaps a more apt description of Elias's theory of civilizing processes as it implies that social and psychological change takes place but without implying that either a moralistic or normative judgement is being made, or a predetermined future envisaged (teleology). Even in a limited context, the term 'evolution' may be used as a legitimate description of Elias's theory of civilizing processes, for as Fletcher argues: 'Nevertheless, Elias's theory can be seen as evolutionary in the simple sense of long-term continuities and processes of differentiation and integration, not biological development (Fletcher, 1997, 44).

SOCIAL HISTORIANS AND CONTINGENCY THEORIZING

The final historical methodology that I shall discuss can be labelled a contingency view of history. It is a perspective that can be identified with the work of any given historian working within the field of social history as I would argue that there are different *degrees* of attachment to contingency theorizing in the work

of all social historians. In this particular context, contingency refers to the degree to which a writer accounts for events in the past by non-developmental or non-processual factors and the extent to which events are said to occur at random.¹² That is to say, the term contingency in this context can be conceptualized in terms of a continuum, in which Foucault's discontinuity concept, as I have stated earlier, represents an extreme form of contingency theorizing. According to Foucault, our understanding of a particular event – as I have summarized earlier in this chapter – cannot be obtained from a knowledge of its antecedent(s). There are no continuities here; events are seemingly contingent on other events occurring contemporaneously and randomly. For example, according to my reading of Foucault, the advent of penal institutions at the beginning of the nineteenth century in France was, for Foucault, contingent on changes in the economy in which the need for a more disciplined workforce that could be more efficiently controlled compared to the previous century, was required by the authorities. However, these changes in the economy lack any sort of explanatory status; that is to say, Foucault does not posit a mechanism – whether it be chains of interdependency or modes of production – that would relate the advent of penal institutions in the nineteenth century to long-term structural forces or long-term changes in behaviour. Moreover, in some of his other accounts (that is to say, other than *Discipline and Punish*), as stated earlier, Foucault fails to explain the origins of disciplinary power in the nineteenth century and seems to deny the importance of economic factors in explaining the rise of disciplinary power.

Conversely, writers who exhibit a strong attachment to processual concepts can be said to exemplify a low degree of contingency theorizing in their writings. Such writers are able to establish continuities and some sort of progression in people's behaviour. This does not imply that writers with a strong attachment to contingency theorizing are unable to posit causal relationships in their study of historical events, but in general, explanations for the causes of any given event in their analyses tend to be proximate rather than long-term. For example, a given historian may attempt to account for, say, the causes of the First World

¹² Cf. Sharma's indirect definition of 'contingency history' where he refers to his own writing of history as a 'history respectful of contingency, mistrustful of inevitability, indifferent to any predetermined route or destination: a history refusing to take for granted (as the victors' texts always want) that the way things turned out was the way they were always meant to: a history that can see, but for a happenstance – Harold not falling out with his brother; Anne Boleyn giving birth to a healthy son; Oliver Cromwell not dying when he did – an altogether different outcome' (Sharma, 2000, 17).

War, in term of immediate events and decisions rather than more long term (and perhaps, processual) factors.

Most historians, however, do not subscribe to the extreme discontinuity theorizing to be found in Foucault's work. Rather, as a generalisation, it can be suggested that most historians employ a low degree of developmental or processual thinking in their writings. For example, a given historian may account for the rise of early and mid-twentieth century Nazism by recourse to explanations that document the development of a German militaristic culture during the nineteenth century. And yet for most social historians the recording and writing of history itself is equated with the unfolding of events in a chronological order; patterns and trends may reveal themselves through analysis, but the search for underlying, long-term processes in an Eliasian sense is a chimera. At best, it is believed, technology may be subject to processes of development, but to infer processes of development in the human condition simply leads to teleological accounts of history. Furthermore, it is held that social change does take place but change itself is contingent on unpredictable events and happenings such as the emergence of leaders or certain social and economic events - industrialization and urbanization for example. The latter may even be referred to as processes, but what is clear in this version is that whilst profound complexes of events such as the Industrial Revolution, the invention of the steam engine, etc., may alter the collective psyche, long-term historical processes that have an ongoing effect on human behaviour and the psyche and habitus of people, do not occur.

I shall now turn to historians who have attempted to account for transformations in interpersonal violence during England's past: the work of Lawrence Stone, a writer who has studied affective relations, including aggression and the propensity to commit violent acts, from the late medieval period to the present; and J.S. Cockburn (1991), a writer who has documented at length changes in the homicide rate during England's past. At this stage, I do not wish to refer to their work in detail. Rather, it is their methodological approaches that I wish to examine.

Themes of contingency and process in the work of Lawrence Stone

Although much of Stone's work is concerned with, ostensibly at any rate, marriage and the family, nonetheless, in effect, his concerns are similar to my own: how affective personal relations have changed, including the propensity to commit aggressive acts, over a period of time measured by centuries. He has also added to this particular body of work through an important article on interpersonal violence (Stone, 1983).

The actual content of Stone's work will be considered in Chapter Four, but, suffice it to say for now, that what Stone argues in essence is that the early modern and medieval periods in England were characterized by 'cool, even unfriendly relations' in which aggression was very much on the surface. This was to persist until the late seventeenth century at which time a transition took place: the beginnings of the phase that Stone labels 'affective individualism', a phase characterized by modern concerns of intimacy and an intolerance of aggression within personal relations.

Much of Stone's empirical historical work has been criticized, especially by fellow historian Wrightson (1982), who argues that Stone has exaggerated the pre-eighteenth century tendencies through focusing too much on the primary sources of the upper-middle classes. However, as noted previously, it is Stone's methodological approach, as opposed to his research methods, that I wish to analyse at the moment.

Stone, ostensibly, would appear to be a writer who has a strong attachment to contingency theorizing and thereby a relatively low attachment to processual conceptualizing. This point can be illustrated by quoting Stone's critique of a particular sociological theory - Nisbet's theory of modernization (see Stone, 1990, 415) - as an inadequate explanation of the many changes in affective relations since the sixteenth century. Since it is the methodological approach that I am interested in the specifics of Nisbet's theory need not detain us for too long. What follows is merely a brief summary.

Nisbet argues (in keeping with modernization theories more generally) that a number of developments have taken place in modern advanced societies since the sixteenth century that combined, constitute modernizing trends, or even processes, which can explain changes in affective relations within modern (or developed) societies over the centuries and thereby account for the pattern of certain forms of behaviour in present-day societies. Nisbet suggests specifically that there has taken place a progressive erosion in five traditional values since the sixteenth century. Firstly, a decay in the sense of community as a result of urbanization; secondly, a decay in the all-pervasive authority and deference that once enveloped medieval society; thirdly, the undermining of social stability as a result of geographical and occupational mobility; fourthly, the undermining of the sacred as the secularization of society progressed; and fifthly, the cutting off of modern people from deep-seated psychological roots in which anomie and alienation are the price of what, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, were people's newly won economic and political freedoms.

As can be seen, Nisbet's model does involve process concepts: urbanization, secularization, etc. However, these are only *partial* processes; that is to say, they are conceptualized by Nisbet in terms of a dichotomous tradition/modernity model: rural/urban, religiosity/secularization, etc; the axis of the dichotomy being based around the early modern period in Europe. However, it is the all-embracing nature of Nisbet's model that Stone does not seem to like. For example, Stone argues that this 'overarching paradigm' does not fit easily with the facts as chronologically determined. Hence, for example, from 1530 to 1660 (in England) deference made itself felt again through the repeated gesture of the doffing of hats to superior people on social occasions, a practice which, according to Stone, acted as a bulwark against anarchy. Similarly, Stone calls into question increased rates of mobility amongst the propertied classes after 1660 and notes that secularization operated in cycles and was never a unilinear phenomenon. Stone's rejection of Nisbet's model is worth quoting in full:

In view of these chronological and class discrepancies the logic of a sociological theory based in an overarching concept of modernization marching relentlessly through the centuries appears less than convincing. It is merely one more example of the many pitfalls of any unilinear theory of history, which ignores the ups and downs of social and intellectual change, the lack of uniformity or the direction of the trends, and the failures of the various trends to synchronize in the way they ought if the paradigm is to fit. Above all, by sweeping broadly across the vast spectrum of highly distinctive national cultures, status groups and classes, these theories reduce the enormous diversity of social experience to a uniformity which has never existed in real life phenomena. (Stone, 1990, 416).

This has led, I would argue, to Stone rejecting implicitly any social theory that involves models or paradigms which invoke high degrees of process conceptualizing for explaining social change. Stone seems to be suggesting that Nisbet is putting forward a model that fails to recognize the randomness, unpredictability and complex variability of history. In other words, Nisbet's model fails, by implication, to recognize the contingent nature of historical, social change. My contention, however, is that Stone, in rejecting Nisbet's modernization model of social change, is *a priori* rejecting any model of social change that attempts to be 'all-embracing' in its methodological procedure and which involves processual thinking. It is as if all models that seek embracing explanations for social phenomena in his view must necessarily be teleological and unilinear. Moreover, as I will suggest later in this chapter, it has led to weaknesses in Stone's own writing to the extent that although he does use process concepts, he only uses them in a selective manner.

I would further argue that Stone's own conceptualizing of changes in affective behaviour that were held to have taken place over considerably long periods of time is intended as a counter to the theorizing put forward by Nisbet and other like-minded writers. For what Stone argues is that (when referring to changes in affective relations in England) history takes place in cycles, as it were; a period of restraint is followed, partly as a reaction, by a period of opposing submissiveness, such as rebellion, which is then followed by another period of deference and restrained behaviour and so on. The libertine eighteenth century (which as noted above was preceded by a period of deference in the mid-seventeenth century) for example, was followed by the deferential mid-late Victorian era which then gave way to a period of twentieth century permissiveness. Of course, Stone is aware of the complexities and contradictions of each of these periods and moreover, does not subscribe to a 'flat-earth'¹⁴ account of the historical process where nothing changes from one epoch to another, nor to what Pearson calls a theory of the 'historical wheel' which: 'rolls on through the ages, as if events move in cycles and periodically repeat themselves' (Pearson, 1983, 207). Social change does occur as society moves from one cycle into another, and Stone does recognize that the collective psyche does change in response to contingent, complex changes in society - industrialism, the break-up of patriarchal institutions and ideologies, etc., as exemplified by the rise of affective individualism in the late seventeenth century. Moreover, my argument is that although Stone's cyclical theorizing is perfectly compatible with process theorizing - for example, the concepts of repulsion and colonization are used by Elias to refer to a kind of a cycle - Stone has, in implicitly rejecting *in toto* the idea of a processual paradigm that would offer, if not all-encompassing causal explanations, a theoretical framework and approach for explaining social phenomena for any given point in time, constrained and limited his own explanations for changes in affective behaviour

¹⁴The term belongs to G. Pearson (1983). It refers to the idea that nothing actually changes throughout history, an idea that Pearson refutes as a description of his own research. In fact, Pearson's own research constitutes a fifth historical methodology; 'history as written backwards'. Pearson seeks to demolish the idea that a Golden Age has existed in British society with regard to law and order. By analysing (largely) newspaper accounts Pearson shows that each generation, starting with the present, and 'working backwards' as far as the sixteenth century, has been concerned with the issue of law and order, and that disorder - delinquency, riots, popular recreations, etc., was prevalent or perceived to be, in each era. However, although Pearson refutes the term 'flat-earth' as a description of his own work - 'I should say at once that I am not trying to promote a "flat earth" version of history according to which nothing ever changes: social circumstance do change, and undeniably' (Pearson, 1983, 207) - he does not actually provide any explanations of a theoretical nature for the continuing occurrence of disorder and does not state whether there has been a qualitative change in the nature and extent of disorder over the centuries.

And yet it is not as if Stone, in some of his writings on affective relations, does actually have a consistently high degree of attachment to contingency theorizing. For at different points in his work he does invoke explanations that are characterized by elements of processual thinking. For example in one important article Stone (1983) attempted to explain what he believes to be a long-term fall in the homicide rate (in England) by recourse to what he terms respectively as 'cultural' and social explanations (Stone, 1983, 29). He cites Elias's processual civilizing concept as an example of a 'cultural' explanation in arguing that a change in the values and behaviour of the English upper classes during the seventeenth century slowly filtered down to the 'violence-prone poor' (Stone, 1983, 30). The evidence he cites for this change in values, in which initially the upper classes of the seventeenth century became more pacified or 'tamed', include the rise of the code of the duel amongst the upper classes after the late sixteenth century; the transformation of manners in the late seventeenth century; and, the humanitarian ideology of the Enlightenment. They are all examples, according to Stone, of the upper classes taming their hitherto violent ways. He then argued that the values exhibited by the upper classes subsequently filtered down to the poor. He also cited what he called 'cultural' explanations for two interruptions in the long-run decline of the homicide rate that were held to have occurred in the early fourteenth century and in Elizabethan and Jacobean England. Both instances are attributed by Stone to a break down in community values or 'anomy' [*sic*]. But he also, in the same article, provides a more 'sociologically-based' alternative for the decline in violence in the last five centuries and argued that there has been a shift in values from those of a feudal society, where status and honour and military values were prized, to that of the commercial values of a bourgeois society: crime against property replaced crimes against people. What these various explanations seem to amount to is an *attempt* by Stone to use processual ideas in accounting for changes in the rate of violence. For example, the way in which Stone puts forward the rise of commercial values, held by him to have developed over a number of centuries, as an explanation for the fall in the homicide rate is an example of processual thinking. However, he only uses these process concepts either selectively or in limited, time-specific contexts. For example, in citing Elias's theory of civilizing processes as an example of a 'cultural' theory, he is abstracting from Elias's total paradigm. That is to say, Elias does not separate cultural from economic or political phenomena; hence, it is as if Stone finds Elias's model, like Nisbet's modernization model, too embracing in its explanations.

This confusion regarding Stone's wavering between contingent-like explanations and processual ones is also revealed in *The Family, Sex and Marriage* (1977) where Stone tries to account for the rise of affective individualism (and by implication the restraint of aggressive impulses) by reference to fundamental personality changes that were held to have occurred during the late seventeenth century. These changes include the people's desire for 'individual autonomy' during the late seventeenth century; the 'recovery of psychological balance'; and, 'the dying away of the siege mentality of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, which saw everywhere a conspiracy of evil, planning the satanic capture of the world' (Stone, 1990, 176). However, it is not clear as to whether these alleged changes in people's psyches are conceived of by Stone as long-term and processual in nature or whether he thought of them as having taken place uniquely during a specific period of time. If the latter, they are contingent explanations. Whether this is so or not, it is certainly the case that Stone does not elucidate the causes of these changes in people's psyches.

My point is that, although Stone's particular arguments have considerable merit, they are not *sufficiently* processual, and hence tend to be limited in their scope to specific time periods. In other words, he has failed to locate his explanations within a systematic paradigm that could account for fluctuations of violence in any given time period. For example, in referring to the decline of feudalistic values in the nineteenth century, Stone is abstracting from history, failing to recognise the fact that, as Elias has argued, feudalization is itself a process which incorporates elements from previous non-feudal societies, and that some feudal values in turn become incorporated into post-feudal societies. Stone's limited processual thinking also creates other problems with regard to explaining both short-term and long-term trends in the homicide rate. For example, it is difficult to see how an explanation in terms of the rise and rise of commercial values would account for the growth in interpersonal violence in late twentieth century England. Stone's references to Elias are also highly selective, narrowly applying Elias's theory of civilizing processes to particular points in time, for example the late seventeenth century in England, rather than using it as a concept that refers to a long-term process that does not have a zero-starting point. Stone, also, does not seem to be aware of the concept of decivilizing processes in Elias's work and how it could be used to account for short-term fluctuations in violent behaviour. Stone, in other words, provides an account of changes in affective behaviour that, despite some recourse to process concepts (the rise of commercial

values would be one example) is nonetheless ultimately rooted in events that are perceived by Stone to be mostly random and unpredictable in nature.

An approach such as Stone's is not without very considerable merits, and yet it is still wanting. In particular Stone underestimates underlying temporal changes in society – what perhaps Elias would call structured processes. This is particularly apparent regarding Stone's account of cyclical movements in affective behaviour. Fluctuations may occur so that, for example, a period of permissiveness may be followed by a period of deference in which an increased tendency towards deferential relations may be a response to a prior period of permissiveness. And yet, I would argue the period of permissiveness in, say, the twentieth century, was not exactly the same as the period of permissiveness in the eighteenth century. Likewise, deferential relations in the mid-seventeenth century were not identical to those of the late medieval era: some sort of *progression* had taken place in people's behaviour. By comparison, within Elias's work there is a developmental aspect to people's habituses: habituses change for example, as a result of people being caught up in lengthening (and shortening) chains of interdependence and processes of pacification (and of militarisation). There is a direction here even though, as I have argued earlier, this is certainly not to impute either teleology or 'evolution', in Giddens's sense of the term, to Elias's concepts. For Stone, however, history is composed of a series of events that are not properly part of any pattern; the psyche may change in response to specific events, but again, there is no direction.

Contingency theorizing in the work of J.S. Cockburn

Another writer who possesses a strong attachment to contingency theorizing is J.S. Cockburn but he, in turn, is critical of what he calls Stone's 'monocausal explanations'. In referring to Stone's work on interpersonal violence for example, he argues that: 'Here, as elsewhere, an emphasis on overarching causal models tends to blur significant variations and, in doing so, to conceal the essentially piecemeal and untidy nature of social and cultural change' (Cockburn, 1991, 103). In effect, Cockburn is asserting the importance of contingency theorizing in explaining historical phenomena. The contingent nature of Cockburn's theorizing is made clear when he argues that his own research minimizes the significance of monocausal explanations and instead, emphasises (in referring to homicide) that 'a wide range of factors – jurisdictional and legal change, peace and war, dearth, technological advance and fashion – helped to shape the pattern of homicide' (Cockburn, 1991, 103). Cockburn is referring here to a number of contingent factors that would

explain the homicide rate in Britain's past: advancements in technology during the sixteenth century which made possible the development of rapiers, and hence, helped give rise to the phenomenon of duelling; changes in the law and in trial procedures which, at any given moment in time, have an impact on homicide rates (for example, legislation enacted during the eighteenth century with regard to vehicular homicide saw a dramatic fall in the homicide rate). Of course, some of these factors cited by Cockburn are processual in nature such as, for example, technology. But Cockburn is not putting forward a developmental explanation in which technology in any given time period accounts for fluctuations in the homicide rate. In some time periods the homicide rate rose as a result of technological factors (the period marked by duelling for example) and at yet other times in England's history, changes in law enforcement procedures have had a more profound effect on the homicide rate. In other words, changes in the homicide rate cannot be accounted for by distinctive underlying structures or processes, but rather, by unpredictable, random factors that are unlikely to be repeated in another time period.

There are a number of limitations to this type of theorizing. For example, it is difficult continually to cite factors of a random, contingent nature where it can be shown that a long-term trend exists. A long-term trend – such as the long-term fall in the homicide rate – surely implies the existence of some underlying structural factors (structured processes) to be at work. Secondly, like Stone, Cockburn abstracts from history in his explanations. For example, the fashion for duelling during the sixteenth century needs to be related to long-term changes in societal codes and to the slowly evolving relationship between the sixteenth and seventeenth century gentry and the Tudor and Stuart states in whose hands monopolization of the means of violence was to become more concentrated. According to Stone, the practice of duelling with rapiers, which reached the shores of England from Italy sometime in the 1560s, attained its acme in the second decade of the seventeenth century and thereafter declined until the Civil War. Its impact on the homicide rate for that period is, however, quite complex. Following Elias, as I shall detail in Chapter Three, the phenomenon of duelling can be seen as a remnant of eras when a feudal warrior ethos prevailed. Stone, for example, documents in *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* the manner in which feuds between families of the nobility, including their retainers and servants, had been a feature of life in early modern England but had begun to decline in the mid-sixteenth century. The Tudor and Stuart states, by assuming a greater concentration of the means of violence, were able to police more effectively the violent behaviour of the

fractious families of the nobility. Stone's main argument however, is that as a way of resolving disputes duels led to less violence and bloodshed than had occurred in the feuds between the families of the nobility which typically involved servants and retainers. Moreover, duelling did not lead to the cycle of revenge and vendetta killings that had characterized these feuds. However, Stone also goes on to argue that duelling *might* have contributed to a rise in the rate of homicides in the early seventeenth century (and possibly before) as the invention of the sharp-edged rapier *circa* the 1560s made it possible to kill an opponent more effectively than the heavier single-edged broadsword which it replaced. Whatever the case may be, according to Stone the Tudor and Stuart states, particularly the government presided over by King James, found the relatively high fatality rates associated with duelling to be increasingly unacceptable. King James in particular brought the full panoply of the state's judicial apparatus into force: the assize courts, the Earl Marshal's Court and the Privy Council – in a full-scale attempt to put a halt to the practice. Consequently, after 1620 the number of duels in England dramatically declined. What Stone's analysis suggests, then, is that technological change i.e., the replacement of the broadsword by the rapier, cannot alone provide an explanation for a rising rate of homicide in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. Long-term processes involving state monopolization of the means of violence and the decline of those feudal warrior values that had once given rise to armed battles within the aristocracy, and yet were to be enshrined in a more muted form in the codes of honour - which corresponded to the rise of the duel - of a sixteenth and seventeenth century gentleman, all must be taken into account in attempting to explain the variable homicide rate of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Similarly, changes in the law and in procedures for detecting crime need to be placed within a much broader and longer-term perspective than Cockburn's. As I will demonstrate in Chapter Three, much of the legislation that Cockburn refers to was a consequence of attempts to extend criminal liability to more and more forms of unacceptable behaviour. Accordingly, its occurrence can be seen as a direct result of long-term changes in people's sensibilities. Hence, Cockburn's contingent factors need to be placed in broader social contexts and examined within an overall framework that would enable researchers to explain the occurrence of violence at any stage of a society's development.

An Eliasian alternative to contingency theorizing

Although Cockburn is critical of Stone for adopting 'monocausal explanations,' he makes the same mistake as Stone in *implying* that the adoption of a model that seeks to establish long term processes, that seeks to

find explanations in developments over a long period of time and through an analysis of what Elias calls structured processes, must necessarily be monocausal. However, Elias's model or paradigm is an example of a model that neither relies on 'contingent'-like explanations nor 'monocausal' explanations in explaining historical phenomena. For example, Elias reconceptualizes the notion of causality by examining it in terms of interconnectedness or dynamic feedbacks: economic and cultural 'factors' do not exist independently of each other. Also, Elias's paradigm recognises the importance of contingent explanations in a *limited sense*, as referring to the idea that at any given point in time, many explanations or factors are likely to exist in a time-specific context that can account for, say, increased rates of aggression. The relative importance given by some authors (see, for example Dunning *et al*, 1988) to the mass media in partially accounting for a rise in hooligan activity in Britain during the 1960s and beyond, can be seen, in the limited sense of the term, as a contingent explanation. But once again, it has to be emphasised that any particular, specific explanation needs to be examined within a broader context of structured processes. We cannot isolate and abstract the development of the media from history or from underlying processes that were, and are, occurring.

To put this another way, my argument is that historians and social theorists have implicitly constructed something of a false dichotomy in explaining social change in history: randomness at one extreme and monocausal explanations – the existence of one single factor that can account for any phenomena – at the other extreme. This a false dichotomy because Elias's concept of structured processes recognises the unintended consequences of people's actions, the element of unpredictability, but not randomness, that occurs when individuals act interdependently.

Moreover, the prevalence of contingent-like explanations within the writings of historians can be accounted for by Elias's ideas regarding what is unique and unrepeatable. Earlier on I discussed, albeit briefly, Elias's distinctions between history, social development and evolution. According to Elias, history, or more specifically the writings of historians, has its origin in the belief that events are unique and unrepeatable. In other words, here is the origin of the idea that what takes place in history is contingent: contingent on unique individuals such as 'great leaders' who have changed the course of history, or events themselves, such as the invention of the steam engine. They are contingent in the sense that they cannot be repeated; individuals are unique. However, as Elias has argued, modalities like uniqueness and repeatability are only symptoms of structural peculiarities of the sequence of events to which these terms refer. In this

context Elias cites the example of Louis XIV. Considered purely as a person, Louis XIV was 'unique and unrepeatable' but the development of the social positions through which an individual passes from his childhood onwards, is not unique and unrepeatable in the same sense as that of the individual who passes through them. Hence, with regard to the position of Louis XIV, Elias concluded that: 'As the development of the royal position moves at a different rate from that of its successive occupants, as this position could survive the demise of one occupant and be transferred to another, it had, as compared to an individual, the character of a repeatable phenomenon, or at least one that was not unique in the same sense' (Elias, 1983, 20).

Having discussed the above historical methodologies, I shall now, in Chapter Three, examine another aspect of Elias's paradigm, the *implied* proposition that, in the context of English society, the further one goes back in time the more violent people were relative to their counterparts in the modern era. Specifically, I want to examine the evidence for this.

Chapter Three: Research Findings on Violence and Aggression in Pre-industrial England.

This chapter is mainly concerned with research findings. My intention is to present a portrait of pre-industrial England in terms of certain categories of violence: more particularly, 'interpersonal' acts of aggression and 'collective' forms of disorder such as those involved in and associated with popular recreations. As far as possible, I shall limit my analysis to an examination of these findings rather than, at this stage, attempting to construct thoroughgoing explanations for these incidents. The subsequent chapter will be concerned with the wider contexts in which these incidents occurred, and the then-prevailing attitudes and sensibilities of the people of those societies. However, there will be a certain overlap between the two chapters even though the emphasis of the present chapter is on mapping out actual incidents of violence. My objective is, in the main, to provide a qualitative portrait of pre-industrial English society, although one which mixes both qualitative and quantitative data, so that for example, two sorts of statements can be made. Statements regarding *levels* of violence (for example, relative to modern England); and statements regarding attitudes toward violence, or what Elias would phrase as thresholds of repugnance regarding violence and levels of sensibility towards and toleration of it.

As I have mentioned above, the main categories of violence that I wish to analyse are, loosely speaking, collective and interpersonal forms of the phenomenon, but, as I have mentioned in Chapter One, the separation of these categories is for practical rather than substantive purposes. The more important distinction to make at this stage (outlined in Chapter One) is that between affective and instrumental forms of violence which encompass both the collective and interpersonal categories. For example, some forms of interpersonal violence - as will be seen - are strongly affective in motivation whilst others, such as premeditated murder, reveal a high degree of instrumentality. However, one should not conceptualise affective and instrumental forms of violence in terms of a dichotomy but, rather, as parts of a continuum. Hence, using the categories collective and interpersonal violence, and by conceptualising them as parts of a continuum, we can conclude that violent acts are many and varied in nature, as the following table demonstrates.

TABLE ONE.

	<div> <div>MAINLY AFFECTIVE</div> <div>← VIOLENCE →</div> <div>MAINLY INSTRUMENTAL</div> </div>
COLLECTIVE VIOLENCE	<div> <div>Popular recreations including bloodsports; football hooliganism and street fighting; some forms of rioting eg, Poll Tax Riots 1372</div> <div>Inter-family feuding of the pre-eighteenth century aristocracy; wars; some forms of rioting eg, nineteenth century Chartist Riots; State forms of terrorism</div> </div>
INTERPERSONAL VIOLENCE	<div> <div>Homicide: murder, manslaughter and infanticide; war crimes: unsanctioned violence occurring during combat; assaults and gangland killings</div> <div>Highway robberies during sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; duelling in the same period; individual acts of terrorism</div> </div>

The above table is not meant to be exhaustive in its categories nor are the categories mutually exclusive. For example, acts of homicide may be either predominantly instrumental or predominantly affective in nature according to the circumstances in which they take place. For example, the calculated assassination of a person will reveal a higher degree of instrumentality than, say, so-called impulsive 'crimes of passion' whereby a person kills another person in an act of rage. Football hooliganism, on the other hand, contains motivations that can be said to be both highly affective and highly instrumental in nature (see for example, Dunning *et al*, 1988, 236).

The overall time-frame in question, as I have mentioned in Chapter One, is that of the pre-industrial era. Obviously, this refers to a broad and massive period of time and so I have delineated three specific sub-periods within this time-frame. The act of delineating historical processes is, of course, something of an arbitrary exercise - history does not conveniently divide itself into neat, compartmentalised epochs - but nonetheless, it will become clear that certain qualitative changes were occurring (according to my interpretation) during the eras that I have delineated. The first period to be delineated begins with the (late) Middle Ages, roughly from the fourteenth century to the early seventeenth; the second period stretches from the mid-seventeenth century to the mid-nineteenth century; and finally, the third period encompasses the

late nineteenth century to the early twentieth. These periods, to repeat, are not based on absolute criteria; rather each era possesses its own particular defining characteristics as will become evident later on in this chapter.

This type of research is open to criticism from those historians who concentrate on researching relatively small periods of time and who shy away from any generalised statements concerning the past. Given the numerous practical constraints in researching such a considerable expanse of time, how can such time periods be properly researched with the necessary amount of detail, and what precise level of detail is actually required before generalised statements about the past can be asserted? It is, I believe, a valid question. My immediate answer is as follows. As I have stated elsewhere, my intention is to create a portrait of pre-industrial society framed in terms of the violence and sensibilities of its people. But also, whenever possible, I have referred to the work of other historians (that is, their empirical research) as a complement, or contrast, to my own findings. Of course, historians are divided in terms of the methods they use to research the past as well as regarding the interpretation of past events. One such dispute concerns the level of aggression in the early modern period, two of the protagonists that I shall refer to being Lawrence Stone (1990) and Keith Wrightson (1982)¹. Again, when it is appropriate, I shall briefly describe the difference of opinion between them and compare their findings to my own. It should also be emphasised that a process-orientated methodology requires a consideration of what may appear to conventional social historians who specialise in the study of particular centuries, to be lengthy periods of time, precisely in order to enable actual processes of behavioural and social structural change to be discerned.

A further methodological point to be borne in mind at this stage is that I have eschewed the study of discourses in the Foucauldian sense of the term. As I discussed earlier, using actual primary data - assize records, coroners' rolls, contemporary accounts, etc., - seems preferable to a methodology that relies solely on discourse analysis. Such analyses can provide insights into the way in which people are subjected to the prevailing dominant ideas of a given society - to dominant discourses - and how, for example, the way in which certain subjects are objectified. But this gives us little insight into the actual *practices* that take place within societies, that is to say, into the way people actually behave towards each other and the way 'subjects'

¹ See also the dispute between Stone and Mcfarlane (Stone, 1983), and the disputes between Stone (*ibid.*), Sharpe (1985) and Cockburn (1991).

themselves react to events and dominant discourses. Consequently, I feel that our understanding of aggression in society can only be fruitfully approached by, whenever possible, an examination of the records of these practices, including day-to-day activities, and of how people were motivated to aggress.

As stated earlier, my sources are both qualitative and quantitative. With regard to the research on popular recreations, the emphasis is on contemporary accounts rather than statistical data. My main intention is to give an impression of the acceptability and levels of intensity of aggression that were involved in these activities. However, with regard to interpersonal acts of violence I have used a comparative historical method in which I have sought to compare different periods in the past by presenting and analysing statistics on assault, homicide, etc., drawn from assize records, coroners' rolls and police returns. These will be complemented by then-contemporary accounts of violent incidents.

1. An Overview of Violence in England: The Late Medieval Era to the Early Seventeenth Century.

First of all, let me begin with an overview of the violence contained within popular recreations. But why study popular recreations in this connection? Popular recreations provide an arena where humankind, *Homo Ludens*, is at its most impulsive and unrestrained in behaviour - relatively untrammelled by day-to-day social conventions. This does not mean to say that popular recreations are without their own rules – just as crowd behaviour can be characterized by collective, self-imposed rules (see for example, Marsh, Rosser and Harre, 1978) – popular recreations were during this period characterized by rules that were largely self-imposed. However, although self-imposed rules can circumscribe behaviour, as Elias and Dunning have shown (Elias and Dunning, 1986) popular recreations allow aggressive impulses to be expressed without the rules that normally circumscribe behaviour in everyday life. They allow, in the words of Elias and Dunning, a ‘controlled de-controlling of emotions’ (Elias and Dunning, 1986, 44) and hence, in this sense, are illustrative of the idea of affective or expressive violence *par excellence*. There is also a second reason for studying popular recreations. They can be used as an index of the collective sensibilities of a given people. For, although the behaviour exhibited in such activities is not typical of people’s ‘normal’, everyday behaviour within mainstream society, such activities can provide an index of how a given people’s toleration of aggression in a relatively controlled setting changes. Popular recreations have been, in the past,

and continue to be, legislated against or reformed whenever standards of behaviour regarding expressions of aggression are judged to be unacceptable by the majority of the people of those societies. For example, as I will demonstrate shortly, much of the violence witnessed in popular recreations centuries ago would not be tolerated today.

The term popular recreations can encompass many disparate activities and I have sought a non-essentialist, fluid typology in describing and categorising these activities. There are at least three categories. Firstly, there were those pastimes that belonged to a distinct military tradition, most prominently: horse riding, hunting, archery, fencing, and pastimes that represented militaristic fighting qualities such as wrestling contests and the antecedents of boxing. Arguably, these recreations were at their peak of popularity in the early and mid-periods of the Middle Ages when the feudalist structure was at its acme. A second category is that of blood sports, including cock-fighting, bear and bull baiting, throwing at cocks, hunting - hares, wild boars, deer - and human 'blood sports': pugilism and cudgelling. Thirdly, there were those recreations that can be labelled folk games, that is to say, activities where a game involving teams of contestants was played with rules no matter how loosely defined. The principal folk game in this respect - dating from the medieval era - is that of folk football with its many local and regional variants: 'camp ball', 'hurling' (in Cornwall), and 'knappan' (Wales). Such games, in which the ball could be carried, thrown, kicked or hit with a stick, involved elements of what later came to be called football rugby, polo and hockey. Other games at this time were 'stool-ball' (believed to have been an early form of cricket), tennis, rounders, bowls and quoits. We can also add to this list the assorted 'revelries' enacted on festival days such as wakes and fairs (annual holidays held in honour of the patron saint of the parish, known as rushbearing processions in Lancashire and Yorkshire and 'revels' in the west of England).

One way in which we can gauge the extent to which violent activities were acceptable within mainstream society on a day-to-day basis is by examining blood sports. These activities can indicate to us the prevailing attitudes to animal cruelty or what Elias terms 'thresholds of repugnance' with regard to what are nowadays seen as cruel and violent acts. Although there is no logical connection between cruelty towards animals and the violence that takes place between human beings in any given society, an examination of changing attitudes towards blood sports can provide a rough but useful indicator of change in a given people's sensibilities. For example, according to Strutt writing in the early nineteenth century,

some two hundred years later than the period he was referring to, during the early modern era bear-baiting and bull-baiting were considered as 'proper pastimes for the amusement of ladies of the highest rank' (Strutt, 1876, 35). Other evidence supports this. During the seventeenth century when James I hunted the stag he would personally cut its throat and daub the faces of his courtiers with blood, which they were not permitted to wash off. It remained customary 'for ladies and women of quality after the hunting of a deer to stand by until they are ripped up, that they might wash their hands in the blood, supposing it will make them white' (Calendar of State Papers, 1617-19, 260). Similar evidence – again demonstrating the extent to which cruelty to animals was highly acceptable amongst the rulers of early modern England – is revealed by Elizabeth I's visit to Kenilworth in 1575. First she hunted the hart until it was killed by hounds after the hart had taken to water. A contemporary, Robert Laneham, wrote that this was a 'pastime delectable in so high a degree as for any person to take pleasure by most senses at once in mine opinion there can be none any way comparable to this' (Furnivall, 1871, 13-14). A few days later, according to this account, a collection of mastiffs was let loose onto a group of thirteen bears. According to Laneham, it was 'a sport very pleasant to see the bear ...shake his ears twice or thrice with the blood; and the slaver about his physiognomy was a matter of a goodly relief' (ibid.). Later on in her reign, when Elizabeth I was older and less energetic, she had to content herself with shooting captive animals. Above all, what the above examples illustrate, is not only an emotional indifference amongst people of a high rank to animal suffering, but an enjoyment of cruelty that was openly and publicly acknowledged; such people were inured to the taking of animal life. Furthermore, such attitudes and sensibilities were also typical of the lower classes during both the medieval and early modern periods in England. For example, cock-fighting had been popular since the twelfth century. The cock's wings were clipped, its wattle and comb shorn off and its feet equipped with artificial spurs. Many incidents also suggest that people not only enjoyed the excitement of seeing animals suffer for sport but were indifferent to animal suffering *per se*. For example, in one incident, a contemporary of the early modern era, Sir Thomas Wroth, writing in 1585, counted 2,100 horses travelling between Shoreditch and Enfield (which are both now parts of metropolitan London); another observer then added that within the next seven years 2,000 of them would be dead in some ditch through overwork (Thomas, 1984, 101).

This does not mean that similar occurrences cannot be found today in early twenty-first century England, but suffering and indifference are no longer accepted by people in quite the same manner as that of the late medieval or early modern periods. Blood sports are, at the very least, no longer considered as part of the sporting mainstream.²

Attitudes to animal cruelty, then, give us an insight into how the sensibilities of people change over an given period of time, but we only have to look at the game of "folk football" in order to realise how intrinsically violent and disorderly recreations could be and how impulsive behaviour was very much to the fore. Such games, based on local rules, could involve hundreds of people and were often an excuse to settle old scores. This fragment, from C. H. Cooper's *Annals of Cambridge* (1843), gives us an indication, for we are told that in the year 1579:

a group of Cambridge students went, as was customary, to the village of Chesterton to play 'at foteball'. They went there, so we are told, peacefully and without any weapons, but the townsmen of Chesterton had secretly hidden a number of sticks in the porch of their church. After the match had started, they picked quarrels with the students, brought out their sticks, broke them over the heads of the students and gave them such a severe beating that they had to run through the river in order to escape (quoted in Elias and Dunning, 1986, 182).

Furthermore, such games when played, accounted for more injuries than we are accustomed to today, in early twenty-first century England. This is how one contemporary, Richard Carew, described the Cornish game of "hurling": across country..... 'When the hurling is over, you shall see them retyring home, as from a pitched battaile, with bloody pates, bones broken, and out of joynt, and such bruises as serve to shorten their daies' (quoted in Elias and Dunning, 1986, 187, from Carew's *A Survey of Cornwall*, 1602, 73-75).

The violence displayed within folk football during this period is described in detail by Stubbes in his *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583). What he writes is worth quoting in full. He observed:

as concerning football playing, I prote[s]t unto you it may rather be called a freendly kinde of fight, then a play or recreation; A bloody and murthering practi[s]e, then a felowly [s]porte or pa[s]time. For dooth not euery one lye in waight for his Adver[s]arie, [s]eeking to ouerthrowe him to picke him on his no[s]e, though it be uppon hard [s]tones? in ditch or dale, in valley or hil, or what place foeuer it be, hee careth not, fo he haue him down.....[s]o that by this meanes, [s]ometimes their necks are broken, [s]ometimes their backs, [s]ometimes their legs, [s]ometimes their armes; [s]ometimes one part thur[s]t out of ioynt, [s]ometimes an other; [s]ometimes the no[s]es gu[s]h out with blood, [s]ometime their eyes [s]tartout; and [s]ometimes hurt in one place, [s]ometimes in another. But whofoeuer [s]capeth away the be[s]t goeth not scotfree but is either fore wounded, craifed, and bru[s]eed, fo as he dyeth of it, or els [s]capeth very hardly and no meruaile, for they have the fleights to meet one betwixt two, to da[s]he him again[s]t the hart with their elbowes, to hit him vnder the [s]hort ribbes with their griped fi[s]ts and with

² Thomas in fact documents acts of cruelty to animals extensively in the period prior to 1740. After 1740, it would appear that people had become less brutal in their treatment of animals.

their knees to catch him vpon the hip, and to pick him on his neck, with a hundred [s]uch murdering deuices: and hereof groweth enuie, malice, rancour, cholor, hatred, di[s]plea[s]ure, enmitie, and what not els: and [s]ometimes fighting, brawling, contention, quarrel picking, murther, homicide, and great effu[s]ion of blood, as experience dayly teacheth (Furnivall, 1877-82, 184).

Of course, due allowance needs to be made for the hyperbole that surely characterizes Stubbes's account; he was after all a Puritan. Nonetheless, Stubbes's observations indicate that football was more aggressively played, and in certain respects more violent, compared to, say, football in late twentieth century England.

Moreover, incidents involving public displays of cruelty to animals could involve large numbers of spectators and could be life-threatening, as this account from the sixteenth century concerning a bear-baiting contest in south London makes clear. There was, the commentator [Harrison] says, “‘a judgement” at Paris Gardens [Southwark, London] about 1000 persons were assembled on the Lord’s day, 13th January [1583], and the place full, so that “not a stick was left so high as the Bear was fastened to”: a figure of speech probably, but some five men and two women were killed’ (Furnivall, 1878, iv, appendix 1). It must also be added that legislation enacted against both cruel sports and rough recreations did exist from at least the fourteenth century (see Chapter Four) – but such legislation, as I will demonstrate in Chapter Four, was *ad hoc* and inconsistent compared to, say, the nineteenth century.

The above snapshots also indicate a society where, on significant festival days, recreations provided not just an outlet for aggressive impulses, but also for acts of aggression that would not be tolerated in later eras. For example, recreational festivals were not the peaceful events that one might expect today. As a then-contemporary commentator on the early Tudor period observed concerning Shrove Tuesday: he states that, ‘youths arm’d with cudgels, stones, hammers, rules, trawels and hand saws put playhouses to the sack and bawdy-houses to the spoil’. They would then fill their pockets full of stones and pelt the constable and his men once they had arrived on the scene (Taylor, 1630, 115).

What we may term ‘collective violence’ can also include what we would call today, ‘street or gang fights’ or simply ‘delinquency’. There is in fact a rich history in England with regard to street gangs during the period under discussion. Contemporaries in Elizabeth I’s reign for example, referred in the streets of London, to the ‘damn’d crew’ and groups of quarrelling, rioting males such as the Roaring Boys, the Bravadoes and the Roysters. In 1623 two fraternities - the Bugles and the Tityes, came to public notice when they were investigated by the government for political reasons (Jones, 1942, 58). There is little doubt that this whole period was characterised by violent, roaming gangs – what people of the time referred to as

'trailbastions'. For example, a commission was set up by King Edward 1 on November 23 1304, known as the Trailbastion Inquiry, to enquire into disturbances regarding 'malefactors and disturbers' in Nottingham, Lincoln and Derby. The report stated that 'many malefactors and disturbers of our peace commit homicides, depredations [*sic*], arsons and very many other injuries by night and by day and wander and roam in woods, parks and divers other places, as well within liberties, as without, in the counties of Lincoln, Nottingham and Derby' (Parliamentary Writs, 1, 407 or Douglas, 1958, vol. III, 519). The report also states that the 'trailbastions' were well received by people 'who are in league with them' and the report also implies that the trailbastions were hired by people who had been put on trial, so as to frighten and threaten jurors. That they would appear to be people who roamed the countryside is also suggested by another inquiry (Trailbastion proceedings at Derby, 4 July 1306) which frequently uses the word 'trespass' in describing their activities.

Street gangs and street fighting do not constitute the only forms of violence involving gangs or groups of people in this period. For example, the period that stretches from roughly the thirteenth to at least the early seventeenth century was characterized by feuds between families of the nobility; feuds moreover, that can be seen to be characterized by instrumental motivations for, as Stone in *The Crisis of the Aristocracy 1558-1641* argues: 'The issues men fought over were prestige and property, in that order' (Stone, 1965, 223).³ And yet Stone argues, in an analysis of the feuding that was held to have taken place over the period 1580 to 1620, that there was much about the aristocracy's behaviour which was highly impulsive. As he summarizes it: 'The behaviour of the propertied classes, like that of the poor, was characterized by the ferocity, childishness, and lack of self-control of the Homeric age' (*ibid.*). It would appear that assailants enjoyed the thrill to be had from seeing their victims suffer and they also appeared to go about their violent activities in a passionate manner. In terms of the Weberian typology discussed in Chapter One, the ends were instrumental but the means predominantly expressive or affective in nature. For example, drawing on primary sources Stone cites an incident in 1578 in which Edward Windham was attacked in broad daylight

³ More specifically: 'What might ostensibly appear as a quarrel over a piece of land or an office, in fact was at bottom a struggle for position and authority within the county society. The gentry squabbled over church-seating, striving for the best pew in the parish, the squirearchy fought for election as knights of the shire and for appointments on local commissions; the nobility strove to maintain or acquire pre-eminence in the distribution of county patronage; the Court aristocracy fought for the ear and attention of the monarch' (*ibid.*).

in Fleet Street by twenty-five retainers of the 2nd Lord Rich: [they were] ‘urged on by their master with bloodthirsty cries of “Drawe villens, drawe”, “Cutt off his legges”, and “Kyll him”, an assault that Windham met by firing a pistol at his Lordship and then fleeing into the French ambassador’s house’ (Stone, 1965, 226). Stone’s analysis is also suggestive of how the balance between predominantly instrumental and predominantly affective forms of violence can change over a relatively short period of time. For example, Stone argues that the ‘calculated ferocity’ which had distinguished the behaviour of the nobility of the late sixteenth century was by 1620 becoming rare. He argues that when brutality occurred it was more often the result of a situation getting out of hand than of a carefully planned onslaught. Stone’s argument, as we have seen in Chapter Two, is that greater concentration of the means of violence in the hands of the Tudor and Stuart states contributed to the taming of the violent behaviour of the nobility in which, he implies, external controls i.e., pressure by their peers to conform, became more prevalent at a time when the Tudor and Stuart states’ retainers were able to police more effectively their violent behaviour. The balance towards self-controls however, had not advanced to a point which we take for granted today.

Interpersonal acts of violence: an overview

Acts of aggression by individuals on other individuals constitute what many writers refer to as interpersonal violence (see for example, Stone, 1983 and Cockburn, 1991) and usually involve assaults that result in either injury or death. Accordingly, many historians have attempted to measure the scale of interpersonal violence in past societies by compiling statistics on rates of homicide (usually measured by the number of deaths per 100 000 or 10 000 population). But to what extent is homicide itself reliable as an indicator of the overall level of violent behaviour in any particular society, and to what extent are recorded homicide statistics reliable as a measure of the actual occurrence of homicide? Historians are somewhat divided on both issues; for example Stone argues that ‘the best recorded *crime* of violence is homicide’ [my italics] and that ‘homicide in the nature of things represents the most extreme example of violent assault in general’ (Stone, 1983, 22-23). On the other hand Cockburn argues that: ‘It is in fact not at all clear that homicide rates are a reliable measure of the overall level of violent behaviour in a particular society’ (Cockburn, 1991, 105). However, what is not clear in Cockburn’s statement is whether he is referring to homicide *statistics* or the *actual* occurrence of homicide. Whatever the case may be, it is plausible to suggest, as I have argued in Chapter One, that an examination of a number of forms of violence – homicide, assault, the

violence associated with popular recreations, etc - is the most reliable way of correlating change in people's sensibilities over a given period of time. It is therefore reasonable to suggest that homicide is but one indicator, albeit an important one, of overall levels of violent behaviour in any given society. For example, an examination of the behaviour associated with football hooliganism and its incidence may provide us equally with an understanding of both the nature of violent behaviour and the extent of its prevalence in a particular society, but the repeated occurrence of acts of football hooliganism is unlikely to reveal itself in the form of a high rate of homicide. Moreover, a knowledge of the occurrence of homicide cannot tell us anything about the occurrence of lawful acts of violence (a knowledge of which may be of use to the researcher of violence) that take place in any given society.

If, then, a knowledge of the occurrence of homicide cannot provide us with a wholly reliable indicator of overall levels of violent behaviour in a particular society, it nonetheless enables us to quantify the amount of what historians call *interpersonal* violence. Of course, as we have seen, interpersonal forms of violence, whether measured by incidents of assault or incidents of homicide, can consist of both predominantly affective and predominantly instrumental types of violent behaviour. Furthermore, not all acts of homicide are of an interpersonal nature; some may be collective: an example would be the feuds that took place in the medieval and early modern eras involving the nobility and their servants and retainers⁴. However, as I shall make clear later on regarding the time periods that I have selected for research on homicide rates, the majority of homicides that took place in pre-modern societies appeared to be predominantly affective, casual and impulsive in nature. Given this, to what extent can the actual occurrence of homicide be reliably measured? I shall begin by giving an outline of what I take to be the most serious methodological criticisms concerning the reliability of homicide statistics before giving my own evaluation of these criticisms.

An evaluation of homicide statistics

Homicide is defined as the killing of another human being by a human being. However, there is no crime called homicide. For example it is homicide where one person kills another in lawful self-defence but this is

⁴ For example, following the murder of Nicholas Radford (a knight of the shire for Devon) in 1455, the Earl of Devon, whose son had murdered Radford, probably for his wealth, marched on Exeter and then besieged Powderham Castle held by Philip Courtenay who, one supposes, had been a friend of Radford. The battle involved one thousand attackers and lasted from 8 in the morning until 4 o' clock in the afternoon. Apparently, contemporaries were shocked by a similar attack on a manor house at Gresham in 1448 (The Mayor's Court Roll of the City of Exeter, 34 Henry VI; Douglas, 1953, Vol. IV, 1232).

not a crime. According to Hogan *et al.*: ‘What the law does is single out certain homicides which are considered to be unlawful or unjustifiable or inexcusable and make crimes of these’ (Hogan *et al.*, 1996, 341). Unlawful (felonious) homicide⁵ in present-day Britain consists of four categories: murder, manslaughter, infanticide and motor vehicular homicide (although in certain circumstances vehicular homicide may be classed as manslaughter). Homicide statistics in fact are created through a process that begins with an initial reporting of a crime or simply the discovery of a dead body. This is usually followed by a police inquiry involving a coroner’s inquest (if it was felt that a death was not due to natural causes or that the death occurred in suspicious circumstances) and possibly the arrest of a known suspect. The suspect is either committed to trial or released; if committed to trial the suspect is either found guilty or not guilty.

Accordingly, homicide statistics can measure the number of known offenders following prosecution – what are known as conviction rates – the number of accusations (which may or may not result in convictions) or the number of indictments, that is to say, the number of indictable offences that arise from coroners’ inquests. The difficulty, however, of research approaches which are based on comparing over different time periods either conviction rates or the number of accusations, is that they do not necessarily correspond to the *actual* rate of killings. For example, during the seventeenth century many incidents following a death were recorded in assize hearings as witchcraft, many of which, but not all, resulted in prosecutions. However, it seems *prima facie* unlikely from our perspective today, that we would acknowledge witchcraft as a cause of death. Such deaths should be attributed to natural causes or to an undiscovered criminal act. Hence, homicide statistics based either on accusations or the rate of prosecutions involving death due to witchcraft would overestimate the actual level of homicides in the society of that time. Moreover, the correlation between convictions and actual killings at any time is likely to be weak. This was particularly so during the medieval era. For example, Green (1972) argues that the great majority of defendants who stood trial were acquitted; witnesses were often afraid to appear for fear that they might invoke suspicion or because they could be fined for having failed to raise ‘the hue’. Few defendants pleaded guilty, as unlike today, murder was punishable by death. If Green’s analysis is correct, then there is every

⁵ More exactly, felonious homicide is defined as: death caused by an act done with the intention of causing death or bodily harm (or known to be likely to cause death or bodily harm); death caused by an omission amounting to culpable negligence, to discharge a duty tending to the preservation of life, whether accompanied by an intention to cause death or bodily harm or not; and death caused accidentally by an unlawful act.

reason for doubting the reliability of conviction rates as a measurement of the actual or 'real' rate of homicide during the medieval era. Once again, historians are divided on this issue for Cockburn argues that homicide statistics based on the number of individual attacks that result in deaths (in other words where a coroner has shown that a death has occurred as a consequence of a criminal offence) are to be preferred to statistics based on the number of accessions or convictions as the former are 'consistent with the generally accepted principle that the reliability of criminal statistics increases the closer one gets to the actual offence' (Cockburn, 1991, 76). Sharpe, on the other hand, asserts that accusations and conviction rates are to be preferred because coroners' inquests are unreliable. For example, he argues that the appropriate descriptions for particular fatalities are based on coroners' pre-conceptions (Sharpe, 1985, 210). Sharpe also cites evidence from the sixteenth century suggesting that suspicious deaths were not always reported to the coroner as invariably as has been supposed.

There are at least three other concerns of historians regarding the reliability of homicide statistics as a measurement of the actual occurrence of homicide. Firstly, legislative changes concerning certain forms of homicide, say, infanticide, have occurred over the periods that I have selected for discussion and have affected the recorded rate of homicide for those time periods. For example, legislation in 1874 concerning the registration of births made it easier for authorities to discover incidents of infanticide. Moreover, comparing homicide statistics over a long period of time measured by centuries may be misleading in that homicide statistics today include a number of manslaughter offences that either could not have existed two hundred years ago or were, at that time, so rare as to have had a negligible impact on the rate of homicide. For example, non-motorized vehicles existed two hundred years ago, but the number of deaths corresponding to vehicular offences would have been much smaller than today for the simple reason that the vehicles used in pre-industrial England were not as dangerous as their modern, motorised versions.

Secondly, attitudes towards criminal liability and culpability, essentially the criteria by which acts of homicide are judged by both the public and jurors, have changed over the course of time making it difficult for the researcher of homicide statistics to compare one time period with another. For example, attitudes towards culpability and criminal liability in the early modern period regarding homicide were different from those of today. An example, drawn from a Kent assize record of 1654 indicates this. It states that:

On March 18, 1654, in a field at Great Chart, William Ruffe and his master [Thomas Toke] were ploughing with a plough drawn by 4 oxen and a grey mare. Against the will and counsel of his master, Ruffe frequently pricked the mare with his goad, causing her to kick and hurt the two oxen nearest to her. Toke thereupon asked Ruffe to give him the goad, and when refused to do so attempted to take it from him by force. In the course of the ensuing struggle, the “spudd end” of the goad accidentally struck Ruffe on the back of the head, inflicting a wound from which he died on 22 Mar. (Cockburn, 1989, 184, Assi 1018).

This was recorded as ‘death by misadventure’ (and hence was not considered as a homicide offence) but, given that attitudes regarding the use of physical force have changed since this time, such an act today would in all probability be tried as an act of manslaughter even when the intent is not to deliberately kill another person. That is to say, it is today less acceptable to use force to either punish someone or to solve a dispute. Changing attitudes towards liability and criminality, therefore, make it difficult to make comparisons between homicide statistics over different time periods.

Another criticism of using homicide statistics as part of a comparative historical methodology is that population figures up and till the early modern period (and possibly later) are difficult to estimate with a high degree of accuracy, so much so that Cockburn argues that we should disregard altogether homicide rates for the medieval period (Cockburn, 1991, 72).

How convincing are these criticisms? Concerning the first criticism, that coroners’ inquests up and till at least the early modern period cannot be relied upon because coroners acted arbitrarily and inefficiently, is insightful but speculative. There is little doubt that coroners *have* arrived at their decisions in an arbitrary manner and continue to do so: witness the present-day controversy surrounding the ‘Shipman case’ of 2002 in which a number of authorities, including coroners, failed to identify the suspicious circumstances in which his victims’ deaths had occurred. However, it needs to be demonstrated just to what *extent* coroners acted in an arbitrary and inefficient manner: the majority of them or only some? Would the effect on the homicide rate have been marginal or significant? To answer these questions we simply need more empirical research. Regarding the criticism concerning legislative changes, two points can be made. First, it becomes relatively straightforward for the researcher to compare one time period with another as long as he or she makes allowances for the fact that legislative changes concerning homicide offences have taken place. For example, a researcher may choose to exclude infanticide from his or her data on the basis that significant changes in the law have taken place at various times in the past making it difficult for the researcher to quantify the actual amount of infanticides that take place over a given period of time. Secondly, even though

legislative changes have occurred such changes may only make apparent in a formal sense what was already taking place in terms of a community's everyday judgements. For example, according to Green a *de facto* distinction concerning murder and manslaughter was evident during the Middle Ages in England even though a judicial distinction only occurred in the seventeenth century. During the medieval period serious offences such as highway robbery and assault were punishable by death (if fatalities occurred), whereas other crimes of homicide were dealt with more leniently reflecting, according to Green, the moral standards of the community. In other words, if Green's analysis is correct, changes in legislation regarding homicide do not seem to have had a profound impact on the construction of homicide statistics over the duration of these time frames.

The criticism concerning population statistics is not as critical as Cockburn implies. It is certainly the case that estimating the population of a town or a village in eras when the modern census did not exist is difficult to do with a high degree of accuracy. However, I agree with Stone's assessment that the change in the rate of recorded homicides over the time period 1300-1980 is sufficiently large to override all but the most extreme cases of uncertainty about the size of the population at risk (Stone, 1983, 25). As I shall demonstrate later, Leicester in the thirteenth century is estimated as having a population of between 2000 and 5000. This degree of uncertainty however is, given the large amount in absolute terms of recorded homicides for that period of time, adequate for the purpose of comparing the rate of homicide in thirteenth century Leicester with that of other towns and cities in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries.

The criticism concerning the manner in which the culpability for crimes has changed and continues to changes does make it difficult to compare in a reliable manner homicide data in one time period with another. However, a knowledge and understanding of the way in which the culpability for violent crimes undergoes change is as useful to the researcher of violence as the recorded statistics that refer to such violent crimes. Legal records involving homicide increasingly reflect over considerable expanses of time an extension of criminal liability so that more and more categories of killing come to be classed as homicide; more and more people come to be considered as culpable for crimes of homicide. For example, Cockburn argues that from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century in England, apprentices, who were often very young, were 'exposed to the full resentment of their unwilling employers' (Cockburn, 1991, 97); violence was passed off as 'moderate' correction and some deaths, usually as a result of starvation, were attributed to

natural causes. He goes on to cite an assizes court case in 1684 (PRO Assi 35/125/3 and Cockburn, 1991, 98), one of the last of its kind, whereby a labourer in Kent kicked and punched one of his apprentices to death and cut off the ear of a second. The labourer was acquitted on both counts. Nonetheless, it is doubtful that such a killing, if it occurred today, would be regarded as acceptable or justifiable to the majority of the population simply because violence is no longer seen as acceptable when used as a 'moderate' form of correction. Hence, if Cockburn's analysis is correct, it would suggest that in a climate where violence against apprentices and servants was tolerated to a far higher degree than it is today, the authorities would have been less likely to have been notified of such acts, and that, even when reported, offenders were more likely to have been acquitted.

Cockburn goes on to argue that by the 1870s (in England) criminal liability had been extended to employers as standards of conduct changed within the population as a whole. The point to be stressed here is that criminal liability has gradually been extended to more and more forms of behaviour over a number of centuries and that this is indicative of how attitudes have changed in our society. Perhaps the most recent example of an extension of liability within English law occurred in November 1994 (Hogan *et al*, 1996) when the first conviction of a company for manslaughter was made. The directors of an adventure holiday company were convicted for manslaughter when four young persons were drowned while taking part in an adventure holiday. The directors were held to have been 'grossly negligent' in allowing the persons to have sailed in dangerous seas. Another way of interpreting this would be to suggest that the criteria for establishing *mens rea*, or what is referred to as malice aforethought in the prosecution of homicides – is constantly changing. That is to say, what the above analysis suggests is that the criterion for establishing *mens rea* is not an absolute that has remained unchanged throughout history. The basis for establishing guilt for any given offence depends upon the prevailing attitudes at a given time and the circumstances in which a person is judged to be culpable. For example, in 1778 in Boughton, Kent, a killing took place in which a Boughton man shot and killed an eighteen-year old boy who was stealing apples from the Boughton man's orchard; he claimed not to have known that the gun was loaded and was duly acquitted (Cockburn, 1991, 87, ASSI 35/54/6/10). If the use of lethal violence is believed to be acceptable by jurors and the public in general in circumstances where a person's property is encroached upon, it becomes more difficult than otherwise to prove guilt – *mens rea* – when a killing occurs in such circumstances.

I shall return to more context-specific methodological criticisms of homicide statistics later, but let me for now concentrate on coroners' rolls for thirteenth century Leicester.

Coroners rolls, where available, can provide a more reliable record of homicide offences than records that solely focus on either conviction or prosecution rates. This is because coroners' rolls provide the researcher with some details of the circumstances in which death occurred (although as stated earlier, witnesses for various reasons were often reluctant to come forward). They also record some tangible evidence of a (potential) crime having taken place: the dead body itself. By focusing on a small number of selected areas, therefore, it is possible to create a portrait of interpersonal violence and aggression in medieval and early modern England. This will involve examining coroners' rolls in the borough of Leicester. The Coroners' Rolls and descriptions of violence in medieval Leicester are taken from 'Records of the Borough of Leicester - Being a series of Extracts from the Archives of the Corporation of Leicester', (ed.) Mary Bateson. They cover three volumes: 1103-1327 (1899); 1327-1509 (1901); 1509-1603 (1905). They were continued by C. H. Stocks, 1603-1688 (1923). A variety of other sources will also be used, including the research of other writers, but most of the evidence presented will be based on my own primary research. In the main, I have sought to focus on a particular region, mainly Leicester during the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries. Later on, however, I will make direct comparisons with Kent during the seventeenth century and with a number of counties or boroughs in the mid-nineteenth century. No special significance should be given to the choice of particular regions, and although it is unlikely that any given region, borough or town can be said to be representative of England in terms of its social, economic and demographic characteristics, nonetheless, given appropriate assumptions, the study of a region or town can provide a snapshot of wider changes that may have been occurring in England as a whole.

During the early fourteenth century, Leicester was for the period a medium-sized town of between approximately 2000 to 5000 inhabitants (Falkus and Gillingham, 1981). Coroners' rolls cannot give a comprehensive, systematic record of all deaths involving homicide in the area; some deaths were probably not recorded as homicide where a motive could not be discovered or where the circumstances could not be gleaned due to a lack of witnesses. These difficulties are compounded by the very fact that people generally during this era tended to be armed, allowing the possibility that some deaths classed as 'death by

misadventure' (death as a result of an accident in other words) could potentially be misconstrued as acts of manslaughter or murder. To illustrate this point I shall refer to a court record from 25 May 1267 (*Calendar Inquisitions Miscellaneous* 1, No 2133 or Douglas, vol. III, 1975, 827) concerning an incident that took place in Sussex. The incident illustrates how the carrying of arms in medieval England (which in itself is an indirect indicator of the level of violence at the time) could easily result in accidental death, and yet potentially be misconstrued as an act of homicide. The court record stated that William de Stangate came down a road called Burleyesdam (in Sussex) to meet Desiderata, a friend and his child's godmother. De Stangate was carrying a cross-bow and a poisoned arrow on his left shoulder. Desiderata asked him in jest:

whether he were one of the men who was going about the country with cross-bows, bows and other weapons, to apprehend robbers and evil-doers by the King's order; adding that she could overcome and take two or three like him. And putting out her arm she caught him by the neck and crooking her leg behind his without his [*sic*] noticing it, she upset him and fell on him. And in falling she struck herself in the side with the arrow which he had under his belt, piercing to her heart, and she died on the spot.

The verdict was death by misadventure but, nonetheless, could in certain circumstances (if for example, it was known that de Stangate had a violent past) easily have been construed as a threatening and deliberate act, and hence, recorded as an act of homicide.

Coroners' rolls for the medieval and early modern periods in England are also unreliable to the extent that, according to Stone, the 'rules of vendetta' operated among the nobility in which feuds involving injury or death were settled by 'blood-money' payments rather than the law; that is to say, rather than having a dispute dealt with by the courts, a member of the assailant's family paid the victim's family members a sum of money. How unreliable this makes the homicide figures for thirteenth century England is not clear (for further detail on this see Stone, 1965, 228-229).

What the Coroners' Rolls of Leicester do show, however, is that quantitatively, in the years 1297 to 1317, 29 deaths resulted from assault, approximately 1.5 deaths a year or (given the uncertainty about the population size) between 3 and 6.5 killings per 10,000 population (the statistical convention is to record homicides per 10,000 or 100,000 of a given population). Quantitatively, as will be shown, this is a figure per capita that is substantially higher than the two subsequent periods treated in this thesis, and higher than that of early twenty-first century England. More revealingly, perhaps, the descriptions of these incidents suggest a fairly high degree of casualness and impulsiveness in the killings. For example, many of these deaths were the result of quarrels in which weapons, of any description, would be resorted to after a verbal

exchange of insults. The impulsive nature of these killings is also indicated by the fact that quarrels often took place in public, usually on the high street. In an incident on May 13 1323 the report describes how William le Palmer was quarrelling in a high street with Henry of Thurmaston. It states that: 'The disputers went quarrelling to the lane which leads to the castle. Opposite the house of Will. le Palmer, clerk, Will of Appelby of Leicester struck Henry of Thurmaston, baker of Leicester, with his fist so that he fell against W. le Palmer's wall. He was about to kill H., when H. defending himself wounded W.; W. reached his house and died. H. fled' (Bateson, 1899, 380).

None of these reports detail the circumstances in which the quarrels took place but nonetheless, the reports in their descriptions suggest that acts of aggression were spontaneous. For example, on June 27 1327 it is described how in the evening twilight a dispute arose between William Hauberk of Scalford and William the son of John the Black of Leicester, in the home of John. The report states that: 'They fought together even to the King's highway, and there each of them abused the other with malicious words, so that the said Will. the black struck the said Will. Hauberk with a certain knife near the left breast even to the heart; of which wound he immediately died' (Bateson, 1901, 2). Some incidents also suggest that relations were 'cool and even unfriendly.' Again the evidence, as described in the records, can only be indicative but consider the following examples. On May 2 1323 Thomas of Pirley and John Dodeman, his groom (one presumes that Thomas was a knight), having left a tavern in the town of Leicester, met at 'Belgravegate' a stranger by the name of Ralph Cockinbred. The report states that:

the said John thereupon asked why he [Ralph Cockinbred] looked at them with such an evil eye, and if he wished no ill to them that he should come at once: the said Ralph said that he wished no ill to them and asked that he might go to his house in peace, in the presence of his neighbours: he (John) did not stop for this, and immediately assaulted the said Ralph with a knife drawn: Nic Patrick, seeing the said Ralph to be in peril of his life, came up and drew his sword and meant to help him to escape death: the said T. of P. came behind the said Nic. who meant him no harm, and feloniously struck the said Nic. with a knife under the left shoulder even to the heart: of which he immediately died: and the said Tho. and John fled to house of Felicia Skoyf and were there caught and taken to prison of the town of Leicester (Bateson, 1899, 377).

Although many of these incidents seem to be characterized by impulsiveness, others are suggestive of premeditation. For example, a report stated that, on February 25 1303 it chanced that:

when Henry Kokebenne went into the lane which leads from the high street towards St. Peters's church and towards Torchmere, and when he came opposite Robert of Willoughby's gate he perceived two men standing under the said gate and he asked them who they were, and they were silent and would not tell their names, but with premeditated assault wounded the said Henry with a knife in his left side even to the heart whereof he immediately died (Bateson, 1899, 367).

The following incident may also be suggestive of premeditation in what was, even for its day, a particularly violent incident. The report states that, on December 26 1300 it chanced after the hour of curfew, in the lane which leads to St. Martins's church that:

when William of Loughborough came.... one of the household of the Lady of Pitchford by name Adam, palfrey-keeper of the Lady aforesaid, assaulted him together with Ric Smith of Leicester, and the said A. shot the said W, with a barbed arrow in the back above the waist, and immediately after the deed he fled, and said R, struck with a sword across the finger of his left hand, so that the thumb hung loose. And he lived till the morrow to the third hour: he had the rites of the church and died from the wound of the said arrow (Bateson, 1899, 364).

As the above examples show, people of the medieval and early modern eras were liable to lose their tempers quite easily. They also felt a strong sense of custom and obligation relative to people today. Moreover, passions could be easily aroused whenever people felt betrayed or when obligations were not reciprocated, even in circumstances that we might today regard as fairly trivial. To illustrate this point I shall refer to an incident that took place in Yorkshire in 1268 and which may be seen as typical of people's behaviour in the early modern period.

The incident in question concerns a marriage ceremony that took place in the town of Byrun in Yorkshire, whereupon:

a certain stranger being newly married was taking his wife and others who were with her to one end of the town of Byrun, when William Selisaule asked for a ball ['pelota'], which it is the custom to give; and they having no ball gave him a pair of gloves for a pledge, afterwards other men of Byrun asked for a ball, and they said they could not give one, because they had already given a pledge for one, and the men of Byrun would not believe them, but still asked for the said ball; and so there arose a dispute, and the wedding party, being slightly drunk assaulted the men of Byrun with axes and bows and arrows, and wounded very many; and the said William hearing the noise and thinking it was for the ball for which he had a pledge, ran with a stick to appease the dispute; and when he came near, one William son of Ralph de Rotil drew an arrow at him and hit in the breast, so that he thought he had got his death; as the said William son of Ralph, not yet content, was meaning to shoot at him again, he saw that he could only escape the arrow by hitting him back, so as to hinder his drawing; so he ran up to the said William son of Ralph to hit him on the arm, but by mischance, hit the said Adam (de Auwerne), who unwittingly came between them, so he died. Thus the said William Selisaule killed the said Adam by mischance, and not of malice prepense (Calendar of Close Rolls for 1268, Cal. Inquisitions Miscellaneous, I, No. 359, or Douglas, Vol. III, 1975, 828).

Many of the incidents recorded occurred in the setting of a tavern or at home and occurred more usually among the lower classes. This is deducible as the assize records, except in a few cases, rarely mention either swords (generally held by the wealthy) or titled names. Moreover, other sources would seem to suggest that the nobility of early modern England were creating and experiencing their own forms of self-control. We can observe this taking place with regard to the phenomenon of duelling in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The duel at this time may well have been, as Elias has argued with respect to the

phenomenon of duelling in nineteenth and twentieth century Germany, a remnant of the previous military tradition; that is to say: 'The duel was a remnant of the time when, even within one's own society, the use of violence in disagreements was the rule, when the weaker or less skilful person was totally at the mercy of those who were stronger' (Elias, 1996, 51-52). This insight can help us to explain the phenomenon of duelling and the code of honour associated with it amongst the nobility of the late sixteenth century. As we have seen in Chapter Two, the feuding that had taken place between the families of the nobility in the medieval and early modern eras declined over the mid-late sixteenth century. The phenomenon of duelling with rapiers, which had reached England from Italy in the 1560s, can be seen to be a legacy of this decline (or perhaps a reaction to it). In an age when the Tudor and Stuart states had assumed greater monopoly over the means of violence, the warrior ethos, which had characterized the behaviour of the nobility of medieval and early modern England, reproduced itself in a more muted form in the code of honour which governed the behaviour of late sixteenth and early seventeenth century gentlemen. It was an offence to impugn a gentleman's honour. However, the hostility invoked was not acted out in a spontaneous manner. To illustrate these points I shall refer to one of our best records of duelling in the seventeenth century, that of the diary of a 'gentleman' of the seventeenth century, Sir John Reresby. Reresby records in his diary (Browning, 1936 or Douglas, 1953, Vol. VIII, 504) a number of duels and quarrels (nine incidents in all) that had occurred between September 1660 and March 1683. Although the events that they relate to are outside the time period currently being discussed, a number of generalisations can be made which are applicable to the behaviour of an early sixteenth century gentleman. One incident concerns Reresby's invitation to dinner at a pub called the Bear, in London amongst the company of Sir Henry Belasyse. It would appear that at the dinner an Irish gentlemen by the name of Mack de Mar: 'provoked me [Reresby] to give some language, which he [Mack de Mar] so far resented that he demanded satisfaction, either by denying me that I meant an injury to him by the saying of the words and asking his pardon, or by fighting with him'. Consequently they fought at Hyde Park where Mack de Mar was almost fatally wounded. What is also of interest here is the use of the word 'injury', used by Mack de Mar, to describe how he felt offended, a word that is nowadays usually used to describe a physical wound. It would seem that, in seventeenth century England (and one assumes in late sixteenth century England), gentlemen could suffer 'injury' merely by crossed words, which is indicative of the extent to which an individual's public character or standing was of

the highest importance in societies that were still governed by semi-feudal militaristic rituals and in which status hierarchies were more entrenched and rigid than they are today. However, my main point here is that the duel by its very nature suggests a certain level of calculation: arrangements had to be made, dates, times, and venues sorted out, etc. In other words, the hostilities that occurred between gentlemen were not acted out in an impulsive manner. For example, in another incident it is stated merely that, at a dinner of Sir Thomas Northcliffe's, Reresby quarrelled with a friend of one of Northcliffe's daughters. The daughter in question was one of Reresby's mistresses. Reresby and the friend were to have duelled the next day except that his opponent called it off at the last moment.

An Overview of Violence in England: From the Mid-Seventeenth to the Mid-Nineteenth Century

The time-frame indicated in the above sub-heading is not meant to signify that the years around 1650 represent some sort of watershed with regard to violence and aggression in England. To all intents and purposes, the characteristics discussed under the heading of the previous time-frame – the impulsive nature of much fighting, both collective and interpersonal – remain equally evident. However, what I want to demonstrate in this section is that incidents of violence were not quite as extensive as before and that sensibilities were gradually, if slowly, changing. Let me begin with an examination of interpersonal violence.

I shall present my own findings regarding assaults, homicide, etc., based on the county of Kent, over selected years, as drawn from assize records. No special significance should be given to the choice of Kent as an area to investigate although the choice does provide an opportunity to compare my statistical findings with the findings of historians. However, once again, it needs to be stated that my main purpose is to try to present a snapshot of interpersonal violence in England by concentrating on a particular region.

Using assize records will unequivocally underestimate the extent of actual violence in this period. The assize courts dealt with serious offences – such as homicide – whilst the magistrates' quarter sessions dealt with, in the main, petty offences such as theft although some of the serious offences would have only been dealt with by the King's Bench. However, for a non-serious offence to reach the assize court a number of conditions had to be satisfied. First, the offender had to be a repeat offender; when it was clear that a number of informal cautions had on each occasion been ignored, then the authorities had no choice but to

summon the offender. Secondly, in the case of quarrels between two feuding factions, usually neighbours, the sheriff would attempt to get the parties to resolve their dispute, saving all concerned time and money. Nonetheless, if the above statements suggest that most statistics dealing with violent crime cannot be relied upon in strict quantitative terms, and therefore cannot be used to make meaningful comparisons between periods and regions, acts of homicide do give us a more reliable record of the amount of serious interpersonal violence in those societies. And yet, my comments regarding the methodological limitations of the coroners' rolls of the fourteenth century still apply: where a motive could not be found - unless it was obvious from the state of the body that a killing had taken place - then a verdict of homicide would not be recorded. Also, and the same can be said of coroners' rolls in the fourteenth century, courts were dependent on the accounts of witnesses. It was not, in the absence of reliable witnesses, always possible to ascertain whether a crime had been committed. However, this is not the only reason to be cautious when comparing homicide statistics based on assize court records with either coroners' rolls of the fourteenth century or, as I shall document later, police returns from the mid-nineteenth century. The records of assize court hearings are, like coroners' rolls, of practical use insofar as they can provide information regarding the circumstances in which killings took place, regardless of whether or not a known suspect was convicted by a trial jury. This is of particular importance with regard to seventeenth century England as, according to Cockburn, the majority of those tried during this period were found not guilty even though killings had taken place.

Let me now turn to a quantitative assessment of the amount of homicides in Kent over selected years. The following table gives a quantitative record of various interpersonal crimes that took place in Kent between 1649 and 1659 and is based on my examination of the assize records compiled by Cockburn. My data are based on offences rather than prosecutions. That is to say, if an assize court record suggests that, for example, a homicide offence had taken place, regardless of whether a suspect was found guilty, I have recorded it in the table. Killings per 10, 000 of the population will be given later. It should also be added that although the assize records pertain to all boroughs within Kent, some homicides actually occurred in areas of south London but were tried in the Kent assizes. Why this was the case is not clear.

The results of trawling through these assize records are as follows:

TABLE 2: INDICTMENTS: KENT 1649-1659 (NUMBER OF CRIMES COMMITTED).

1649-1659	
HOMICIDES	68
INFANTICIDES	10
ASSAULTS	29
RAPES	9

SOURCE: Assize records compiled by Cockburn, HMSO, 1989.

Infanticide has been separated from the category of homicide in the table even though, strictly speaking, it is a form of homicide. Moreover, I have not included infanticide statistics as part of the overall figure for the rate of homicides as, during the period in question, infanticide was often difficult to prove. Figures for infanticide only become relatively reliable in 1874 when the registration of births and infant deaths was made compulsory. It is, of course, a presumption that infanticide was difficult to prove during the seventeenth century because of the absence of a national register, and because the bodies of dead infants could be concealed relatively easily. The phenomenon of witchcraft also punctuates the records from 1652. Such incidents were recorded in the assize records as murder or in a few cases as assault but my own statistics exclude such incidents as further research would be needed to ascertain the real causes of such deaths. Such incidents usually involved females as both victim and assailant except in some cases where infants were the victims, or in even rarer cases, males. The infanticides recorded all feature females as the killers. The most unreliable figure in the table however, is, not surprisingly, rape, although the very fact that rape was actually recognized as a crime during this period is significant in that it suggests that people at this stage of the English civilizing process regarded sexually-motivated violence as unacceptable. And yet it has to be added that, since the seventeenth century, attitudes towards rape have changed so that, for example, it is now in England a crime to rape a spouse. Furthermore, in recent years, the burden of proof has shifted away from the victim to the assailant possibly indicating a further advance in thresholds of tolerance and repugnance.

Quantitatively, the figures for homicide for the period 1649-1659 are as follows: 0.86 killings per 10,000, given a population for Kent of approximately 85,000 (my source here was H. C. Darby's *Domesday England*, 1977). This is a figure considerably lower than that of the earlier medieval period.

What can these findings indicate to us regarding levels of interpersonal violence in the early modern era? Different historians give very different interpretations of the evidence. Significantly, for my purposes, these figures show that interpersonal violence in the early modern era was considerably more prevalent than in our own times even if the figures do not suggest that violence was endemic. It should also be borne in mind that these statistics underestimate the real extent of violence for the reasons suggested earlier with regard to coroners' rolls of the fourteenth century: some bodies probably went missing during a time when the technology of surveillance was not as advanced as today (although the technology of killing had advanced since the medieval era). And yet, the figures alone still do not give us a real insight into the violent behaviour of the people of early modern England. Again, my own qualitative research findings make apparent the impulsiveness and casualness of interpersonal violence in England during this period.

The majority of the assaults and crimes of homicide I came across in this part of my research involved males hurting other males. As with earlier times, impulsiveness rather than calculation is evident. An incident in Kent in June 1654 is not untypical. The report states:

On June 27 1654 [Clement] Pilcher was beating out a hot, iron nail rod upon his anvil to make nails when, by accident some sparks from the iron fell into the shoe of Henry Rolph and burned his right foot. In anger, Rolph struck Pilcher across the shoulders with his cudgel and then took hold of him by the shoulder, shaking and pulling him. Pilcher, to defend himself, held out the hot nail rod, and in the struggle which followed the hot end of the rod accidentally pierced Rolph under the short ribs, inflicting a wound from which he died the following day. (Cockburn, 1989, 183, ASSI 1013).

This is not to say that calculation is not occasionally evident in some of these incidents, as is sheer ruthlessness. Typical in this respect is an incident relating to murder and highway robbery which took place at Shooter's Hill, London but is included in the Kent assize records. The record states that on 14 March 1654: '[Robert] Gibbs shot [John] Pelham in the back with a pistol (2s. 6d.) loaded with gunpowder and a lead bullet. [Richard] Whitfield aided and abetted him in the felony' (Cockburn, 1989, 183, ASSI 1016). He died three days later.

Many incidents also involved domestic disturbances: Cockburn estimates that 13% of all homicides in Kent were domestic (Cockburn, 1977) either between husband and wife or between the married couple and a mistress (one can further *infer* jealousy between rival lovers in some incidents). Such incidents could be fairly stomach-churning in their violence as is testified by the following incident (although, again we do not know the full circumstance in which it took place) which took place on the 16 November 1651. Once again, this incident took place in south London but is included in the Kent assize records. The record states that:

'At St Sepulchre, London, [John] Carter [of London] assaulted Mary Carter, his wife, and thrust his hand "in and through [her] bearing place.... up and into [her] body and belly [and] a great quantity of [her] inward parts....from [her] body and belly..... did tear, rend and pull away ' (Cockburn, 1989, 96, ASSI 535). As a result she languished at Kingsland (in Hackney) until 7 December 1651 when she died.

Fights, as Cockburn puts it, took place at 'work, rest and play'. Any implement was used that came to hand, further emphasising the casual impulsiveness of much violence: staffs, pick-axes, stakes, iron rods, and even clumps of earth were used. For example, on 28 April 1652, Anthony Hoyland of Yalding 'threw a hard clod of earth at Walther Raynes which struck him in the left eye, inflicting a wound from which he died the following day' (Cockburn, 1989, 116, ASSI 638). Many of the domestic incidents involved throwing a woman (in some cases a man) down the stairs. In an incident which occurred on 1 May 1652 Thomasine Glover, wife of Thomas Glover of Lewisham, 'assaulted Margaret Cripps, wife of Thomas Cripps, who was taken great with child, and threw her down upon a heap of brickbats. She suffered bruising and injuries on the right side of her belly and died at Lewisham on 27 May' (Cockburn, 1989 117, ASSI 643). Of course, some domestic incidents did involve weapons, usually daggers, stilettos or swords (among the wealthy); but such incidents were not commonplace. People of that time it would seem could lose control of their tempers for what appear from our standpoint today to have been the most trivial of reasons. For example, the seventeenth century gentleman John Reresby, referred to earlier, describes an incident concerning boarding a boat on the Thames on September 10 1660. He states in his diary that a 'quarrel was happening between my company and some other about first going into the boat, I was struck over the head with a cudgel, which provoked me to wound one or two with my sword'. Although one cannot be sure of the precise circumstances which led this incident to occur, one does detect the same impulsive behaviour that governed the behaviour of the lower orders: 'It was he that had received the affront, for I threw a glass of wine in his face, and so we were reconciled' (from Reresby's diary, 2 June 1652). Such incidents as these suggest that, given the code of honour governing the behaviour of a gentlemen, offence could be taken quite easily. It is only when these military values recede and when processes of what Elias calls functional democratization advance, that the codes defining 'public' standing lose some of their importance.

The street fighting, characteristic of earlier times, was also present in the time-frame under discussion. For example, further reference is made to the terrorization of the countryside in the seventeenth century by

'trailbastions' and 'clubmen'. On March 17 1712 Queen Anne issued an edict which noted that 'Great and unusual Riots and Barbarities...have been committed in the Night-time in the streets [of London] ... by numbers of Evil-disposed persons... £100 reward' (quoted in Jones, 1942,56). There is no doubt that the editors of newspapers were shocked by marauding gangs (including the notorious upper-class 'Hell-fire' clubs) such as the Scourers and Mohocks. As *The Times*, April 5 1714 commented: 'The scourers go to Vauxhall gardens to annoy the women, raise a riot or start a fight' (quoted in Jones, 1942, 57). According to Jones, respectable women were not safe on the streets late at night, as they could be raped, have their noses slit, or their arms slashed.

Accounts of recreations and festivals within the time-frame under discussion also suggest a lack of control over impulses similar to that of the previous time period. For example, the Reverend Oliver Heywood describes numerous incidents regarding drunkenness and fighting that occurred on an almost daily basis in the county of Yorkshire. For example, regarding a popular pastime of the region and period, rushbearing, he wrote of how on Sunday, July 12 1680: 'There was rushbearing at Howarth and their Tyde (as they call it) on which multitudes of people meet, feast, drink, and commit many outrages in revellings, in rantings, riding, without any fear or restraint' (Turner, vol. 2,1881, 272). Revelrous behaviour does not imply that violence took place, but given the acceptance of heavy drinking and the assumption of unbridled licence, impulsive, aggressive behaviour was still quite common at festivals.

That involvement popular pastimes could give rise to injury or even death to the participants is revealed by this entry from Heywood's diary which concerns an incident that took place in 1680: 'Last Easter at the very place at Hauksworth [a town in Yorkshire] on a Lords day 2 men were playing at ball, the one hit the other on the brest, and fell down dead, yet they sin still' (Turner, vol. 2, 1881, 271).

Festival days and public holidays were occasions for fighting and displays of aggressions as the following two incidents indicate. On a May Day 1680, again at Hauksworth, there were several gentlemen:

drinking and ranting at a strange rate, amongst whom was one Hauksworth uncle to Sr Walter Hauksworth who lives there, and one Sherburn who was more outrageous [*sic*] then the rest and grievously provokt this Hauksworth, challenging him to fight, Sr Walter fetcht his uncle a rapier, and sd if you be an Hauksworth try it with him, they both went out, Sherburn let fly at him, Hauksworth defended himself, would have ceased but the other was so desparate raging that he turned again, run him into the brest, Sherburn was carreyd in dyed presently, oh dreadful (Turner, Vol. 2, 1881, 271).

On another May Day (this time the first of May) 1680:

A great number of persons of the poor and baser sort, begun early in the morning, (even while it was dark) to bring in May, they divided themselves into 3 companys, every company above 60, one about the Crosse, another about Starfold, another about Clarke-brig (Halifax) men, women and big youths, they had all white wast-coats [*sic*] or sheets about them, with huge great garlands, flowers, branches of trees, - they had 2 or 3 drums, pipers, fiddlers, some of them had white barriers flying with red crosses, thus they went up and down the town to all houses receiving money, they broke windows at T.R. [presumably either the name of a person or of a place] because these [*sic*] denied them: above 100 went in to Dr Hooks house but [what] they got I hear not, thus they kept rambling about most of the day (Turner, Vol. 2, 1881, 270).

To progress further on this general theme we need to examine two influential, but competing interpretations of the evidence: the versions given by Lawrence Stone (1983 and 1990) and Keith Wrightson (1982). Their research covers both the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Stone, by examining personal correspondence and diaries of that era, has portrayed both late medieval and early modern England as a country in which relations between people were 'cool, even unfriendly' (Stone, 1990, 77). According to Stone, casual physical and verbal violence predominated, as evidenced by the following: the numerous assault and battery cases dealt with in the law courts; the difficulty of holding duelling in check after the Restoration; and feuding between families and villages in an almost tribalistic fashion (*ibid*). It is only in the late seventeenth century that we begin to see major changes in people's sensibilities: the beginnings of an era labelled by Stone as one of 'affective individualism'. I shall not at this point go into the details of this particular thesis (it will be detailed in Chapter Five). Suffice it to say, for now, that Stone's portrait of Tudor and Commonwealth England is of a brutal society in which punishment and cruelty were rife, especially to young children. The 'paternalistic' guardians of morality of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries may have cared for their womenfolk and children more than had their elders of the late medieval era, but nonetheless, it is held, their treatment of such people was harsh by the standards of today. Stone also documents the extraordinary amount of casual, interpersonal physical and verbal violence recorded in legal records. The most trivial disagreements tended to lead rapidly to blows, and most people carried a potential weapon, if only a knife, to cut their meat. The correspondence of the day was filled with accounts of brutal assault at the dinner-table or in taverns, often leading to death. Duelling, which as we have seen, spread to England in the late sixteenth century, was kept more or less in check before 1640 by the joint pressure of the Puritans and King, but became a serious social menace after the Restoration. Friends and acquaintances felt honour-bound to challenge and kill each other for the slightest

affront. Casual violence towards strangers was also a daily threat. Finally, in Stone's account, children were often neglected, brutally treated and even killed (Stone, 1990, 80).

Wrightson offers a different interpretation. He simply rejects Stone's idea that a harsh, authoritarian-type of family characterized pre-eighteenth century English society. He also rejects what he sees as the pathological view of the treatment of children that has been put forward by Stone.

Essentially, Wrightson argues that a companionate family existed in this period, characterized by open, tolerant relations. It was not, in fact, a new phenomenon of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, as contended by Stone. Wrightson denies Stone's claim that the occurrence of violence was widespread; he also takes issue with Stone concerning the nature of the violence in question. He quotes the historical research collected by Sharpe regarding homicide in the county of Essex (Wrightson, 1982, 160). Between the years 1645 and 1679, according to Sharpe, homicide rates in Essex were three times greater than were the rates in that county in the mid-twentieth century but for Wrightson these figures are 'not sufficiently high to justify any suggestion that life could be casually taken.' (Wrightson, 1982, 160). As we have seen, violence, by and large, was not calculated and was less contained within the family compared to modern England. For example, in Essex between 1620 and 1680 only 20% of all homicides occurred within the family compared to 50% in modern times. That is the case even though the affrays or private wars that were to be found in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and before had become rare occurrences by the late seventeenth century.

With regard to violence towards women and children, Wrightson argues that, although it did occur, it has simply been exaggerated. He also argues that there was a popular intolerance towards it. An example is provided as when the villagers of Yardly presented a petition to the Worcestershire Justices in 1617. They complained of one householder who 'did beat his wife most cruellie' (Wrightson, 1982, 99).

It is clear that Wrightson does not agree with Stone or other historians over the extent of violence in this period. Predictably, the difference of view can be traced to the methods employed by the two historians. Wrightson argues that Stone, in his portrayal of lower class behaviour, has relied on evidence regarding upper-class experiences and perceptions, such as the diaries of upper-class people, and that consequently he 'has devoted insufficient care to the exploration of the experience of the mass of the population' (Wrightson, 1982, 71). However, it should also be added that Wrightson does acknowledge Stone's

admission (in the Hardmanson edition of Stone's work) that from the outset, his (Stone's) own pioneering work was 'grossly over-simplified and over-schematized' (Stone, 1990, 4). To what extent do my research findings support one or another of these entrenched positions and what conclusions can be arrived at concerning violence and aggression in early modern England?

Given the sparseness of written records in this period and the unreliability of the court records as a definitive record of the extent of interpersonal violence, no definitive statement can be made that would unequivocally support either position: we simply need more empirical research. However, the position becomes clearer if *relative* statements are made. Hence, I would argue that Wrightson is correct to criticize Stone's conclusions which are based on relatively sparse records. The picture is *probably* not as bleak as Stone suggests. Wrightson does in some ways provide an alternative scenario to that of Stone and yet it would appear that, relative to England in the twentieth century, violence in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was more casual and far more extensive. Even allowing for the compromise on the extent of brutality to children as argued by Wrightson, it was tolerated to a far greater degree than is the case in modern, twentieth and twenty first-century England. Further evidence is provided by another historian of the early modern period, G.R. Quaipe (Quaipe, 1979). Although I shall document Quaipe's findings in more detail in Chapter Five regarding his research on morality and sexual behaviour in the early modern period in England, his findings regarding aggressive, violent behaviour are worth commenting on.

Quaipe's research is based on depositions presented between 1601 and 1660 to the Quarter sessions of the County of Somerset. Somerset, at the time, was a wealthy county and yet Quaipe concludes that violence in the 'troubled communities' of the rural villages was always just below the surface and that 'almost every occasion had potential for blood-letting' (Quaipe, 1979, 25). In particular, disputes over boundaries, unwritten contracts, tithes, imaginary insults and domestic quarrels were common. However, it is the impulsiveness of people's behaviour, compared to the people of today, that once again, one is struck by. For example, Quaipe recounts how drinking in alehouses was fraught with danger and how, in one incident (no reference is given), one man was 'stupid' enough to complain about the language used by a group of heavy drinkers. He was beaten and almost stabbed to death. Violence against women was also quite prevalent; wives were beaten by their husbands and tithingmen's wives suffered because of their husbands. For example, in 1648 in Wells (Quarter Sessions, Wells X-2-48 or Quaipe, 1979, 26), a Wells miner in 'falling

out with his wife' beat her with a girdle containing a brass buckle, giving her two wounds. Apprentices were also subject to what were, for the time, high rates of abuse and violence. For example, in an incident from 1650 (State Register 82 6-7-50 or Quaife, 1979, 27) we are told that an apprentice failed to provide enough straw in the stables at St. Pauls's Fair, Bristol. The blacksmith struck him down 'upon the ground with his fist and also then struck him 3 or 4 times with his foot upon the sides and about three weeks after he grew lame but not much and was able to work, and of late within this fortnight he grew so lame and impotent in his body, on all parts of one of his sides, that he was not able to do his master any service'. The record goes on to state that as the apprentice was not able to stand to strike the anvil, the blacksmith: 'struck him down again with his fist at two blows by which means he is crippled and not in a condition to help himself.'

An Overview of Violence from the Late Nineteenth to the Early Twentieth Century

To what extent did the people of nineteenth century England share the same aggressive characteristics as the people of early modern England? In part, I shall try to answer this question by examining police returns regarding homicide rates from a number of counties during the mid-late nineteenth century. Police returns can also provide information on the judicial process itself in the sense that they allow us to compare the number of offences with the number brought to trial. But my sole reason for providing this information on the numbers committed to trial is that such statistics break down prosecutions into males and females. This information will be of use in Chapter Five.

These statistics will be used as a direct comparison with the homicide rate for Kent in the seventeenth century and the homicide rate for Leicester in the thirteenth century and serve as a basis for an overall portrayal of interpersonal violence in the nineteenth century England. Once again it needs to be stressed that comparing statistics on homicide over different eras creates a number of methodological problems. Police returns are useful insofar as they provide data on the number of offences committed as opposed to, say, the number of prosecutions. As I have argued earlier, the number of offences taking place for, say, assault is unlikely, in any given era, to match the number of prosecutions or even the number of reportings. That is to say, the amount of police returns concerning crimes such as assault, robbery etc are influenced by such variables as the ratio of officers to civilians, the priority given to certain crimes and the willingness of

observers or witnesses to report crimes. In principle though, police returns should be just as reliable as the assize records or coroners' rolls when it comes to measuring the actual rate of homicide insofar as police returns (offences recorded by the police) for murder and manslaughter are ultimately based on coroners' inquests: inquests that have a relatively high degree of reliability.

The following tables are derived from my own examination of the records of statistical returns made by police stations in a number of counties: Kent, Metropolitan London and the City, Liverpool, and Gloucester (HO 63, PRO KEW).

TABLE 3: INDICTABLE OFFENCES, VIOLENT CRIMES AGAINST THE PERSON: KENT 1858-1862. POPULATION (AVERAGE): 460 000 Source: Police Returns of Kent police stations 1858-62, PRO, Kew

	NO. OF CRIMES	COMMITTED TO TRIAL	
		MALE	FEMALE
HOMICIDES	60	40	10
RAVISH WITH ABUSE	43	44	0
RAPES	44	41	1
ROBBERIES ON HIGHWAY	21	33	0
SHOOTINGS, STABBINGS.	47	45	0
ASSAULTS	73	92	1

TABLE 4: INDICTABLE OFFENCES VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON 1858-1862, METROPOLITAN LONDON AND THE CITY OF LONDON, POPULATION (AVERAGE): 2.5 MILLION. Source: Police Returns of London police stations 1858-62, PRO, Kew

	NO. OF CRIMES	COMMITTED TO TRIAL	
		MALE	FEMALE
HOMICIDES	208	122	22
RAVISH WITH ABUSE	126	97	0
RAPES	149	79	2
ROBBERIES ON HIGHWAY	224	198	47
SHOOTINGS, STABBINGS.	450	248	56
ASSAULTS	566	523	43

TABLE 5: INDICTABLE OFFENCES, VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON, GLOUCESTER, 1858-1862 POPULATION: (AVERAGE) 322 000. Source: Police Returns of Gloucester police stations 1858-62, PRO, Kew

	NO. OF CRIMES	COMMITTED TO TRIAL	
		MALE	FEMALE
HOMICIDES	50	21	21
RAVISH WITH ABUSE	26	28	4
RAPES	14	7	0
ROBBERIES ON HIGHWAY	28	26	1
SHOOTINGS, STABBINGS.	30	25	3
ASSAULTS	31	26	6

TABLE 6: INDICTABLE OFFENCES VIOLENCE AGAINST THE PERSON, LIVERPOOL, 1858 POPULATION: 374 401 Source: Police Returns of Liverpool police stations 1858-62, PRO, Kew

	NO. OF CRIMES	COMMITTED TO TRIAL	
		MALE	FEMALE
HOMICIDES	18	14	0
RAVISH WITH ABUSE	4	4	0
RAPES	2	2	0
ROBBERIES ON HIGHWAY	55	19	4
SHOOTINGS, STABBINGS.	159	49	5
ASSAULTS	98	50	0

The above tables provide a reasonable cross-section of the English population: northern, urban Liverpool; southern, urban London; rural or at least semi-rural, Kent and Gloucestershire. Figures for Liverpool for the years 1858-62 were not available but the figures for the year 1858 provide a useful point of comparison. The category of homicide refers to the amalgamation of three categories: murder, attempts at murder and manslaughter. Hence the homicide figure does not quite equate with the overall number of killings. However, the 'attempts at murder' is a very small figure and therefore does not have much impact on the overall figure for killings. The number of crimes committed does not always equal the number committed to trial as sufficient evidence may have been lacking that would enable a court to try a potential criminal. In strict quantitative terms, the ratio for Kent is 0.26 killings/attempted killings per 10 000 population; that for London, 0.17 per 10 000; that for Gloucester 0.31 per 10 000; and for Liverpool in the year 1858: 0.48 per 10,00 population. The figures are appreciably smaller than those for the prior two periods in my research. They are higher than the statistics for mid and late twentieth century England (and Wales) when the average for most of the period after the Second World War was 0.03 killings per 10 000 (see May, 1977).

The above figures also reveal a fair spread of ranges with Liverpool recording a higher figure for homicide than London. Undoubtedly, these figures do reflect, to some extent, differences in the collection of statistics and differences in the reporting of crimes. This makes comparisons concerning the other five categories, rape, ravish with abuse (sexual assault but without sexual intercourse), assault, robbery on the

highway and shooting/stabbing incidents, unreliable as points of comparison, but nonetheless local causes or factors must also be at work here. London has a higher per capita figure for all these categories than either Kent or Gloucester - as one might reasonably expect - but these figures are proportionally less than those of Liverpool, especially where 'shooting incidents' are concerned. The lower per capita figure for homicide in London, compared to Liverpool, probably reflects the fact that killings in London were concentrated in particular areas of the metropolis. How reliable, then, are these homicide figures as points of comparison?

To answer this question I shall compare my own findings on homicide with that of the work of a number of historians. In this respect the most widely acknowledged work on homicide data is that of Gurr (1976) in which he provided an overview of some twenty sets of data that cover the period in England from the thirteenth to the late twentieth century. The data show a long-run trend to exist in which, to quote Stone's summary: 'The homicide rates in thirteenth-century England were about twice as high as those in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and that those of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were some five to ten times higher than those of today' (Stone, 1983, 25). Stone also, in his commentary on Gurr's data, notes the existence of two periods in which a counter-trend is held to have occurred: the period just after the Black Death of 1349 and the period 1560-1620. Other historians, most prominently Sharpe and Cockburn, are in broad agreement with Stone's assessment but nonetheless, Cockburn's observations concerning his own in-depth study of homicide in Kent for the period 1559 to 1980 are worth commenting on. Cockburn, as noted, is in broad agreement with the trends established by Gurr but nonetheless strikes a note of caution. He for example points out that the recorded homicide rate can vary quite significantly between regions. By way of illustration, his own data regarding Kent over the period 1580 to 1709 bear little relation to those in Cheshire over the same period. Secondly, he argues that comparisons in the recorded rate of homicide between pre-modern and twentieth century England are highly unreliable. He cites reports (see Cockburn 1991, 102) demonstrating that if improvements in medical skills during the twentieth century (and possibly the nineteenth century) had *not* occurred the homicide rate for the last fifty years would be some 40% higher than the official recorded figures. He also cites the example of one study which shows that the inclusion of recorded unsuccessful attempts at murder between 1975 and 1985 would increase the official rate for that period by eight times. Finally, he argues that changes in the law since 1973 concerning vehicular homicide

have given rise to a fifty percent fall in the recorded homicide rate for the years 1973-77. However, that said, his point concerning improvements in medical skills needs qualifying, for Stone asserts that medicine would have had little impact on death from gangrene or infected wounds before the discovery and acceptance of the importance of sterilization towards the end of the nineteenth century (Stone, 1983, 24); a period of time that is outside the time-frame covered by my own data. What, then, should we conclude? Comparing homicide statistics for twenty-first century England with those for pre-twentieth century societies would appear to be a highly unreliable exercise for the reasons stated by Cockburn. However, the long-term trends indicated by Gurr's data and my own are suggestive that a fall in levels of interpersonal violence, as measured by homicide statistics, has taken place between the early thirteenth and the late nineteenth century. The long-term trends established by my own findings in this respect are quite similar to the long-term trends established by Gurr even though my figures in absolute terms are not always comparable. For example, my recorded homicide rates for Leicester in the late thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries – between 30 and 65 deaths per 100 000 population – is higher than the average (trend) figure recorded in Gurr's data: 20 deaths falling to 18 per 100 000 for the same period, but lower than the single highest figure recorded for fourteenth century England, Oxford in 1349 (110 deaths per 100 000 population). Whether my figures for Leicester are typical of England as a whole in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries is certainly open to question. We require specifically more empirical data for towns and cities in this time period. My figures for Kent in the seventeenth century are slightly higher than the trends established by Gurr but not appreciably so (8 deaths per 100 000 and 6.8 deaths per 100 000 respectively), whilst my figures based on a number of counties in mid-nineteenth century England (between 1-3 deaths per 100 000) are broadly consistent with the trend established by Gurr for that time period (1.0 deaths per 100 000). That these trends can be explained simply by the growth of policing needs to be, *prima facie*, discounted: a professional police force for the whole of England only came into existence in 1839, long after a downward fall in the homicide rate was held to have taken place, although of course different forms of policing had occurred long before 1839.⁶

⁶ One can see an historical development in this process. For example, in the medieval period in the town of Leicester policing was by today's standards rudimentary. The town was divided into four townships or tithings (districts); each quarter consisted of one frankpledge answerable for the production of any of its members accused of crime (a frankpledge was a citizen who had been nominated to be responsible for the behaviour of others in the community). High and Petty constables would have enforced the law with a ratio

And yet compared to our own time, then-contemporary accounts suggest that people's sensibilities towards violence were still very different. For example, this account of a football match, taken from *The Echo*, February 10 1879, in which a fatality occurred, is marked by the matter-of factness of its reporting:

Killed at football - yesterday a youth died at Tunstall from a kick received at a football match played between the Tunstall and Goldenhill (N. Staffs) team, at Tunstall, a few days before. Play was very rough, [sic] and Herbert Whitedock, one of the Goldenhill team, was kicked in the stomach. He was conveyed from the ground in a state of unconsciousness and succumbed after much suffering. It is not known who made the fatal foul' (quoted in Furnivall, 1877-82, 319)

Other incidents also demonstrate the gulf between sensibilities today and then. For example, in the following extract concerning the famous siege of Sidney Street, a confrontation between a gang of anarchists and the police, the ferocity of the violence - and the number involved - suggest that, even though sensibilities were changing, they were nonetheless still very different from our sensibilities in the West today. Pitched battles, even by the time of the early twentieth century, can still shock our contemporary sensibilities as this extract, from *The Guardian*, January 4 1911, indicates, for it states that a raid was:

...made by the London police early yesterday morning on a house in Stepney - 100, Sidney-street - in which two of the gang that murdered the three police officers in Houndsditch last month were believed to be hiding, developed into a pitched battle or siege. At the outset the police were received with pistol shot, and they summoned reinforcements. For several hours the police and a party of Scots Guards poured a heavy fire upon the windows of the desperadoes' refuge. The men within fired back with revolvers. Altogether one police officer was seriously wounded and several other persons, including some spectators were slightly wounded. Soon after one o' clock the house was seen to be in flames, having been set on fire whether by the fusillade or by the desperadoes themselves. The building was gutted. In the ruins were found the remains of two men, one of whom is believed to be "Fritz" and the other another member of the gang.

The police engaged were reinforced till they reached the number of at least 1500. The majority of these were employed in keeping away from the shooting the vast crowd which had gathered in the neighbourhood.

of two officers for every hundred of the population. In 1464 Leicester was provided with its first Justice of the Peace, while in 1467 the first constable proper was mentioned. By the nineteenth century, all this had changed. The 1839 County Police Act provided for a paid police force to be provided for each local authority on a permissive basis; in 1856 this became compulsory.

Chapter Four: Social Order, Discipline and Changing Sensibilities.

Having provided an overview of the incidence of violence in the periods and regions selected for discussion, I shall move on to a fuller examination of changing sensibilities in the period that spans the late medieval to the late Victorian era. One of my aims for doing so is to provide a context for those acts of aggression and violence that were documented in the previous chapter. For example, I shall be discussing people's changing attitudes and beliefs with regard to a variety of activities - popular recreations, fairs, blood sports, etc., - that were seen at the time to be disorderly or violent or both - in order to establish some of the changes that were taking place in people's sensibilities as a whole. However, I wish to examine people's changing sensibilities specifically within a broader context of the social control mechanisms that are implied by *civilizing processes*. *That is to say, one implication of civilizing processes for people's behaviour*, is that, as we have seen, over substantial periods of time people's sensibilities, it is held, become more refined. For example, people become more sensitive to open, public displays of aggression and violence. Consonant with this, or perhaps as a corollary, people's behaviour becomes more disciplined, although the elision of Elias's civilising process concept and the rise of the disciplined subject – an assertion made by a critic of Elias, the historian Lyndal Roper (Roper, 1994, 145) - is not entirely accurate. Elias's concept of civilizing processes certainly implies disciplined behaviour in the sense that individuals are held to become increasingly self-disciplined in their control of emotions and to rely less on an external imposition of discipline. And yet, this is but one aspect of the 'civilizing' of behaviour in Elias's usage of the term. The very term itself refers to behaviour in the round so that, to take one example, violent, aggressive behaviour may be predicated on a high degree of self-discipline as demonstrated by the extermination camps of Nazi Germany. In other words, the rise of the disciplined subject may be compatible and congruent with a relatively low degree of what most people in the West today would regard as civilized behaviour. However, be that as it may, I would hypothesise that a more disciplined subject did emerge in Europe during the time periods selected for discussion, a more disciplined individual moreover, who was increasingly refining his or her sensibilities as a consequence of European civilizing processes.

Implicit in Elias's theory of civilizing processes, therefore, is a notion of social control in which, it is held, people who are caught up in longer and longer chains of interdependencies come to exert more and

more control over others. For example, as a result of equalizing tendencies in societies, or what Elias referred to as functional democratization processes, the lower classes come to exert greater levels of control over the classes above them. However, these mechanisms of social control are contested, often implicitly but occasionally explicitly, by other writers and schools of writers. For example, Marxist writers in general point to modes of suppression, such as the cash-nexus of the eighteenth century and onwards, as a distinctive form of social control, and how 'repressive' legislation, whether in relation to popular recreations or disorderly behaviour in general, reflects the concerns of the dominant or upper classes. Lyndal Roper however, rejects not only Marxist-based accounts of suppression but also what she refers to as Elias's 'disciplinary thesis' as methodological devices for explaining transformations in the violent and aggressive behaviour of people in early modern Europe. Instead, as I shall detail later in this chapter, she looks to Foucault's ideas regarding social control as a basis for a methodological procedure that would help to explain changes in public order and, specifically, the violent, disorderly behaviour of people in any given society.

My assertion, therefore, is that if a more disciplined figure did in fact emerge during the time periods selected for discussion, it would suggest either that external authority figures were imposing their own standards of behaviour onto reluctant individuals in a manner suggested by Marxist writers, or that, perhaps, individuals were gradually disciplining their own behaviour in a manner that suggests a transformation in people's sensibilities was taking place. Moreover, if it is the case that a more disciplined subject, able to restrain his or her emotions in public, did emerge over the time periods that I have selected for discussion, it would further suggest that people's propensity to commit aggressive acts had diminished over those periods of time.

There are, of course, a number of methods through which one can examine changing sensibilities. For example, an analysis of primary documents – such as John Evelyn's diaries, to be discussed later on – can reveal the way in which people's sensibilities with regard to blood sports were changing. However, in this chapter the methodological approach that I have chosen consists of examining, in the main, public order legislation: national and local ordinances, proclamations, etc., regarding the regulation of public order. Of course, such legislation may well reflect the prejudices and biases of the legislators in the first instance, but I have further assumed that such legislation reflects, at least to a certain degree, underlying attitudes with

regard to people's conceptions of public order, or at least reflects the attitudes of significant groups within a given population. That is to say, the legislation that I have selected for discussion reflected, to varying degrees, changing sentiments and beliefs amongst particular groups within the population who were increasingly becoming more intolerant of what they perceived to be the rough behaviour of some of their contemporaries, or behaviour that they felt transgressed their own emerging social standards of citizenship. Thus, by examining public order legislation, I specifically want to establish the framework or context in which legislators, whether they be local councillors, members of parliament, or kings and queens, were becoming increasingly sensitive to people's changing sensibilities and the way in which legislators were creating newer social standards of citizenship.

The activities that I have selected for discussion, to which public order legislation refers, do not constitute an exhaustive list of all the different forms of public disorder that have taken place, or continue to take place. For example, what authority figures during the sixteenth century regarded as disorderly public behaviour included, as this Royal Proclamation from 1555 states: 'Heresy, Lollardy, [a form of anti-establishment religious movement that had its origins in the fourteenth century] false rumours, excess of apparel, unlawful assemblies, reading and expounding of scriptures, vagabonds and idle persons, journeymen, alehouses, and suspect hostelryes' (BM¹, 26 May 1555, Titus b 11, 100 Philip and Mary). Accordingly, I have decided to concentrate my research on those activities where it is possible, through an examination of ordinances, proclamations, etc, to infer changing attitudes or sensibilities with regard to what we would today call 'barbaric' or harmful behaviour (or with regard to the carrying of arms, the potential for harm). Hence, the activities that I have chosen for discussion include the following: the disorderly behaviour associated with popular recreations and fairs; 'blood' sports in general; and, 'vagabonding' and 'vagrancy', which were perceived by authority figures at certain times in the past to be harmful. Legislation affecting these activities also tell us something about how authority figures were changing their conception of citizenship and what sort of behaviour was being demanded of people in societies where disorderly behaviour was becoming less tolerated.

My contention, therefore, is that, an examination of public order legislation can enable a judgement to be made regarding the extent to which people during the time periods selected for discussion were

¹ British Museum Library

disciplining their own behaviour and the extent to which sensibilities were becoming more refined. Specifically, my assertion is that public order legislation increasingly proliferated during the time-frames selected for discussion, suggesting an increasing intolerance towards what can be broadly called ill-disciplined, public behaviour. As I will demonstrate later in this chapter, local and national government legislators have increasingly attempted to regulate any form of public behaviour that is perceived as having the potential to disturb the peace or to cause harm to other people.

The conception I have taken of public order is a constructivist one: what is regarded as a disorderly act is contingent on the perception of the ruling authorities at any particular point in time. Our language in this area reflects the changing meanings of the concept of disorder. For example, at certain times in history state legislators have felt threatened by 'insurrectionary mobs' and at other times by less-pernicious sounding 'protest movements'. Here is a then-contemporary description (recorded by the Chamberlain of Leicester Borough Records) of a May Day riot in Leicester in the year 1603: 'There was the same night many maypoles by an unruly band [*sic*] and a confused multitude of base people set up in the street, and the stewards' watch too weak to suppress the outrage' (quoted in Kelly, 1865, 102). The Chamberlain then went on to state that, 'after this outrage proclamation of departure was made to the rude audience, which was then contemned [*sic*] made and seconded the next day with "morrices", and a great number of idle, rude company, many of them armed with shot, following them, morning and evening, the whole town throughout' (Kelly, 1865, 103). The Chamberlain chose to describe these events as an 'outrage' and the fact that the people were armed with shot adds an element of menace to the events. However, the Chamberlain states elsewhere that the armed shot was simply for 'merry-making' purposes, the point being that these events would in all probability have been described as 'revelrous', 'boisterous' or 'carnavalesque' in time periods (for example, the European Middle Ages) when people's sensibilities were less refined compared to those of the people of seventeenth century England.

Like my research approach outlined in Chapter Two, I merely wish to outline what I take to be long-term changes in people's behaviour, sensibilities and attitudes. By examining events in pre-industrial England in a processual manner I am attempting to demonstrate changes in the psyche and habitus of people who would not have held a conception of their own self-identity and psyche in a manner that we take for granted today. Furthermore, I am fully aware that in examining events with regard to a number of

activities, recreations and blood sports for example, over a duration of some five hundred years, there is a distinct danger of the researcher simplifying the 'causes' of transformations in a number of assorted activities. For example, historians are divided in their analyses with regard to the transformation in popular recreations held to have occurred in post-Restoration England. Similarly, historians are unable to agree on why comprehensive attacks on blood sports in England were held to have occurred for the first time during the late eighteenth century, culminating in legislation during the early and mid-nineteenth century. Explanations for such complex events and processes are likely to be in themselves complex and multi-faceted. My main purpose is merely to suggest that changes to the psyche and habitus, as revealed in this instance by changing attitudes and sensibilities with regard to disorderly activities, were occurring in a more or less observable direction.

As can be seen, an examination and evaluation of public order legislation has important consequences for some of the theoretical and methodological perspectives so far considered. In particular, there are two theses, briefly referred to above, which can be considered as alternative perspectives, or even methodologies, to Elias's. They are, firstly, what I shall call a 'suppression thesis' which is associated with various social historians and some Marxist sociologists. Essentially, these assorted writers² argue, often implicitly, that in the field of disorderly practices and popular recreations in particular, the history of England from the early modern period onwards was one of state-sponsored suppression of activities that were felt to be inimical to a nascent capitalist-industrial order. This is usefully and succinctly encapsulated in E. P. Thompson's observation that, in the period between 1780 and 1830: 'The "average" English working man became disciplined, more subject to the productive tempo of "the clock", more reserved and methodical, less violent and less spontaneous' (Thompson, 1968, 451). In other words, the 'causes' of diminished aggression and violence are held by Thompson and similar writers to be located in new forms of production processes and concomitant with them, new forms of social control such as the cash-nexus. Moreover, it is held, state legislators' suppression and control of hitherto disorderly public activities, such as recreations, reflected the interests of the newly emerging capitalist-industrial class (es).

² These writers include the following historians: E. P. Thompson (1968); A. Howkins (1981); M. Delves (1981); and the sociologist John Hargreaves (1986).

The second thesis is that of Roper's Foucauldian perspective but here, it has to be stressed, she is reacting to what she refers to as a 'social disciplining' thesis, her application of the term being much broader than that of the Marxist writers. The perspective that she is addressing and criticising involves *reference to a wide-ranging interpretation of history that is seemingly based on an a priori notion of a discontinuity that is held to have happened in European history in the periods of the Renaissance and the Reformation*. Roper claims that historians in general have given the impression that the Reformation and the Renaissance curtailed through regulation the hitherto free, instinctive life which people had enjoyed in medieval Europe. Her argument is that both Elias and Weber identify the history of early modern Europe and after in terms of the rise of the 'rational' and the repression of all that is irrational in people. That is to say, in her Freudian interpretation of Elias's and Weber's writings, she sees them as arguing that the rational ego steadily takes control over the irrational id and its concomitant impulses and instincts. According to Roper, disciplinary ordinances, or what I shall refer to as public order legislation, in Elias's and Weber's writings, are held to act as both a confirmation of the existence of repression and as its cause. Hence, in referring to Elias's work she says:

Civilization is counterposed to instinct, and the body is conceived as an anarchic collection of drives which civilization, even in its most 'advanced' form, keeps under tenuous control. In much historical writing influenced by Elias, this view of the period before the rise of the bourgeois, disciplined individual finds its counterpart in a picture of the free, undisciplined culture of pre-Reformation carnival, a vision which owes much to the work of the Russian cultural theorist Bakhtin on the writings of Rabelais (Roper, 1994, 6-7).

Although this view seems ostensibly to be similar to the previous (Marxist) perspective in that it appears to endorse the idea that the proclamations of state legislators suppressed rough and disorderly behaviour, it is in fact, as I shall demonstrate later, subtly different. And yet Roper herself rejects this line of reasoning that she attributes to both Weber and Elias in favour of a perspective that is influenced by Foucault and his aforementioned analysis of power. Here, Roper applies Foucault's analysis of desire, sexuality and power to disciplinary ordinances in early modern Germany (the equivalent of public order statutes and proclamations in England) and hence provides a different interpretation from the previous writers regarding the role of disciplinary ordinances in curbing violent, aggressive behaviour. More precisely, her argument, like Foucault's, is that the people responsible for the implementation of disciplinary ordinances in early modern Germany were obsessed with aggressive behaviour amongst their citizens and incited it through such legislation. However, I shall attempt to evaluate this perspective after analysing my own research findings.

I shall begin this chapter with an analysis of legislation in the late medieval and early modern periods in England, the implementation of which was concerned with disciplining behaviour. My sources are of two types: local acts and proclamations implemented by the Borough of Leicester and the proclamations of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs, whose legislation was supposed to encompass the whole of England. A single borough such as Leicester is worth considering because power during these two periods was highly decentralised in so far as local mayors, boroughs and guilds could all implement ordinances at a local level as well as administer their own punishment. Nonetheless, the monarch was still the highest power in the land, at least nominally, and could from time-to-time implement his or her own legislation. I shall proceed by examining, first of all, legislation that sought to address activities of a recreational nature before proceeding to statutes concerned with other aspects of social disciplining, principally vagabonding and vagrancy; recreations; disorderly behaviour at fairs; the carrying of arms; and blood sports. I shall first of all examine legislation enacted by legislators in the medieval and early modern periods in England.

PUBLIC ORDER AND SENSIBILITIES IN MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

Relative to later centuries, the medieval period itself was very much characterized by a sparsity of statutes and proclamations dealing with public order which indicates, implicitly, the acceptability of or tolerance towards certain forms of affective behaviour compared with later periods. One area where legislation did exist at both a local and national level is that of popular recreations. Legislation attacking popular recreations goes back to at least the fourteenth century. For example, in 1314 Edward II enacted an edict banning football. In the main, such activities were seen as either an inconvenience, as when football was played in the streets or public thoroughfares, or as lacking purpose; the aforementioned recreations did not benefit the kingdom in any instrumental way. A Royal Proclamation of 1542 (for the kingdom) summed this up thus: 'Yeomen, servants, journeymen, apprentices, laborers, and common poor artificiers do daily use and haunt dice, cards, bowls, tennis playing.....and archery is diminished and impaired' (33 Henry VIII, 1542, SR³ 3, 837). In similar vein, Edward III had forbidden gambling, hand-ball, football, club ball and throwing of stones, but according to Strutt, writing some five hundred years later, they were not forbidden

³ Statutes of the Realm.

on any account of 'evil tendency' but because they engulfed too much leisure time and distracted people from supposed training for military pursuits (Strutt, 1876, xi).

Broadly speaking, such acts and statutes reflect concern about what the common people of England were doing in their spare time, and more importantly (to the authorities), what the higher strata in society were doing (Henry VII prohibited the clergy from playing at dice and cards, and most of these acts were highly selective in who they were targeting). But in comparison to the seventeenth century these acts were sporadic and to some extent symbolic. For example, in the 'twenty- [s]econd year of the reign of Elizabeth I' an edict banished all recreation and pastimes on the Sabbath, but we are told it was at the discretion of the Lord Mayor as to whether it should be applied. The queen's advisors at the time thought it was too strict. This edict was also followed by a proclamation making pastimes acceptable after service (quoted in Strutt, 1876, XL). And yet there is some evidence that the medieval and early modern English monarchs were concerned about the roughness of some recreations and their potential for injury, although utilitarian motives may well have underlain such considerations. For example, although this edict only applied to those within the court, Henry VIII implemented the following proclamation: 'From this court I debarre all rough and [v]iolent exercises: as the foote-ball, meeter for lameing, than making able' (quoted in Strutt, 1876, xv). Nonetheless, despite the utilitarian sentiment of much of this legislation, a certain morality does underpin it. The authorities felt a need to prescribe, in certain respects, the moral behaviour of their citizens. That is to say, there is some evidence for what I shall refer to as a 'paternalistic' concern regarding harmful behaviour. By this term I mean the manner in which authority figures, whether they be the state or local government legislators or heads of households, were becoming increasingly concerned about the behaviour of their subjects (or their potential citizens) whenever their behaviour was felt not to be meeting the legislators' perceived standards of citizenship. And yet, legislators were nonetheless averse to granting what we would today call 'civil rights' among their subjects. An example that illustrates this paternalistic concern refers to a regulation in 1393 that sought to regulate street-walking by night and women of bad repute by setting a curfew of 9 o' clock unless the person was a lawful man or of 'good' repute who carried a light. Furthermore, the curfew was limited to 8 o'clock for 'aliens' whilst women were to be kept out of the city (London) as they were seen to be the cause of 'affrays, broils and dissensions' (quoted in Douglas, Vol. IV, 1953, 137). The background to this, apparently, was that many men had been slain or murdered

walking late at night. This paternalistic sentiment, caring and interventionist, but averse to giving responsibility to the state legislators' citizens, is an important characteristic of the period which, it is my contention, differentiates it from the early medieval era.

A further example of such paternalistic concern in its Tudor form is provided by a Leicester Borough Ordinance, November 19 1563, which sought to suppress time spent in ale-houses: a closing time (echoing the London curfew in the fourteenth century, cited above) of 9 o' clock was imposed. And yet these Acts and those that followed reveal a paternalistic ethos that was described earlier, for the act from 1563 stated that,

unthrifty persons being poore men & hauyng wyfe & children use commonlye to sytt & typple in alehouses & typlynghowes at suche tyme as they ought both by Godes lawes & by the lawes of this realme to be otherwyse occupied, not only to the great displeasure of God but also the impoueryssyng of them that so abuse their tyme, whylst their poore wyfes, chyldren, and famele almost starve at home for lacke of that that [sic] the said euylly disposed people superflewusley spend' (Bateson, 1905, 109)

The way in which standards regarding public order and discipline were changing can also be observed with regard to statutes dealing with vagrancy and the way in which authority figures were changing their perceptions of the poor. Vagrancy was routinely condemned during the sixteenth century and was very much linked with a re-conceptualisation of the poor and with anti-social behaviour in general. A distinction began to be drawn between the 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor. Proclamations directed at begging had in fact appeared as early as 1517 and were routinely repeated every few years or so. Such statutes, ostensibly, tried to move vagrants and beggars on from a particular physical location probably because in part, like 'bastards', they were a burden on the parish rates, but in part, because they were also associated with anti-social behaviour, in particular assault and theft. As a statute of 1594 for the arrest of vagabonds and the deportation of Irishmen put it: 'There is a multitude of able men, neither impotent nor lame, exacting money continually upon pretense of service in the wars without relief.' (SP⁴ 12/247/66, 36 Elizabeth 1). An act of 1591, three years earlier, also cast vagabonds as part of sundry 'great disorders committed in and about by great assemblies of multitudes of a popular sort of base condition' around the city of London (London, 20 June 1591, 33 Elizabeth 1). The attitudes underlying such legislation may or may not have been new, but what was different in this period was the vigorous manner in which vagrants and beggars were pursued.

⁴ State Papers.

What does this tell us about the sensibilities and behaviour of people in the societies of these times? And how can we explain the centrality of the Tudor paternalistic ethos - a sense of intervening for the perceived 'good' of the people - that characterizes much of this legislation?

I have already referred to the fact that the paternalistic ethos was not new to the Tudors; the same sort of sentiment can be traced back to at least the fourteenth century. What this ethos in its Tudor form does reveal however, is that the authorities - whether they be kings or justices of the peace - took a concern for the well-being of their citizens in a way that was far more systematic and consistent than what went before. As we have seen, the attempts to suppress ale-houses reflect, in part, a genuine concern to protect wives who sat at home waiting for their husbands, and to prevent temptation. This also informs much of the legislation that sought to suppress crime, particularly violent crime. In other words, I would argue that such legislation could be seen as a nascent attempt to protect the rights of the individual self; the authorities were now aware of the very real threats that existed to the individual. An earlier articulation of this sentiment had occurred as early as 1487 when a Royal Proclamation attempted to enforce public order; it stated: 'No manner of person nor persons ... ravish no religious woman, nor man's wife, daughter, maiden, nor no man's nor woman's servant and that no common woman follow the king's host, upon pain of imprisonment' (AC⁵ 2 Henry VII). It is a sentiment that can also be observed in a letter sent by Edward Boughton to the Mayor of Leicester, January 12 1586, concerning a vagrant ten year old child. The letter states that he [Boughton] is sending to Leicester.....

a child, Edward German, about ten years of age, who came to his house asking relief in August last, and was then almost devoured with lice. He called himself the son of Edward German fletcher of Leicester, a very poor man no way able to relieve him. He was taken in and cured of sundry sores, but fell to wandering in his old manner. The parents have neglected him and suffered him to wander in most ungodly and uncharitable manner where, by better order, he might have been a good member of the commonwealth (Bateson, 1905, 222).

The same sentiment also informs the many statutes in the sixteenth century that sought to suppress the carrying of arms. For in the early sixteenth century statutes banning arms - crossbows and handguns especially - proliferated, particularly in the boroughs of London. For example, a Royal Proclamation 18 December 1575, stated: 'Great and heinous robberies and murders have been committed both in the highways and other places in divers parts of the realm by such as do carry about them dags or pistols' (AC 9, 564, Dec 18 1575, Elizabeth I). These particular problems, it would appear, had not been resolved some

⁵ Acts of Court.

twenty years later, for a Royal Proclamation 9 September 1598 stated that, 'rogues, vagabonds, soldiers from the wars, who arming themselves with shot and other forbidden weapons, have not only committed robberies and murders upon her majesty's people in their travels from place to place, but also resisted and murdered divers constables and other that have come to the rescue'. This particular statute also placed London vagabonds under martial law (SP 40 Elizabeth I 12/268/54).

I would hypothesise that these new forms of discipline were a product of a new order in which earlier standards of behaviour were no longer tolerated as they had been. It was not that the lower classes appeared to be a political threat comparable to that perceived in the early nineteenth century. Rather, state legislators had become far more sensitive to crimes of violence and disorderly behaviour in general and sought to impose their own standards of 'good' behaviour in a (mainly) paternalistic manner. The sixteenth century, therefore, can perhaps be best described as a period of statist intervention and social disciplining, with the state's legislators assuming ever greater responsibilities over aspects of behaviour which, up to then, had been treated as private.

So far I have been concerned with the period from roughly the fourteenth to the sixteenth century. I shall now consider changes held to have occurred during and from the seventeenth century.

THE CHANGING NATURE OF PUBLIC ORDER AND SENSIBILITIES IN ENGLAND 1660-1850

These forms of legislation that were enacted during the previous time-frame, the early modern period, continued to be enacted during the seventeenth century. That is to say, statutes were repeatedly enacted during the seventeenth century that were concerned with perceived threats to public order from vagabonds or other groups perceived to have the potential to disturb the peace. For example, a statute of 1616 banned steelets, pocket dagges (pistols) and pocket daggers in the borough of Westminster (CW⁶ 82/1866), whilst a Leicester Borough report, 5 June 1648, declared: 'The eminent danger both this Corporation and Countie is in, by the greate number of evell [*sic*] affected delinquents assembled together in divers places adjacent' (Stocks, 1923, 366).

However, the view taken by many social scientists regarding the period that begins with the Restoration of 1660 is that the Restoration itself marked the closing of a period in England's history that was perceived

⁶ Court of Westminster.

to be something of an aberration (see for example, Hargreaves 1986). It is held that the old Puritan strictures were no more: theatres re-opened and dancing recommenced. In other words we would seem to be, according to these accounts, witnessing a seamless return of the revelrous, impulsive and ill-disciplined English people who acted spontaneously and aggressively.

My argument is that this is only superficially correct. It is probably true that the Puritan 'excesses' were reversed after the Restoration but it is also true that the English people of the post-Restoration period were continuing to change in certain fundamental ways: in terms of behaviour, attitudes and sensibilities. The social order was gradually changing. Many of the traits that characterized the Puritan era were still evident. People throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries still exhibited the same predisposition for impulsive, aggressive acts, as documented in the previous chapter, but what is worth noting here is the increasing sensitivity of the authorities to cruel sports and popular recreations involving public congregations of people. Let me explore these themes further by providing an overview of the period from the Restoration to the mid-nineteenth century.

The period from the Restoration to roughly the nineteenth century is a period marked by changing attitudes to recreations, revels and disorder, as well as a 'softening' of life with regard to public displays of violence and cruelty to animals. The last quarter of the eighteenth century to the first quarter of the nineteenth century, in particular, marks a fairly abrupt transformation in public order legislation although a change in attitudes towards public events involving cruelty to animals could already be detected in the late seventeenth century.

It is only in the late seventeenth century that we begin to see the first major changes taking place in attitudes towards blood sports, itself an indicator of changing sensibilities towards brutality. It is in this period, for example, that John Evelyn, a cultured country gentleman, condemned cock fighting, dog fighting and bear and bull-baiting, which in Stuart England were still popular, public events. Two examples from his diary, written in the 1660s, are instructive here. For example, this entry from his diary dated 17 August 1667, describes the baiting of a horse with dogs:

There was now a very gallant horse to be baited to death with doggs; but he fought them all, so as the fiercest of them could not fasten on him, till they ran him through with their swords. This wicked and barborous sport deserv'd to have been punish'd in the cruel contrives to get mony, under pretence that the horse had kill'd a man, which was false. I would not be persuaded to be a spectator.' (Bray, 1818, 332).

Unlike, perhaps, the Puritans' critique of blood sports which tended to dwell on the primitive and base nature of such activities, thus highlighting people's fall from grace, this description is tinged with pathos and empathy for the dying horse. It is an account that shows, quite unusually for its time, how sensibilities have been touched upon. Furthermore, in an account relating to events on 16 June, 1670, Evelyn highlights the contempt he feels for the human participants of what he takes to be a degrading sport. He tells the reader how he went with some friends to a bear garden where there was cock-fighting, dog-fighting and bear and bull baiting:

It being a famous day for all these butcherly sports or rather barbarous cruelties. The bulls did exceeding well, but the Irish wolfe-dog exceeded, which was a tall greyhound, a stateley creature indeede who beate a creull mastiff. One of the bulls toss'd a dog full into a *lady's lap*, as she sate in one of the boxes at a considerable height from the arena. The poore dogs were kill'd, and so all ended with the ape on horesback, and I most heartily weary of the rude and dirty pastime, which I have not scene, I think, in twenty yeares before (Bray, 1818, 345).

As we shall see later, by the mid-eighteenth century legislation against cruel sports had begun to proliferate.

As Malcolmson has suggested (Malcolmson, 1973, 118), up until the first half of the eighteenth century, the upper and middle classes had passively acquiesced in the culture of the common people giving them licence to riot (the 'Church and King mobs', for example) and to hold popular recreations. Gentry involvement was crucial in the popular recreations of this entire period: gentry money was required in the hiring of fairs, providing bulls, cocks, and donations (to morris dancers and hoodeners, etc.). Individual members of the upper classes acted as patrons for boxers and held positions in local authority and government which could, of course, give or take away licences for various events. Passive acquiescence - an approval or toleration of popular pastimes - was crucial if they were to survive. And yet, during the latter half of the eighteenth century, this licence was gradually being withdrawn.

The culmination of this withdrawal was a period of outright suppression of disorderly, or violent, recreations and activities involving cruelty to animals in the late eighteenth century, culminating in a proliferation of legislation during the mid-late nineteenth century. Blood sports were the first to be legislated against. Bull-baiting was banned by an Act of Parliament in 1835. Cruelty to horses, cattle and dogs were all prohibited by Acts of Parliament in 1824, 1839 and 1849 respectively. By 1840 most blood sports, at least of the common people, had been eliminated or pushed 'behind the scenes' like present-day dog-fighting.

Yet, by the mid-nineteenth century, other non-blood sports had succumbed to pressure to be either controlled or simply outlawed. Football was moved from the town centres of Alnwick, Derby and Ashbourne in 1827, 1846 and 1869 respectively. Also, as Delves's research points out, holiday festivals in Derby were growing fewer and fewer, a trend that was echoed throughout the land (Delves, 1981). Howkins, for example, notes how the thirteen 'day spree' of the Whitsun festival which had its roots in pagan, carnivalesque, fertility rituals became a one-day Bank Holiday in 1870 (Howkins, 1981). In the late eighteenth/early nineteenth centuries, the wakes fairs were in decline due to the suppression of bear-baiting, cock-fighting and bare-fist prize fighting.

Such transformations mark the ascendance of newer, more effective forms of control. For example, as we have seen in Chapter Three, a police force had been made compulsory in 1839 enabling undesirable fairs and recreations to be dispersed, such as bull-running in Stamford (prohibited in 1843). The RSPCA had been formed in 1824 which acted as a pressure group for the abolition of cruel sports and which could also monitor such activities.

And yet, I would argue that the legislation promulgated against cruel sports during the nineteenth century reflects, in part, a response to heightened sensitivities towards acts of cruelty by the 'common people'. These displays seemed senseless and cruel; cruel in the sense that, as the psychologist Anthony Storr has argued (Storr, 1992, 124), someone has the ability to empathise with the victim: the tormentor can put his or herself in the place of the victim. That is, animals, or more accurately non-human animals, cannot be cruel in this specific sense. A cat mauling a mouse does not have a conception of what it is like to be that mouse at that particular moment. This does not mean that during these periods of time the majority of the populace were necessarily less aggressive in their ways or that there was actually a lower propensity to violence than had previously been the case. As I have argued earlier, there is no simple correlation between sensitivity towards cruel acts against animals and the propensity to aggress amongst human beings. Nonetheless, what such legislation does indicate is that a change in the psyche and habitus was taking place; at the very least, certain forms of violence could no longer be tolerated. Blood sports were increasingly being defended on utilitarian grounds. For example, supporters of blood sports were defending such activities on the basis that foxes were 'vermin' and needed to be controlled. The gentry class was increasingly defending such practices on utilitarian criteria rather than that of pleasure for its own sake.

The legislation implemented against blood sports must also be seen in the light of the same trends in discipline and manners that were described earlier. Quite possibly for a number of people cruel sports merely represented the rough, loutish behaviour that characterized the 'rough working classes'. For those who wanted to better themselves such cruel practices could be described as having appeared barbaric, although for the gentry classes they were seen as part of England's tradition and could, of course, be seen as a means of entry into the circles of the gentry by the aspiring *nouveau riche*. Quite simply, the motives for banning cruel sports were probably mixed but, considered over a much longer time-frame, such legislation does act as a convenient barometer of the sensibilities of the people of England.

If one aspect of public order legislation was the concern with cruelty to animals, another was the concern with any form of public disorder where the potential for violence or rowdyism - or both - could occur. On the one hand this was a question of self-interest: the authorities by the nineteenth century could consider anything that involved mayhem, rowdyism or simply festive spirits in the public arena as a form of public disorder with one eye seemingly on the look-out for the threat of riot or insurrection. The early nineteenth century was, after all, the period of the Chartist and Reform riots. Yet, this does not provide us with a complete explanation. Popular recreations were now seen as a site for distraction and temptation in which emotions were often uncontrolled and could lead to a loss of working time. Employers, however, were not just concerned with the loss of working time as the entrepreneur, Henry Zouch, suggested, as early as 1786, when he argued: 'That when the common people are drawn together upon any public occasion.... quarrels and disturbances are too often promoted' (Malcolmson, 1973, 95). In short, Zouch was giving articulation to the idea that a new moral climate was emerging.

What my analysis so far suggests, then, is that the decline of popular, public recreations and blood sports in England, over the time-frames in question, was due to a number of factors. It becomes difficult to produce one definitive explanation for this decline. However, the question that I now want to raise, is: why exactly were public congregations of people legislated against, and was this simply a form of suppression on the part of the legislators within national and local government? These questions are important because what needs to be revealed is the extent to which open, public displays of emotions - often involving displays of aggression - were curtailed through external agents, state or local government legislators for example, or as

a result of changes in thresholds of sensitivity amongst increasing numbers of people. The two explanations are not, of course, mutually exclusive.

By focusing on one particular event in the mid-nineteenth century we can discern a number of trends in the pattern of public order enforcement. The Croydon Fair, which was successfully banned in 1855, usefully illustrates a number of trends held to be occurring during this time. The records state (HO 45, 6097, PRO Kew) that the Fair originated as a three-day event in the reign of Edward II. Over time it became a one month event with one day set apart for the sale of oxen, sheep and horses. However, in 1855 a petition was sent by the clergy and the gentry, representing the inhabitants of the town and parish of Croydon, to the Secretary of State, expressing the opinion that the Fair should not be more than one day in duration because it was an event of 'great social and moral evil' that brought crowds from London and with them demoralisation and crime, replete with dancing and drinking booths that were composed of the 'lowest descriptions of persons'. Apparently, the last fair necessitated extra police, including one inspector and two sergeants, plus twenty-six constables. Also, according to the correspondence, twenty people were apprehended - two for felony and the rest for drunkenness, but the superintendent remarked that the fair passed off fairly quietly and with less disorder than for some years.

It is certainly not clear to what extent this event was really violent but it does seem reasonable to suggest that the authorities and members of certain classes were increasingly intolerant of what can only be described as rough behaviour on the part of some of its participants. This does not mean to say that genuinely violent behaviour was absent, but again it points to an increased sensitivity to public displays of aggressive behaviour and behaviour that did not conform to the newly emerging standard of citizenship.

Clearly attitudes to public events were changing. The authorities were taking a wider conception of what constituted disorder. Aggression resulting in violence in public met with opprobrium from the authorities and respectable citizens. This conclusion, that attitudes to public displays of violence and aggression were changing in this period, has not gone unnoticed.

In a detailed examination of crime in England from 1660 to 1800 (Beattie, 1986), the historian, J. M. Beattie, argues that not only had levels of violence fallen during this period, but that attitudes had changed as well. Like myself, he cites the changing attitudes concerning cruelty to animals but in addition, he points to the behaviour of crowds as an indication of how attitudes towards violence were changing. He cites how

violence within riots had become relatively pacified compared to the early eighteenth century. In 1738 for example, a woman was accused of being an informer,⁷ she was consequently surrounded by a crowd who, according to the *London Evening Post* of May 5 1738: 'Beat her, kicking and cramming dirt in her mouth, that she died' (Beattie, 1986, 135). In the same week, an 'enrag'd mob' beat several informers, two of whom were thought to have been killed whilst a third was to die from blows that he had received. The people responsible for the beating were not professional troublemakers but ordinary men and women. Beattie goes on to argue that by the end of the century the behaviour of crowds had become subdued. He also cites how attitudes towards violence within the family were changing: by the middle of the eighteenth century stricter penalties for child abuse and wife beating had been levied by jurors and judges who were becoming hostile to such violent crimes.

To return to an earlier question - what does legislation regarding public violence, disorder and cruelty tell us about the changing nature of (mainly public) forms of aggression and violence from the late medieval era to the mid-Victorian period? It is my contention that by the mid-nineteenth century conceptions on the part of the legislating classes regarding private and public behaviour had changed, as well as sensibilities regarding displays of aggression: conceptions of disorder were now wider in scope. Public displays of aggression were not tolerated in the same way or to the same extent as they had been previously. Let me, therefore, return to the theses, which I hold to be alternatives to Elias's, that were briefly addressed at the start of this chapter.

Explaining change in sensibilities and public order: an evaluation of competing perspectives

Both of the perspectives considered so far, those mainly (but not exclusively) associated with Marxist writers, and Roper's Foucauldian perspective, have implications for our understanding of how aggression and violence came to be controlled. Let me firstly examine what I have labelled the 'suppression' argument.

This perspective is not directed at specific forms of violence as such; in fact, the main concern of these writers is with popular recreations in the post-Restoration period through to the late Victorian era. These writers, mainly social historians, are rarely linked in any underlying theoretical sense. Nevertheless, it is my contention that they all invoke an element of suppression in their explanations for the curtailment of either

⁷ A quite commonplace incident, the 1738 Gin Act for example, meant that gin had to be sold with a licence which was prohibitively expensive. Hence, attempts were made to sell it illegally.

riots or disorderly public recreations. They point to the increasing capacity of national and local government legislators to control public displays of aggression or violent behaviour relative to earlier periods in England's history.

The exact details of the various arguments are not important for my purposes; rather, it is the explanatory model or framework on which I wish to comment. The drive or impulse for the changed behaviour of state legislators during these time periods is held by these authors to have come from the forces of urbanization, industrialization and the development of capitalism. The need to discipline recalcitrant employees, to observe regular time schedules, the enclosure of public space and what Marx referred to as the 'dull compulsion of labour', are all necessary ingredients in this narrative. Different authors stress different aspects but there seems a general agreement that the patronage of popular culture by the upper and middle classes that existed in England prior to the eighteenth century, was being withdrawn in the late eighteenth century. It is held that the upper classes in the nineteenth century were, through their influence on the legislature, able to suppress activities that were either seen as a threatening, ie., public congregations of people involving large numbers, or as detracting from 'capitalist' conceptions of discipline and order. The antecedents for these changes lie (in some readings) with the demise of the so-called patriarchal order of the early eighteenth century and prior. The old patriarchal order was gradually being replaced by newly emerging market relations in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This need, in effect, to control and discipline an embryonic capitalist-industrialist workforce, can also be conceptualised as a discontinuity in the sense that a new set of disciplinary forces was unleashed that was contingent on the new relations of production and the cash-nexus. By the end of the eighteenth century employers required a new disciplined form of labour in which physical enforcement would no longer be required; an observation that is expressed by Pollard when he states that: 'Like the generals of old, they had to control numerous men, but without powers of compulsion: indeed the absence of legal enforcement of carefree work was not only one of the marked characteristics of the new capitalism, but one of its most seminal ideas' (quoted in Giddens, 1987, 175)

Such a suppression thesis is not necessarily simplistic. E.P. Thompson points to the continuance and vibrancy of popular recreations in the industrialized potteries in the Black Country during the late eighteenth century. In addition, many cruel and violent activities went underground. Many were not given

up without a fight. Nor are the lower classes automatically seen or portrayed as victims of ruling class legislation in these writings - they are seen as being relatively autonomous in relation to the ruling or dominant class(es) as the respectable elements of the working class sought to discipline and differentiate themselves from the rougher elements by disdaining the rough pleasures of the latter. They were very much 'making' their own culture. The artisan or skilled working classes implemented their own disciplinary regimen, perhaps as part of a power strategy: disciplined political action could be far more effective than simply taking to the streets as their forbears had done. But in addition, such behaviour can be seen as part of their 'improvement' and as an assertion of autonomy. The gentry patronage of old was very much an anachronism whilst the rough and ready practices and rituals of their contemporaries and forbears - folk football, etc., - were now disdained. And yet, persuasive though this explanatory framework is, there is nonetheless a problem here for writers who seek to account for these changes through recourse to explanations that solely invoke the rise of a capitalist-industrialist order. For, as Storch argues concerning change in the nineteenth century (but which could equally be applied to changes occurring in the eighteenth century): 'It is difficult to quarrel with the general statement that the rise of a specifically nineteenth century form of capitalist society "produced" far-reaching effects on popular culture, but it is still somewhat difficult to construct an adequate theory fully accounting for all the phenomena encountered by historians' (Storch, 1982, 10)

The basis of the argument that this period in history is equated with increasing suppression of disorderly or aggressive or violent activities and practices, is flawed. It is true that the imperatives of capitalism and industrialism imposed their own particular constraints on behaviour for, as Pollard's observation makes clear, capitalist enterprise possessed its own internal form of social control: the cash-nexus. And yet, as I have argued earlier, to view public order legislation as simply a top-down phenomenon is misleading. The legislation that was enacted in each epoch was derived from a number of influences. Pivotal groups in society, such as the clergy and gentry of Croydon in 1855, were becoming alarmed at what they saw as the ill-disciplined behaviour of the lower classes. State legislators had every desire to interfere and alter people's behaviour for the public good, seen from another point of view another form of control and suppression, and yet underlying this was the fact that different classes and sub-classes in society fought for legislation that would bring about the changes that they desired. Football was displaced from many public

streets because ordinary citizens did not care for it anymore. This is not to say that the authorities did not have their own agenda, an agenda that was shaped by their perceived threats to the social order - the Charter and Reform Riots, from the vantage point of the early nineteenth century state legislators, were probably perceived as nothing less than insurrectionary. Popular disturbances were suppressed because in some respects they were inimical to the needs of capital or because the values that they espoused did not seem to correspond to the values of the bourgeoisie or their political representatives. But this does not, in itself, provide a complete explanation.

Another theory that superficially shares many of the characteristics of the above is what Roper terms a 'social disciplining' thesis. Roper identifies this thesis with Elias (although Elias does not actually use the term) insofar as it is, according to Roper, largely derived from his studies of the development of absolutism in France during the early modern period. In Roper's interpretation of Elias's writings, early modern Europe marked a transformation of the religious, political and psychological identity of the European person and allowed for the early development of a modern conception of the self. During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries developing states imposed order in their citizens. But at the same time as this was going on the citizens themselves underwent psychological change, enabling them to 'submit to the authority of a civilized society' (Roper, 1994, 146).

Roper's concept of social disciplining embraces many different aspects: 'confessionalism,' a term used by Roper to refer to an increasing sense of moral duty and obligation amongst both Catholics and Protestants in sixteenth century Germany; control of the male body with regard to 'drinking and whoring' by local borough legislators; and, public disorder in general (Roper, 1994, 145). Roper recognises the importance of the role of the 'psyche' in Elias's interpretation of historical processes and how this has influenced other writers who wish to locate the 'rise of the disciplined modern subject' in the early modern period. Implicit in Roper's interpretation of Elias's writings is the suggestion that the state is not a 'class state' in the manner that has been described by Marxist writers. In Roper's interpretation of Elias it is the 'political' rather than the 'economic' that bears the brunt in the explanation of social and historical change: 'Change in the structure of state becomes the explanatory black box, the reasons for changes in manners, social comportment, even perception' (Roper, 1994, 8).

Although Roper is writing of a specific historical context - the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries - and is dealing with particular historical phenomena - the belief systems of Calvinism and their impact on social discipline, disciplinary ordinances, etc., Roper's concerns are methodological and theoretical. Specifically, Roper's account merits attention for two reasons. First, she seeks to question the impact of disciplinary ordinances on different groups in any given society, arguing that the effects of such legislation in sixteenth century Germany were contradictory and inconsistent. Disciplinary ordinances did not self-evidently give rise to a disciplined modern subject if the disciplined subject is equated (in Roper's interpretation) with Elias's 'civilised' European subject. The assertion that Elias is proposing a 'social disciplining' thesis enables Roper to claim that the developing state has not been a progressive force in early modern history in the way that Elias has depicted in his writings. Elias does not, in his studies of the civilizing process in Europe, actually examine disciplinary ordinances but the inference for Roper is clear. By implementing disciplinary ordinances the developing states of early modern Europe have played an important role in creating disciplined values, in creating a civilised, disciplined modern subject. It is this assertion that Roper rejects.

Second, Roper seeks to question the concept of regulation and its application in historical studies that have been, in Roper's interpretation, influenced by Elias's historical method. The word 'regulation' implies the simple imposition of controlling measures on human behaviour. Roper questions this: 'I want to suggest that we may need another vocabulary altogether if we are to adequately imagine the contradictory effects on human beings of disciplinary legislation' (Roper, 1994, 146). Accordingly, Roper rejects the allegedly Eliasian-influenced concept of regulation in favour of an analysis - in effect a methodology - that is influenced by Michel Foucault. Roper rejects the idea that ordinances regulated behaviour, for example that they simply controlled sexual drives. Basing her ideas on Foucault's work on sexuality and power, she argues that ordinances and discourses in sixteenth century Germany seemed to incite the desires that they were supposedly repressing: social discipline was concerned with 'drinking, gorging and whoring', but as an obsession rather than as a form of repression. Consequently, Roper argues that Eliasian-inspired historical narratives, by emphasising the historical containment of drives, give inadequate accounts of human psychology. On the contrary: 'Drives are developmental, cultural creations and we need to see "repression" as part of the double process which also create rather than represses its opposite' (Roper, 1994, 160). Roper,

in short, casts doubt on what she argues is an Eliasian-based methodology that has influenced writers who take the rise of the disciplined modern subject as read. To what extent are her assertions justified?

There are four aspects of the social disciplining thesis that Roper questions and which allow her in the last instance to reject what she regards as the Eliasian idea that discipline was the 'natural' outcome of a 'progressively expanding state' which succeeded, in sixteenth century Germany, in inculcating discipline in its subjects. Firstly, a number of competing institutions had laid claim to the moral authority to discipline, principally, the secular courts in opposition to the Church, and the guilds in opposition to both of these institutions. In that context, Roper concludes, enforcement was episodic rather than consistent. Secondly, the passing and implementation of disciplinary ordinances was not a universally uniform process: they involved the making of distinctions among the ruled and also advanced social distinctions. For example, those who enacted ordinances in seventeenth century Germany sought to create the establishment of vagrants and outsiders as particular categories of person. Non-citizens guilty of adultery were banished from the body politic while their citizen peers were given prison sentences and eventually reintegrated (Roper, 1994, 151). Furthermore, men's and women's experience of the ordinances was different; I shall, however, explore this assertion later on in the next chapter. In any case, for Roper, these disciplinary ordinances were the product of ambivalent motives: they sought to incite as well as condemn. After all, the German ruling class(es) according to Roper, needed its citizens to be capable of fighting external enemies even if at the same time it disapproved of the aggression shown internally.

These arguments are inadequate, both in Roper's interpretation of Elias's writings and in her conclusions concerning the concept of regulation. Roper is right to stress the role of the state in Elias's theory in contradistinction to so called economic models of the state, an important distinction that I shall examine later on. She is also right to point to the role of the psyche in Elias's theory as a differentiating element from the work of other historically inclined social theorists. And yet her conclusion that disciplinary ordinances do not provide evidence for the progressive role of the developing state in history (in the sense that the developing state realises a more disciplined, less impulsive citizen), does not logically follow from the criticisms that she has made - that the ordinances were not uniform; did not always prove effective, and that they were contested, etc.

Roper argues that in Germany, the disciplinary ordinances did not have the effect that was desired, but more than this, in principle, such measures create desires as much as they repress. And yet, it is difficult to arrive at this conclusion from the logic of her arguments. The fact that ordinances may not always prove effective or that they have unequal effects on different groups within a society should not surprise us. In fact, Roper's empirical findings are similar to my own. But, because ordinances and proclamations were not always effective or efficient in their implementation does not mean to say that they necessarily had the opposite effect to the desired one. The effects of such statutes on behaviour are an empirical matter. Therefore, it would seem Roper's conclusions are largely derived, *a priori*, from the theoretical ideas of Foucault on power and sexuality. There are, however, as I shall make clear shortly, at the very least, difficulties with this argument. Moreover, her evidence is ambivalent, for she only provides examples drawn from then-contemporary fiction as evidence of how some then-contemporary authors could incite the very behaviour that they were supposedly condemning. Furthermore, Roper does not make it clear as to whether she thinks the alleged rise of a more disciplined subject in the early modern period is merely a social construction of then-contemporary writers (or perhaps contemporary commentators), or is a 'real' phenomenon in its own right.

The application of Foucault's methodology by Roper is accomplished with little reference to Foucault's theoretical reasoning, and yet the criticisms levelled earlier in Chapter Two at his theory of power are still appropriate. Power, or rather the technology of power, is held to incite sexuality (and other forms of affective behaviour) rather than to repress it. The *raison d'être* of these power mechanisms does not lie in the repression of sexuality as such; rather, such mechanisms (of power) are created to regulate, monitor and administer society. But, as I argued earlier, this theory is fraught with empirical and theoretical inadequacies. Foucault's central theoretical and empirical proposition - that discourses on sexuality flourished in nineteenth century Europe, thereby proving that sexuality was not repressed, as is commonly supposed - is simply an unproven assertion. As we have seen (see Chapter Two) Giddens has challenged Foucault's assumption that such discourses, largely medical, must have filtered down to the masses. And as I have argued in Chapter Two, it is not clear in Foucault's analysis where exactly this power to incite emerges as it (power) is only utilised by dominant groups and is not created by them. Any suggestion that it emanates from 'structures', say capitalist relations, is dealt with ambivalently for fear of recreating an

economistic theory of power This is because power for Foucault is an abstraction that is neither properly rooted in either structures nor in individual experience. But notwithstanding these lacunae and contradictions, Roper's critique of the concept of regulation and its application in historical research fails because, like Foucault, she equates disciplinary forces and regulation with repression.

This is an equation that allegedly appears in the work Freud – and in that of Elias, according to Giddens's misinterpretation of Elias. From a Freudian perspective civilization bequeaths greater social and individual control of the individual and collective id and hence a repression of basic drives. However, this is a complex problem that I shall return to in the next chapter. Suffice it to say, for now, that disciplinary control and certain forms of 'liberating' affective behaviour are in fact compatible.

In conclusion, the above authors would appear to deal inadequately with the developing state's role in the transformation of violent, aggressive and cruel practices in pre-industrial England. But, given these inadequacies, what conclusions can be inferred from the above analysis concerning public order legislation?

Changes in affective behaviour are, in a sense, a function of power relations at a number of inter - connecting levels. A number of power strategies have been used in different contexts and at different levels, so that for example, during the late eighteenth century what I have described as paternalistic relations that characterized the immediately preceding period gradually disappeared. As we have seen, by the end of the eighteenth century the gentry had withdrawn their patronage from popular recreations whilst at the same time the lower classes had become empowered in a number of ways.

Historical research on rioting reveals a number of more disciplined protest movements to have emerged in the late eighteenth century (see for example, Rude, 1981) - the disciplinary regimen of the skilled working class guilds can in part be explained by this. These groups also eschewed the rough ways of the other working classes. The proclamations of state legislators at this time were less characterized by paternalistic sentiments: much legislation was put into effect with, perhaps, the 'insurrectionary' masses in mind so that any form of public gathering was seen to be potentially threatening. But empowerment is not just a question of political strategies. The lower and middle classes were also gradually changing their affective behaviour and responses so that, for example, legislation concerning the prevention of cruelty to animals could become a reality during the mid-nineteenth century. There may have been various motives for such legislation, but there is little question that such legislation was prompted by a change in the

sensibilities of the mass of the population. Similarly rough, disorderly behaviour at fairs and public gatherings was disdained by the 'respectable' masses - again, for a variety of reasons. Gradually, over time, individuals become more able to control their emotional drives in a less impulsive manner and to direct their emotions more flexibly, that is to say, in ways that were more appropriate to changing social situations and circumstances. This is an empowerment - an affective or emotionally invested empowerment, a concept that I shall develop further in Chapters Five and Six.

Given the above arguments, it would appear that an important aspect of Elias's civilizing process concept, the way in which people's sensibilities become more refined as a result of people becoming involved in longer and longer chains of interdependencies, is, given the (limited) evidence presented in this chapter concerning the time-frames selected for discussion, highly plausible. People were becoming more self-disciplined as a result of their sensibilities becoming more refined, and although it could be said that many activities in pre-industrial England - popular pastimes, blood sports etc - were disappearing from the social landscape as a result of their suppression by local authorities or national legislators who were merely reflecting the interests of the capitalist upper classes, to argue that suppression alone was responsible for these changes is inadequate. At the very least, legislation, when it did occur, reflected the changed sensibilities of, initially, the 'respectable' groups in society, and then increasingly the masses. Similarly, Roper's conclusion that disciplinary ordinances merely incited the behaviour they were supposedly condemning is also inadequate as a proposition, insofar as she does not take into account the way in which disciplinary ordinances were a product of a number of (often competing) motives, including people's desire to be rid of rough, disorderly public behaviour.

I shall now explore this theme of sensibilities and social order further by examining another aspect of Elias's framework for the study of aggression and violence: changes in drives, drive-controls and trajectories and gender differences in affective behaviour. This will be the subject of Chapter Five.

Chapter Five: Drives, Drive Controls and Trajectories and Gender Differences in Affective Behaviour.

In one sense this chapter can be read as an extension of the thesis pursued in the previous chapter: how affective relations and sensibilities have changed over a duration of some five hundred years. But, more than this, in attempting to establish a framework for the study of aggression and violence I shall consider a number of competing conceptions concerning drives, drive-controls and trajectories and gender differences in affective behaviour, for I wish to argue that it is these concepts that influence our thinking about the roots of aggression and violence. More specifically, I shall examine a number of 'models' that are precisely concerned with the relationship and connections between displays of emotional behaviour, such as aggression and sexuality, and the drives or instincts that are held to underlie the release of these emotions. There are three writers in particular who, I believe, have attempted to address these issues surrounding trajectories in emotions and drive controls, who in effect provide 'models' for our understanding of affective behaviour; those belonging to Giddens, Freud and Elias. This is not to say that other models do not exist, but as will become apparent, there are a number of interconnected influences here: Elias has acknowledged Freud's influence on his early writings and, as I shall argue later, Giddens's writings are a reaction to the writings of both Freud and Elias.

Let me just take one model of affective behaviour and drive controls that I shall address in greater detail later in this chapter: Freud's psychological model of behaviour in which he established links between instincts for aggression and instincts for sexual behaviour in an attempt to explain changes in emotional controls and affective behaviour in modern, European society. Freud, it is held, argued that a 'repression' of instinctual behaviour, that is to say, a 'repression' of sexual and aggressive drives, was a pre-requisite for 'civilized' behaviour in Western societies in which aggression would no longer be directed 'outwards' but 'inwards' towards the self. However, according to Freud, the human price that has to be paid for the possibility of more passive and less aggressive behaviour is a repression of humankind's sexual and aggressive instincts.

Accordingly, I shall be examining the nature of changes in emotional controls, not only over the time periods selected for discussion in this thesis, but in more recent times as well, for the models that I have selected for discussion have implications for our understanding of people's displays of affective behaviour,

including the propensity to aggress, in the modern era. For example, to what extent has affective behaviour in the modern era become more or less controlled, more or less 'open' and 'free'? Is it the case that in the modern era we are witnessing displays of increasingly controlled forms of emotional behaviour? If this is the case, what are the implications for our understanding of why both *interpersonal* and collective forms of violence have purportedly increased in modern, industrialised countries? More fundamentally, is it the case that some form of repression of people's drives or instincts is a pre-condition for behaviour deemed to be more 'civilized' – more passive and internally controlled in other words? Or, is it the case that, as Giddens has argued, a more emotionally 'liberated' individual has emerged in modernity, less psychologically 'repressed' who also happens to be, Giddens implies, less aggressive in his or her behaviour?

This an area of study in which some of Elias's critics argue that his concept of civilizing processes is incompatible with the more open displays of permissive behaviour held to be a characteristic of European people in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries; a critique of Elias which Mennell refers to as the 'permissive society' argument (Mennell, 1992, 241). More specifically, for critics like Giddens, civilizing processes entail repressive mechanisms which are incompatible with, it is held, the more liberated behaviour of people in contemporary European society. This chapter, therefore, will be concerned with affective behaviour 'in the round' in an attempt to explain trajectories in emotional controls in the modern era and to illuminate the precise relationships between drives and drive-controls. Let me, therefore, begin this analysis with an overview of affective-sexual behaviour in the time periods selected for discussion in this thesis as this will provide, in part, an empirical basis for evaluating the aforementioned models concerning drives, drive controls and trajectories and gender differences in affective behaviour.

My research combines both primary sources and the research of other historians. The primary resources refer to those already cited in Chapter Three, the local borough records of Leicester compiled by Bateson, which will be combined with the research of Lawrence Stone (Stone, 1990), which refers predominantly to the early modern period, and another historian of the early modern period, Quaife (Quaife, 1979). Quaife's research concerns depositions presented between 1601 and 1660 to the Quarter Sessions of the County of Somerset and to the Consistory Court of the Diocese of Bath and Wells. As Quaife argues, these depositions provide one of the few sources from which the activities and attitudes of the illiterate lower orders can be

discerned and cover almost every aspect of human endeavour in the minuscule world of the rural parish. But first, let me just give a brief overview of Stone's research which relies predominantly on diaries.

Stone's argument is that during the fifteenth century and prior, peasant or lower order attitudes towards sex were essentially amoral in that a great deal of sex between individuals was illicit, that is to say it took place outside marriage. However, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the extended network of the family diminished while the nuclear core was strengthened in an 'age of patriarchy', in which the state and male heads of household took greater control over the moral behaviour of the family (Stone, 1990, 109). Increased brutality was one outcome as greater efforts were made to regulate the moral behaviour of children. There was also some evidence, paradoxically, of more affectionate relations between husbands and wives relative to the medieval era and of a resurgence of Christian morality among the lower orders. By the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries this patriarchal power gave way to the notion that all human beings were unique which presaged a period of what Stone calls affective individualism (Stone, 1990, 262). These attitudes, in which relations were now based on the notion of love and affection among adults, initially predominated amongst the companionate families of the upper classes to be followed, in a process of stratified diffusion, by the lower orders. Sexual morality was now characterized by indifference as individuals were now concerned solely with the economic consequences of having children.

Quaife, like Wrightson in a different context previously cited, criticises Stone's over-reliance on upper-class sources such as diaries. Basing his conclusion on the depositions, Quaife argues that, in essence, Stone's perceived behaviour characteristics of the medieval period and the eighteenth century - licentiousness and economic rationalism respectively - were both present in the early seventeenth century. There was in fact little evidence of a puritanical morality among the lower orders. But to return to my original two questions: what were the characteristics of affective relations in the pre-modern era, and what characterized moral attitudes during this time period?

According to Quaife's findings, during the medieval period sexual activity was, according to Christian precepts, licit only if a number of conditions existed: sexual intercourse between husband and wife should take the form of the missionary position; it should only take place for the purpose of procreation and it should not conflict with prohibitions related to the Christian calendar. Yet, by the seventeenth century, the areas of sexual activity deemed to be illicit had contracted considerably. For example, a clergyman who

preached against the trend was excommunicated for 'meddling with private matters of matrimony' (Quaife, 1979, 38). However, an act of 1650, in the period of the Commonwealth, made it clear that incest and adultery carried the death penalty whilst fornication was to be punished with a three-month gaol sentence (Quaife, 1979, 41).

In most cases the sexual act was a private affair but many acts during this period became public knowledge; the authorities were quickly informed by members of the public of any cases of adultery, suspicious company and fornication in public. That early modern England appeared to be an intolerant society regarding people's attitudes towards sexual and affective behaviour is suggested by what Stone refers to as an 'explosion' in litigation between 1560 and 1620 (Stone, 1983, 31). According to Stone cases brought before the civil courts concerning the denunciation of neighbours for sexual deviance, as well as those concerning slander of all kinds by neighbours (mostly women), increased far faster than the demographic growth of this period. The following extract concerning a minor but not unimportant incident recorded at a court hearing in Leicester in the year 1598, provides us with an example of the sort of activities that were often denounced and gives an indication of the context eg., marital infidelity, in which these activities took place. The court hearing states that:

Thomas Alsoppe of Leicester, saddler, saythe that on Tuesday the fourth of Julye last past, he sawe two persons viz. the wief of Thomas Stapleford of Leycester [*sic*], joyner, and one Thomas Hodges of Great Glenne in the countye of Leicester, husbondman, togeyther in suspicious maner in a parler in wydowe Yates howsse in Leycester, and the dore shut to them, and dyd see hym kysse her vpon the bedd in the parler, also he saythe, that Robert Clyfton, sadler, the constable of the ward, dyd see them in the said parlour (Hall papers 11, No. 550, July 7, 1598, Bateson, 1905, 344).

It would appear that during the early modern period in England people could be denounced for what appear to be from our standpoint today the most trivial of matters. Furthermore, the explosion in litigation referred to by Stone possibly indicates that a break down in what Stone calls traditional methods of arbitration had occurred. However, the sudden rise in litigation in 1560 followed by its equally sudden decline in 1620 is something of a vexed issue for historians and still demands a definitive explanation. Moreover, early modern England could be said to be not just an intolerant society in respect of attitudes towards promiscuity but also a society where people lacked restraint over their sexual urges. For example, according to Quaife's research, approximately one tenth of girls consented to sexual intercourse through violence or the fear of violence (Quaife, 1979, 27).

In the Christian interpretation of sexual norms men had complete sexual freedom as long as it did not impinge on the property rights of other men. But, according to Quaife, this did not conform to the realities of village life where there were three competing sexual norms: a Christian morality amongst the respectable middle class women; male freedom for respectable men; and, amorality amongst the majority. The immoral behaviour amongst unruly women, cited by Stone, was according to Quaife, rare.

Male attitudes to sex and women reflected this moral dichotomy. During the early modern era men had a low regard for the rights of women: any woman was seen as a legitimate object of a man's desires. Attitudes towards sexuality amongst men and women differed greatly. In general, women were seen as sexually voracious and as needing men to satiate their female lust. Quaife's study of the legal records shows that lower-class women displayed considerable sexuality; many girls prided themselves on their lustiness and were not backward in praising their sexual prowess. Accordingly, men assumed that most females were anxious to have intercourse with them and appeared to treat them as objects. For example, men who were alone with women considered it natural, almost obligatory, that they should attempt their chastity or fidelity. According to Quaife, there was little reference to the real sexual needs of the female (Quaife, 1979, 182). This view is illustrated by an incident in Somerset in the year 1607 when a peasant was caught in the act of fornication by a rector and several respectable parishioners. When the couple were informed by the clergyman that they must look to be punished for what they had done the parishioner replied: 'Did you never see a cow bulled before?' (AM Wollfall, 1607, SR 2 or Quaife, 1979, 183).

Respectable women had to conform to the Christian model - intercourse for procreation with their husbands - whilst peasants, both men and women, enjoyed sexual freedom but in an environment in which women were seen as sexually voracious. This moral dichotomy between men and women is also reflected in the patterns of punishment. The punishment provisions of most orders were directed predominantly against the woman. Of several hundred orders investigated by Quaife only eight imposed corporal punishment on the man and all these involved a second offence (Quaife, 1979, 216). Also, as the Leicester Borough records show (see Chapter Four), at least for the fifteenth century, punishment for 'bastardy' and adultery fell heavily on the woman.

In conclusion, in describing the characteristics of sexual activity in the late medieval and early modern periods, Quaife argues that illicit sexual invitations were direct and to the point. Few girls considered the

morality of their act in agreeing to fornication or in bemoaning their fate as a consequence. Alongside this, the Church of England had developed a liberal attitude toward the purposes of marriage and sex in the middle of the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. According to Quaife, clergymen who confronted their parishioners were regularly punished (Quaife, 1979, 248). What conclusions, then, can be drawn regarding affective relations and attitudes in this period?

One should be wary of ascribing present-day moral judgements on the sexual behaviour of people in the past. To say that attitudes towards sexual behaviour were liberal or illiberal is merely to suggest that attitudes were relatively tolerant or intolerant by the standards of society today. To say that behaviour and attitudes were immoral or amoral is to make a judgement according to the standards or norms of the time as laid down by the main authority on morals at the time: the Church. Differences of judgement, in this respect, do occur between Stone and Quaife. For Quaife the immorality of the lower orders in the medieval period, as contended by Stone, and the predominance of puritanical attitudes in the early modern period, are exaggerated. One could ascribe to Quaife's position a far greater degree of liberality and tolerance amongst the lower orders compared to Stone's; amorality rather than immorality is seen to be the dominant characteristic in Quaife's judgement. But, relative to the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, I would argue that during this time attitudes were illiberal and intolerant. Whilst it may appear that attitudes were quite permissive in the sense that urges and emotions were often uncontrolled, implying that people possessed greater sexual freedom relative to their counterparts in present-day society, such a view does not take into account the idea that rights concerning people's sense of inviolability, particularly when applied to women, did not exist to the same degree as in our society today. That is to say, women during the pre-modern era had fewer rights compared to their counterparts today. For example, until recently, it was still licit for a husband to forcibly have sexual intercourse with his wife. This did not, in English law, constitute rape.

As we have seen, women were portrayed as a target of men's lust. Conversely, the psychological restraints and social controls that inhibit sexual urges amongst men today, in relative terms, were less pronounced during this period. Also, whilst the stricter, ascetic elements of the Church's sexual and moral codes were to some degree ignored by the populace at large, nonetheless, attitudes were by the standards of present-day society highly illiberal: the harsh treatment meted out to homosexuals, adulterers and

fornicators, as well as the suspicion and hostility amongst neighbours regarding any form of carnal behaviour, indicate this.

Furthermore, there is little evidence of affection within marriages, a point emphasised by Stone. Quaife, pointedly, often uses the word lust rather than love or affection to characterize sexual behaviour. Certainly, intimacy in sexual relations was often physically not possible given the lack of privacy within households at the time, although Quaife does make the point that the Somerset peasant who engaged in either licit or illicit sex found privacy if he or she thought it necessary. However, there is some evidence that by the eighteenth century attitudes and behaviour were rapidly changing.

The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are characterised by Stone as the beginning of a period of affective individualism (Stone, 1990, 149). It was marked by four features in particular: children were now treated as a special status group; warmer affective relations existed between the husband, wife, parents and children compared to the previous era; there was a recognition and acceptance of sensuality in relations, and sex and death were both 'excluded as sources of information' (that is to say, as subjects of discussion); unlike the previous eras, death was no longer treated as a public ritual and spectacle in which frequent deaths were seen as a warning against excessive affective involvement with others.

For Stone the rise of the affect is only partly a product of individualism. Instead, it has its roots in basic personality changes. Whereas according to the ideologies of the medieval period, the family, clan and village presided over the individual, and whereas in the seventeenth century the individual was seen as unique but nonetheless free to impose his will on others (the era of patriarchal power), the beginning of the eighteenth century was marked by an ideology that saw all human beings as unique. Once again one has to adopt a relativistic position whenever moralist judgements are being made pertaining to notions of liberalism and affects. Roy Porter's summation of the early eighteenth century compared to the late twentieth (Porter, 1982) for example, emphasises the guilt that accompanied sexual activities; the intolerance of sexual activities that did not fall within the various authorities' definition of the licit; and, the continuing dichotomy in sexual attitudes between men and women. For example, sexuality was still characterised by dirt, disease and a lack of privacy, so that sex was seen as perfunctory and functional. Family disgrace, community shame and church courts punished those who stepped out of line; popular bawdy embodied subconscious male fears of cuckoldry, castration, impotence and the insatiability of

women. Sexual libertinism was rife in royal circles but such libertinism cannot, relative to present-day society, be equated with liberal attitudes such as the toleration of sexual permissiveness. For example, much Restoration comedy was by the standards which are dominant today erotic and obscene but the pornography was aimed to disgust and shock - 'pleasures were guilty' (Porter, 1982, 3).

Yet, according to Porter, the Enlightenment saw a rejection of all of the above. It was above all constituted by naturalistic and hedonistic assumptions in which sex was pleasurable and naturalistic, that is, men were urged to follow their natural impulses in a manner that did not imply guilt. A felicific calculus of happiness came to be linked to sexual gratification whilst the body was seen as a seat of sensation (Porter, 1982, 5). There occurred also, perhaps for the first time, an intellectualisation of sex as discourses regarding sex as a facet of personal relations prevailed. Open sexual discussions were now desired. A marked feature of Georgian sexuality in fact was its public nature, openness and visibility. Sexual indulgence was open, easy and, according to Porter, unrepressed. Sex in public was quite acceptable and prostitution now existed in over 10, 000 clubs in London (Porter, 1982, 7).

In conclusion, one could say that by the standards of the Middle Ages, sexual relations were less characterized by guilt; hitherto sexually deviant practices were now tolerated to a far greater degree than before; the sex act was subject to less regulation (from religious and government bodies); affective relations were now characterized by more intimate sensibilities in which people now felt a certain freedom to discuss sexual problems, whilst sexual impulses could now be controlled within a new framework of affective-sexual relations. For example, women were no longer *just* seen as sexually voracious and as objects to satisfy men's lusts.

Although this is a broad-brush picture which ignores the undoubted fluctuations in permissiveness and submissiveness that occur over different time periods, it nonetheless serves to highlight the fact that significant changes had occurred in affective-sexual relations over a period of some five hundred years. At the very least, a development of intimacy within affective-sexual relations between individuals became more pronounced over time whilst sexual behaviour was becoming more open in societies in which people were starting to adopt more liberal attitudes towards particular forms of sexual behaviour eg., homosexuality, that were hitherto seen as 'deviant' and unacceptable. However, this conclusion raises what is ostensibly a paradox in this thesis. Following Elias, I have argued that over the time periods in question English society

as a whole was becoming less tolerant of acts of aggression and violence - emotional impulses involving aggressive acts were more readily *controlled* from within the individual psyche and habitus rather than from the imposition of external constraints. In other words, a change in the psyche and habitus, that is to say, a change in the balance of the composition of the psyche and habitus had occurred. And yet, how does this idea equate with the theme of the above discussion, that emotions have, at least in the realm of sexual relations, become *less controlled*, freer, and less regulated by external authorities? Moreover, what are the implications of these changes in sexual relations for our understanding of present-day expressions of emotions, and what precisely is the underlying relationship between drives and drive-controls?

What is at issue here in one sense, is the usage of language. For as I have argued earlier in this chapter, in some readings of Elias the concept of civilizing processes can be interpreted as a theory of *repression* where the controls that he identifies are essentially repressive. For example, when referring to Elias specifically, Giddens states that, he 'builds his theory very directly around the theorem that increasing complexity of social life necessary entails increased psychological repression' (Giddens, 1985, 240). That is to say, the control of impulses, whether they be aggressive, sexual, etc., are inhibited in a Freudian manner. Let me, therefore, begin this particular analysis by reference to Giddens's critiques of both Elias and Freud regarding the concept of repression, for as I shall argue later, Giddens's critique of Elias is based on an assumption that Elias's ideas are based on a Freudian notion of repression. I shall first of all discuss Giddens's critique of Freud, but I would also emphasise that Giddens's own writings can be viewed as a reaction to his understanding of the theses put forward by *both* Freud and Elias. I shall then discuss what I take to be Giddens's misplaced critique of Elias before elaborating on Giddens's own account of trajectories in emotional controls in modern-day Western societies. The above analysis will eventually provide a framework for analysing, in Chapter Six, what I take to be the key features of emotional, aggressive behaviour in contemporary Western societies and will also provide a basis for attempting to illuminate the roots of aggression and violence.

Giddens's critique of Freud is aimed primarily at the thesis presented in Freud's *Civilisation and its Discontents* (1930), but it is equally clear that Giddens objects to Elias's concept of civilizing processes for the same reason that he objects to Freud's analysis of modern civilization: in Giddens's interpretation of Elias's and Freud's writings both writers analyse modern, Western societies in terms of ever increasing

levels of repression. With regard to Freud's work specifically, Giddens argues that Freud was wrong in equating the advancement of 'civilized' society with increasing internal psychological repression which is expressed within individuals as a form of guilt. Giddens rejects what he takes to be Freud's central idea that a repression of drives, particularly sexual ones, which engender feelings of increased guilt, is a pre-condition for 'civilized' behaviour.

It is the growth of permissiveness since the late Victorian era within Western society that Giddens cites as evidence of a trend that disproves Freud's predictions, as extrapolated from *Civilisation and its Discontents*. In effect, Giddens is arguing that Freud (and the same argument I believe is directed at Elias) assumed that the historical advancement of modern society - at least in the West - was predicated on a repression of emotions and affects that runs counter to the empirical reality of modern Western societies. Crucial to Giddens's understanding of Freud is the notion of guilt, residing within the superego, as constituting repression. According to Giddens repression in Freud's work is conceptualised in terms of guilt and the conscience. Indeed, according to Giddens, it was Freud's intention to represent a sense of guilt as the most important problem in the development of civilization. To illustrate this point Giddens quotes the following statement from Freud's *Civilization and its Discontents*: 'The price we pay for our advance in civilization is a loss of happiness through the heightening of the sense of guilt' (Freud, 1963, 71). According to Giddens's interpretation of Freud, 'civilization' - a society which Freud describes as 'the whole sum of the achievements and regulations which distinguish our lives from those of our animal ancestors and which serve two purposes - namely to protect men against nature and to adjust their mutual relations' (Freud, 1963, 26) - can only be built upon a renunciation of instincts and pre-supposes that they cannot be satisfied in 'civilized' societies. The desires and instincts that are suppressed in modern, Western societies by 'external' authorities - such as parental figures or (in a reifying term used by Freud) the community itself - lead to feelings of guilt through the mechanism of the superego or conscience as individuals try to come to terms with these repressed desires.

I believe that (in the present context) Giddens is partly correct in his interpretation of Freud. In particular he is correct in arguing that the difficulty of Freud's thesis presented in *Civilisation and its Discontents* is that he cannot provide adequate concepts or a framework that would allow us to understand the advent of the so-called 'permissive society' of the 1960s as well as changes in attitudes towards sexuality

that have taken place more generally in advanced Western societies in the last century. Giddens denies Freud's insight that people in modern Western societies, in contrast to less advanced societies, are characterized by guilt, at least with regard to sexuality. Giddens's assertion that societies in the West are only repressed in an 'institutional' sense – to be discussed later - and not in terms of a Freudian notion of guilt does seem, at least to some extent, plausible. For example, the historical research discussed earlier, in particular that of Stone, does suggest that people in Western societies are less inhibited, more self-reliant and intimate in their private, sexual behaviour than their counterparts were in pre-modern societies. Freud's writings in this respect may have been unduly influenced by the social climate of his boyhood years, when in late nineteenth century Europe, public displays of sexuality were more inhibited than they had been in the eighteenth century, while middle and upper class women were protected by middle and upper class men and from the more coarse or vulgar aspects of society. I would also argue that Freud seems to confuse what we might today refer to as 'lust', which was arguably a more dominant characteristic of people's behaviour in pre-modern societies, with a notion of sexual love that embraces intimacy and affection. He seems to equate the suppression of lustful instincts or drives with a repression of sexual drives in general. However, this does not take into account, as I shall detail later on, the idea that sexual drives are in a sense socially moulded, for as Elias has argued, the sexual drive in modern, advanced Western societies has been channelled into feelings of intimacy and affection within more privatized relationships.

I would argue further that Freud was led into this theorizing through adopting a somewhat rigid conception of instincts and drives, one that seems to regard raw drives and instincts as immutable and given. For example, with regard to the 'instinct' of aggression Freud stated that, 'aggression is an original, self-subsisting instinctual disposition in man'(Freud, 1963, 59). And yet Freud seems to have only arrived at this conclusion through a speculative type of reasoning with little reference to empirical studies. The same type of reasoning is to be found in other areas of his work. For example, according to Strachey, in his introduction to Freud's 1963 edition of *Civilization and its Discontents*, Freud, in his early work (for example, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, 1905), conceptualised aggression either in terms of the libido, the source of all instinctual energy, or in terms of a self-preservation instinct. Hence sadism, the main form of aggression discussed in Freud's early work, was related to the sexual instinct. Strachey goes on to argue that Freud did hypothesize that there might be an independent source for aggression (that is to say,

independent of sexuality) such as acts of cruelty which, it is held, Freud related to the instinct for self-preservation. However, in 1920 Freud introduced his concept of the death instinct - *thanatos* - which represented a new independent source for aggression even though here, aggression is conceived of as secondary to the death instinct or destruction. Perhaps, though, the main implication of Freud's later writings (post-1920) in this context, is that he developed his ideas concerning the 'repression' of instincts. In his earlier writings, according to Strachey, repression was analysed in terms of internal factors. For example, 'innately determined barriers' such as incest taboos, held by Freud to be 'racially ingrained' in all societies thus preventing certain forms of sexual activity from taking place. However, in his later writings, beginning with *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud began to analyse the repression of instincts in terms of external or social factors, an analysis that is fully attempted in *Civilisation and its Discontents*.

Simply put, the aggression normally shown to external individuals (such as parental figures) - a form of self-preservation - was, under 'civilized' conditions, sent back to the ego through the mechanism of the super-ego: the conscience. Freud argued that initially a child's ego, when submitting to desires - sexual or aggressive - fears a loss of love as when a child attempts to conceal the fact that he or she has given in to a desire. The concealment ensures that he or she does not lose the love of the parent. For adults, however, the parental figure is replaced by other authority figures within the community. This parental/authority figure within civilized societies becomes internalised within the superego and is expressed as a sense of guilt. Even though instincts continue to be repressed by the community, individuals nonetheless, still possess such desires which through the workings of the super-ego create a sense of guilt: a guilt that resides in the conscience. Freud sums it up thus for any given individual:

His [*sic*] aggressiveness is introjected, internalized; it is, in point of fact, sent back to where it came from - that is, it is directed towards his own ego. There it is taken over by a portion of the ego, which sets itself over against the rest of the ego as super-ego, and which now, in the form of 'conscience', is ready to put into action against the ego the same harsh aggressiveness that the ego would have liked to satisfy upon other, extraneous individuals. The tension between the harsh super-ego and the ego that is subjected to it, is called by us the sense of guilt; it expresses itself as a need for punishment (Freud, 1963, 60).

The above analysis, then, suggests that Freud's analysis of emotional trajectories in modern Western societies is flawed in the sense that he is unduly concerned with increasing levels of guilt even though, as Giddens argues, guilt has not necessarily been manifested as a dominant aspect of people's behaviour (with regard to sexual behaviour at least) in modern Western societies. Nonetheless, the strength of Freud's

analysis is that he has identified aspects of behaviour in modern Western societies that have become socially prohibitive, a point that I shall make clearer later on when examining the ideas of Giddens.

As stated earlier, Giddens has criticised Elias for making the same error as Freud: both writers, according to him, analyse emotional trajectories in modern societies in terms of increasing levels of repression. The argument that I want to pursue at this point, however, is that Giddens's critique of Elias is wrong. And yet I hope to demonstrate, to put it schematically and simply, that Elias, by highlighting the socially prohibitive elements in people's behaviour in a developmental manner and yet, by avoiding an allegedly rigid Freudian notion of repression, is able to assert some of the strengths of Freud's analysis whilst avoiding its weaknesses. My starting point here is Giddens's assertion that Elias's theory of civilizing processes is based on a notion of repression. Let me, therefore, turn to Giddens's critique of Elias.

I would argue that in discussing Elias's work, Giddens has been unduly influenced by Freud's concept of repression, or at least what Giddens takes to be the idea of repression in Freud's work, and has consequently confused the idea of suppression in Elias's work with a notion of repression. Let me elaborate.

The key to Freud's analysis of 'repression' in modern societies (in his post-1920 writings) I would argue, is the renunciation of instinct, for when Freud analysed civilization he did so in the following manner: 'It is impossible to overlook the extent to which civilization is built upon a renunciation of instinct, how much it presupposes precisely the non-satisfaction (by suppression, repression or some other means?) of powerful instincts' (Freud, 1963, 34). But, as the quotation makes clear, the extent to which one can use the word 'repression' to describe Freud's analysis of the renunciation of instincts in 'civilized' societies is a contentious point. Nonetheless, Elias's analysis of people's aggressive and sexual behaviour differs from Freud in the sense that Elias used the 'weaker' term, drive (*Trieb*) rather than the term instinct to describe the way in which emotions are released. The former term does not have the same essentialist connotations as the latter. Furthermore, the term drive is even considered by Elias as too essentialist a term when specifically referring to aggression. For example, when referring to aggression, he makes it clear that rather than it being a pre-disposition in humankind, it is not a separable species of 'drive' and that, 'at most, one may speak of the "aggressive impulse"' (Elias, 2000, 161). The main point here, however, is that for Elias, drives only exist in a raw, unmoulded state within a pre-social new-born baby; otherwise, drives are socially moulded: an aggressive impulse could be displayed and channelled in a number of different ways and take a

number of different forms. Similarly, sexuality or the sex-drive can be channelled in a number of different ways. The concept of suppression in Elias's work seems to invoke this idea. The term suppression, when used by Elias refers to a channelling of behaviour from the public to the private sphere. An effective illustration of this is the way Elias traces the manner by which sexual relations in modern, European societies became privatized and took on a more intimate form: 'With the advance of civilization the lives of human beings are increasingly split between an intimate and a public sphere, between private and public behaviour' (Elias, 2000, 160). And when speaking of the sex drive he says: 'The drive has been slowly but progressively suppressed from the public life of society' (Elias, 2000, 158). In the same manner he speaks of times when 'intimization' was less advanced and that the trend of the [European] civilizing movement is 'towards the stronger and stronger and more complete "intimization" of all bodily functions' (Elias, 2000, 159). Consequently, I feel that it is difficult to sustain the argument that sexuality within Elias's writings, in the context of modern, privatized relations, is something that has been 'repressed'. Rather, it is something that has been transformed, or even transmuted, or sublimated – transformed into something that could perhaps be said to be less like 'lust' and something that is more intimate and private than was formerly the case. Moreover, arguably, the distinction between repression and sublimation in particular was something that Elias came to recognise as having been dealt with inadequately in sociological and psychological writings in general, and even perhaps, in his earlier Freudian influenced work. For, in *Mozart: Portrait of a Genius* (1993) – one of his later writings – he stated: 'Despite its sociological significance, the problem of the human capacity for sublimation has been somewhat neglected, as compared with the capacity for repression' (Elias, 1993, 55). In fact, Elias's position on 'impulses' and their containment within increasingly civilized societies is perhaps most succinctly summarized within the aforementioned work as when he says:

Every advance of civilization, no matter where or on what level of human development it takes place, represents an attempt by human beings in their dealings with each other to pacify the untamed animal impulses which are a part of their natural endowment by means of countervailing socially-generated impulses, or to sublimate and transform them culturally. This enables people to live with each other and with themselves without being constantly exposed to the uncontrollable pressures of their animal impulses – their own and those of others (Elias, 1993, 52).

Perhaps though, the clearest distinction between Freud's and Elias's ideas in general is that Freud adopts a much weaker notion of the concept of process than Elias does. For although Freud does consider the advancement of civilization as a process viz: 'I may now add that civilization is a process in the service of

Eros, whose purpose is to combine single human individuals, and after that families, then races, peoples and nations, into one great unity, the unity of mankind' (Freud, 1963, 59) - he lacks a developmental perspective with regard to his analysis of drives and drive controls. For Elias, sexual and aggressive drives and impulses, although based on raw, unchanging elements, are constantly being socially moulded and transformed, whereas for Freud what would appear to be unchanging instincts are 'repressed' by 'civilization' itself, repressed precisely so that civilization can continue to function. As Freud described it: 'Civilization has to use its utmost efforts in order to set limits to man's aggressive instincts and to hold the manifestations of them in check by psychical reaction-formation. Hence, therefore, the use of methods intended to incite people into identifications and aim-inhibited relationships of love, hence the restrictions upon sexual life' (Freud, 1963, 49). Even if the term 'repression' is an inadequate term to apply to Freud's analysis, nonetheless, Freud does not emphasise sufficiently the processual manner in which drive controls and drives change over time.

Let me now turn to Giddens's analysis of trajectories in emotional controls in modern societies, for although, as I shall argue shortly, I believe Giddens's depiction of trajectories in emotional controls in modern societies to be wrong, nonetheless, he does provide a useful framework, particularly with regard to his ideas concerning guilt and shame, that can be (ultimately) utilized for analysing modern forms of aggressive behaviour.

As I have stated earlier, Giddens's ideas are a reaction to the theses advanced by both Elias and Freud. Giddens describes what he takes to be the relevant changes in emotional controls in the last two hundred years or so within Western societies. That is to say, Giddens traces the path by which people in the West have become more 'liberated' from the guilt complex of the superego. Crucial to his analysis is a distinction between the notions of guilt and shame. Both concepts distinguish Giddens's two epochs - pre-modernity and modernity, in abstract terms and serve to highlight the transformations that have taken place regarding this transition. Guilt as an emotional trait very much characterizes the pre-modernity period for Giddens and must be analysed in terms of the primacy of tradition considered as a set of normative prescriptions and regulations. Where these normative regulations are particularly strong, feelings of guilt are more likely to occur and consist of 'anxiety produced by the fear of transgression where the thoughts or activities of the individual do not match up to expectations of a normative kind' (Giddens, 1991a, 2). Accordingly, Giddens

implies that moral transgression and the concomitant guilt are more prevalent in traditional societies than in modern ones; guilt is held to arise from mechanisms extrinsic to internally referential systems.

If guilt, very simply, consists of feelings of wrongdoing set against a background of strong normative regulation, then shame refers to feelings of personal insufficiency and can only be understood in relation to the integrity of the self in modernity. Shame, in contrast to feelings of guilt, is linked to trust and involves a sense of personal insufficiency rather than a transgression of moral guidelines that have been externally imposed. Therefore, when it occurs, it threatens the integrity of the self. According to Giddens, guilt may affect aspects of the self but only discrete elements of behaviour and modes of retribution; shame affects the self-identity as a whole.

The burden of Giddens's argument is now apparent. The experience of shame usurped feelings of guilt as societies (in the West) gradually became internally referential. Consequently, this resulted in a liberation of the emotions: compared to the medieval era, people today are liberated from a tyrannical, Freudian guilt complex. In particular, within modernity sexuality became sequestered in the sense that it was withdrawn to the intimate confines of the bedroom and took on a privatized form in which intimacy began to predominate over lust. But, more than this, sexuality itself was 'invented' when it went behind the scenes and became the property of the individual and the body; eroticism conjoined to guilt was replaced by self-identity and a propensity to shame, hence: 'The hiding away of sexual behaviour was not so much a prurient concealment from view as a reconstitution of sexuality and its refocusing on an emerging sphere of intimacy' (Giddens, 1991a, 164). Sexual development and sexual satisfaction became bound up with the reflexive project of the self.

This does not mean to say that modern society or modernity, according to Giddens, is held to be characterized by an absence of repression. On the contrary, it is characterized by what he calls 'institutional' repression. According to Giddens (in an analysis that is highly influenced by Aries and Elias, and is acknowledged by Giddens), the sequestration of experience, discussed in Chapter Two, has given rise to an ontological insecurity as individuals no longer confront such experiences as principally death, illness and madness within the confines of the family or the community. Events such as these have been sequestered to institutions that reside outside the community, spatially and symbolically. It is this and the consequent lack of normative regulation that has given rise to what Giddens calls institutional repression:

individuals are repressed in the sense that they are unable to express their emotions – at least in public - when dealing with taboo subjects – illness, death, etc, as such phenomena have been sequestered to institutions that reside outside the day-to-day experience of people. This concept is to be separated from, as we have seen, the Freudian conception of repression: a guilt that resides within the conscience. How plausible, then, are Giddens's ideas?

My assertion is that Giddens has confused two types of guilt: a medieval-type of guilt in which guilt feelings are equated with desire and strong normative regulation, and a guilt-complex that can be said to be based on the internalization of social prohibitions arising from what Elias described as socially competitive pressures. Giddens is surely correct in analysing the manner in which strong normative regulation in pre-modern societies gave rise to strong guilt feelings whenever people transgressed these regulations. Nonetheless, there are two related problems here. In rejecting the existence or predominance of a Freudian guilt complex in modern societies, he cannot account for the less impulsive behaviour of people in such societies compared to what he calls pre-modernity or traditional societies. It is as if Giddens is not willing to recognise that some sort of psychological change has taken place with regard to displays, for example, of aggression. In emphasising the 'liberating' elements in modern life, he has unnecessarily ignored the changes that have given rise to increasing levels of controlled behaviour. Giddens has simply confused the Freudian notion of guilt with a guilt complex that could be said to have characterized people in pre-modern society, although these ideas pertaining to guilt are better conceptualised in processual terms. Hence, the guilt syndrome that characterized people in, say, medieval society, is necessarily different to that which characterizes people in modern societies. In these earlier societies guilt feelings occurred whenever people transgressed extrinsic or externally-given normative regulations and represented a conflict between desires and the conscience at a *conscious* level. That is to say, this was for a given individual a deliberately willed conflict as when, to take one extreme, people of such societies deliberately injured their own bodies to atone for the existence of their physical desires. Of course, such displays of behaviour are still to found in present-day society but would nonetheless be considered as deviant or extreme. Such behaviour involved the transgression of norms that were, and are, in Giddens's terminology, extrinsic - based on external sources (God-given laws, traditional authority, etc.). Giddens is correct in identifying the gradual disappearance of this guilt complex as externally-given norms are replaced by internally referential systems and he is also

correct in concluding that this is, in effect, liberating at an emotional level. However, Giddens is wrong in effectively discounting an idea of guilt generated through socially competitive pressures: the way in which people learn to internalize controls as chains of interdependencies become longer. Giddens's concepts of shame and guilt cannot explain or make apparent the social prohibitions that seem to have characterized modern behaviour. In this respect what is called for is a development of his concept of guilt.

As stated earlier, guilt, analysed in terms of normative regulations and extrinsic factors, could be said to have characterized people in pre-modern societies, and although it is highly unlikely that Giddens would want to argue that guilt has totally disappeared from modern societies, nonetheless, guilt seems to be an important element of behaviour in modern societies when analysed in terms of social prohibitions. Unlike people in medieval societies, people today have become more and more controlled with regard to displays of aggressive behaviour. These prohibitions however, are not generated to any significant extent through normative regulations – it is not the case that people's behaviour today in Western societies is bounded by, say, religious prescriptions or a sense of tradition to the same extent of people in 'pre-modern' societies. Rather, guilt feelings today, may be experienced as a sense of anxiety residing within the conscience or Freudian superego; a failure to meet one's own expectations: expectations that are generated through socially competitive pressures. A person failing to throw out a life jacket or even attempting to rescue a drowning person may experience guilt feelings if he or she felt that they should have done something. A law abiding person who deliberately fails to pay his or her taxes may experience this as a sense of guilt: they have engaged in behaviour that is alien to them and what they might consider as being immoral. This, then, points to a weakness in Giddens's analysis. Whereas in less advanced societies people would have followed their impulses without expressing any noticeable sense of guilt, in advanced societies an individual's superego infuses him or her with a sense of guilt when embarking on particular courses of action.

For Giddens, then, as stated earlier, guilt pervades relations within pre-modernity and is associated with repression. There is also a further problem with Giddens's analysis which stems from his dichotomous conceptualising. With regard to what I have called Giddens's notion of a medieval-type of guilt, although plausible as a characterization of pre-modern societies, it is, as Elias has observed, only one manifestation of the behaviour of people at an earlier stage of a civilizing process. In other words, the extreme guilt that could be said to have characterized the monk flagellating himself in atonement for sins of a physical nature,

can be juxtaposed with the vulgar, coarse behaviour of people who did not feel unduly sinful or repentant. It is the changing balance in people's behaviour – the way in which it becomes less discontinuous over time – that is important. Giddens's problem in this context is that in adopting a dichotomy based around guilt and shame which also corresponds to a pre-modernity/modernity axis, he cannot account for changes in these extremes of behaviour.

In conclusion, therefore, I feel that of the three 'models' considered, Elias provides a more reality-congruent model of affect-based behaviour and drive controls in which he emphasises the manner in which drives, impulses and drive-controls change over time, and specifically, how in recent times sexual and aggressive drives and impulses have been transformed or even sublimated. In particular, Elias's conception of people increasingly 'retreating' into privacy i.e., the privatization of behaviour, captures the emotional behaviour of people in modern society and is a more reality-congruent concept than the concepts provided by both Freud and Giddens. However, the above account does not cover all aspects of Elias's thinking in relation to the way in which drive-controls change and is unlikely to satisfy all of Elias's critics who wish to argue that such concepts cannot enable us to understand affective behaviour in 'permissive' societies. At this point, therefore, I wish to unravel further Elias's ideas concerning drive-controls but my focus will no longer be on the issue of 'repression' in Elias's work. Rather, I shall be discussing his ideas concerning permissive eras in general or periods characterized by what he called a 'relaxation of morals' for, it is my contention that while Elias's concept of advances in shame and repugnance underlies his early thinking with regard to permissiveness, his concept of informalization processes added another element to his later thinking concerning permissiveness, drives and drive-controls: how specific changes in the balance of power in the twentieth century have affected people's drive-controls. Let me begin this analysis, however, with his concept of shame as this concept can further illuminate our understanding of changes in the trajectory of drive-controls in the modern era.

Elias's concept of shame conveys his notion of anxiety which itself becomes more apparent the further along the civilizing process people are. For Elias the feeling of shame is

..... a specific excitation, a kind of anxiety which is automatically reproduced in the individual on certain occasions by force of habit. Considered superficially, it is fear of social degradation or, more generally, of other people's gestures of superiority. But it is a form of displeasure or fear which arises characteristically on those occasions when a person who fears lapsing into inferiority can avert this danger neither by direct physical means, nor by any other form of attack (Elias, 2000, 414).

It is an anxiety that resides in the individual's conscience, in the superego, that is implanted by others on whom the individual is dependent, who possessed power and superiority over him or her. In other words, it is a conflict that takes place within the personality and represents a transgression of social opinion. Concomitantly, shame is more apparent when 'alien' restraints have been transformed into self-restraints.

Elias effectively illustrates these ideas with regard to exposure of the body. He argues that after the seventeenth century it became a distasteful offence to show oneself exposed naked before those of higher or equal rank; with inferiors, however, it could be a sign of goodwill. But, as people became more socially equal it slowly became a general offence to expose oneself naked in front of either superiors or inferiors. He argued that in the modern era (ie., the twentieth century), the social command not to expose oneself or to be seen performing natural functions had begun to operate with regard to everyone and had begun to be imprinted in this form in children (Elias, 2000, 118). Moreover, the lack of inhibition with regard to nakedness in medieval society disappeared first in the higher classes and much more slowly in the lower classes in the sixteenth century, and more rapidly in the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Elias, 2000, 139). Advances in thresholds of shame and repugnance, therefore, have resulted in increasing individuation and privatization of behaviour, including intimization, as we have already seen.

If, then, the above concepts allow us to understand why behaviour in modern European society has become more inhibited (at least in public), Elias was nonetheless aware that, at the time of writing *The Civilizing Process*, certain forms of social behaviour were becoming 'less rigid'. Certain forms of affective behaviour had become less restrained: 'A certain relaxation was setting in with regard to the natural functions and dancing and bathing' (Elias, 2000, 119). Compared to, say, the Victorian era, people were less inhibited in exposing their flesh in public spaces such as bathing resorts, and less rigid in their behaviour generally. There appeared to be a 'relaxation of morals'. And yet Elias's thinking with regard to these issues is inconsistent. On the one hand Elias argues that such characteristics represent 'one of the fluctuations that constantly arise from the complexity of the historical movement within each phase of the total process' (Elias, 2000, 157). He further states that civilizing processes do not follow a straight line: 'In each phase there are numerous fluctuations, frequent advances or recessions of the internal and external constraints' (ibid). However, on the other hand, he states that a relaxation of morals was made possible (ie., the 1920s and 30s) because of the high standard of drive-control expected of people at that stage of the

European civilizing process. That is to say: 'Only in a society in which a high degree of restraint is taken for granted, and in which women are, like men, absolutely sure that each individual is curbed by self-control and a strict code of etiquette can bathing and sporting customs having this relative degree of freedom develop' (Elias, 2000, 157). It was a relaxation that could only occur within the framework of a new standard of self-control and can therefore be seen as a corollary of civilizing processes. Nonetheless, he says, in referring to European societies in the early and mid-twentieth century, that emotional controls are becoming stricter: 'In a number of societies there are attempts to establish a social regulation and management of the emotions far stronger and more conscious than the standard prevalent hitherto, a pattern of moulding that imposes renunciations and transformations of drives on individuals with vast consequences for human life which are scarcely foreseeable as yet' (Elias, 2000, 158). Therefore, should we surmise that all periods characterized by a relaxation of morals are merely temporary fluctuations – 'regressions' – and thus exceptions to what would appear to be a dominant direction in people's controls? Or, are such periods a corollary of civilizing processes and greater levels of self-control?

My observations of course are made with the benefit of hindsight. Elias was writing *The Civilizing Process* during a time (the 1920s and 30s) when the changes he was describing regarding a relaxation of morals appeared to be significant. Over seventy years later from writing *The Civilizing Process*, one can observe the occurrence of two directions in people's affective behaviour in Western societies. Firstly, the 'stricter social regulation and management of emotions', identified by Elias as occurring in the 1920s and 1930s, has continued to take place in the sense that privatization and individuation of behaviour has (arguably) become more pronounced over the last seventy years or so. Secondly, a relaxation of morals, thought to be a temporary phenomenon at the time of writing *The Civilizing Process*, has also *continued* to be a significant aspect of people's behaviour in European societies over the last seventy years. However, it was only later, in *The Germans* (1996), that Elias attempted to explain why this should be so through his concept of informalization processes.

Here, Elias argued that processes of 'informalization' had occurred throughout history intermittently and what had seemed a minor phenomenon in the 1930s became a substantial phenomenon in the 1960s, the advent of the so-called 'permissive age' (although Elias realised that a number of eras in modern times had their own permissive age such as the 'roaring 20s').

The key observation in *The Germans* is the way in which certain groups in twentieth century Europe sought to emancipate themselves. Elias argued that during the twentieth century there had taken place a change in the balance of power between a variety of what he terms 'established' and 'outsider' groups: men and women; parents and children (that is the younger and older generations); European societies and their former colonies, and the rulers and the ruled. Accordingly, codes of behaviour, including codes of etiquette between these groups, underwent transformation. Elias cites, among a number of examples, the experience of women in post-First World War Germany. Elias noted that in the pre-war period codes of etiquette between men and women were highly formal and ritualised but that after the War women were ushered into universities in an emancipatory movement that had swept across Europe. As a result of women enjoying equal rights, at least formally, the old rituals - in effect dependent largely on external constraints - disappeared to be replaced with more informal ways of behaving. The pre-existing forms of inequality regarding civil rights had led people in general to become reliant on formal codes of etiquette to guide their behaviour, but emancipation itself allowed opportunities for individuals, whenever they enjoyed an equality of rights, to restrain their own behaviour without recourse to the old formal codes. The old external codes were no longer required to guide behaviour as they had done in the previous stage.

Elias in fact went further than this, arguing that over time two distinct trends have occurred with regard to formal and informal behaviour. On the one hand, compared to the previous century, codes of behaviour are less formalised at one extreme, but less informalised on the other. In other words (citing his case-study of Mozart), Elias argues that in dealing with people of the same rank or status, we are, as a people, more informal in our behaviour compared to, say, people in Mozart's era. That is, less coarse and vulgar as a matter of course, but in dealing with people of a higher rank than ourselves we are less formal in our behaviour; for example, less deferential, less rigid.

In conclusion, one could summarize Elias's position as follows. The increased tendency towards the informalization of behaviour this century and the changing balance between informalization and formalization (in the sense that in dealing with people of a higher rank we are less formalized in our behaviour and that various emancipations have led to successive waves of informalization) is an aspect of civilizing processes in the sense that, like the changing balance between external and internal constraints on aggressive impulses, it is predicated on changing power balances within society as a whole. What is

common to both tendencies (informalization and increases in thresholds of tolerance towards displays of violence) is the changing balance between external constraints on behaviour - external, ritualised codes of etiquette, external imposition of controls on aggressive impulses - and internal forms of control. This concept of informalization retains the essence of Elias's methodology: how the balance in external and internal controls has become more even and less discontinuous over time. This concept has also been influential in the work of a number of Eliasian-influenced writers including that of Cas Wouters. One of his central arguments is that greater informality in the relationships of interdependent people induces and requires more deeply built-in self-restraints than relationships of more formal nature characteristic of greater and more overt status and power inequalities (Wouters, 1977, 447). For example, Wouters points out that giving children more freedom imposes more self-restraints on parents. Permitting children more leeway to do things on impulse at possibly inconvenient times requires firm control. In turn more permissive attitudes by parents eventually induce greater self-control in children (see Mennell, 1992, 242-246 for an overview of Wouters's work and that of other writers who have contributed to what is now a substantial body of work on informalization processes).

Although his concepts of advances in thresholds of shame and repugnance and informalization processes resolve what at first sight would appear to be a paradox in Elias's writings - the manner in which civilizing processes imply greater levels of control of emotions and, at the same time, a liberation of them - these concepts nonetheless raise a number of issues.

Firstly, Elias does not explore the consequences of intimization processes, which are themselves predicated on advances in shame and repugnance, for modern expressions of behaviour. That is to say, one consequence of civilizing processes is the intimization of behaviour, but one could regard intimization itself as being a 'civilizing' influence in its own right. For example, the way in which people, in the context of more intimate relationships, have come to refine their sensibilities and come to acquire a stock of more refined responses to a given number of situations, is an area that requires further investigation. In other words, intimization allows the *acquiring* of emotional resources to take place, it allows people to become more emotionally *expressive* within the context of private relationships and thus to acquire a stock of what are more sensitive and controlled ways of responding to a variety of situations. This acquiring of a store of, in effect, 'emotional capital' can be compared to Bourdieu's idea of 'cultural capital' (Bourdieu, 1977): how

people become successful in education through acquiring the values of the dominant class(es). Another way of describing this is to suggest that a 'liberation' of emotions (in the context of private relationships) has taken place or what I shall refer to as an 'empowerment of the emotional self'. This is not to suggest that Elias was not aware of the liberating implications of civilizing processes. For example, Elias was, even in his earlier writings, fully aware of the liberating aspects of civilizing processes as when, for example, he cited how women in European courtly aristocratic society were liberated from the external constraints that had characterized feudal society (for example, restrictive rights in marriage, being treated as second class citizens, etc.). As Elias stated: 'Thus the civilizing process, despite the transformation and increased constraint that it imposes on the emotions, goes hand in hand with liberations of the most diverse kinds' (Elias, 2000, 156). However, there is a tension here between a liberation based on 'social power' (what today we would call, certainly in terms of its superficial or surface aspects, civil rights, equality of opportunity, etc.), and individual emotional renunciation (self-restraints). Women in courtly aristocratic society were now expected to restrain their own affective behaviour. In other words, the 'liberating' aspects of civilizing processes, couched in terms of the language of the emotions, although recognized by Elias, are never fully explored. That is to say, Elias does recognise that increasing thresholds in shame and embarrassment give rise to greater levels of intimacy and privacy than had been the case formerly, but he does not explore the implications of this as fully as he might have done – greater equality within relationships perhaps, more expressive behaviour in private, intimate relations etc., the very aspects that Giddens has explored in his own recent work (see Chapter Two).

My second point is that although Elias links advances in the thresholds of shame and repugnance to changes in the balance of power ie., equalizing tendencies in society or processes of functional democratization, when referring to informalization processes he explicitly links specific changes in the balance of power in the twentieth century – 'emancipatory tendencies' – to changes in affective behaviour: the way in which people's behaviour became less formal. Here, I would argue, there is scope for further analysis of the way in which the people have become emotionally 'empowered' as a result of more general changes in the balance of power, the way in which people through acquiring a stock of emotional *and* cognitive responses and strategies – tolerance, patience, assertiveness, calmness, for example, come to avoid violent, aggressive acts in dealing with potentially hostile situations. The point I want to stress here is that

we need further research on how changes in emotional trajectories - liberations in emotional behaviour, more extensive informalization, increasingly privatized, intimate behaviour, and empowerment processes - may account for both diminishing *and* increasing levels of aggression in post-war England. I shall, however, explore these themes and issues further in Chapter Six. Let me now turn to the subject of gender.

Although I have decided to examine the theme of gender differences and the propensity to aggress as part of the general framework of this chapter – concerned as it is with changes in emotional trajectories - the issues relating to gender intersect with a number of themes in this thesis. Specifically, there are three reasons as to why gender is of relevance to the framework that I have attempted to establish so far in this thesis. Firstly, gender differentials in the propensity to aggress have implications for our understanding of the roots of aggression and violence given that, as I shall elaborate later, males have a much higher chance of committing aggressive acts of violence than females. For some authors the roots of aggression are to be traced to masculinist cultures which, it is held, encourage, reproduce and valorize acts of aggression and the values associated with such acts. The literature here is extensive and diverse, ranging from those authors who take a developmental approach to the study of masculine cultures and who emphasise the linkage between physical differences and power differentials between males and females in pre-state societies (Elias and Dunning, 1986, Firestone, 1972), to those who stress the links between male aggressiveness and patriarchal structures in contemporary societies (Gilligan, 2001, Hargreaves, 1992) and finally, those writers, sociobiologists in particular, who hold aggressive, masculine culture to be the product of evolutionary forces and genetic predisposition (see for example, Tiger and Fox, 1972).

Secondly, increasingly conflictual gender relations between males and females, as a result of the way in which gender roles have changed over the recent past, are seen by some as a cause of rising rates of aggression and violence in post-Second World War Britain. I shall, however, elaborate on this theme with regard to the work of Oliver James in Chapter Six.

Thirdly, the relationship between gender-based behaviour and the propensity to commit violent acts has profound consequences for Elias's theory of civilizing processes in that, as I have already remarked, aggressive acts of violence tend to be far more common amongst males than females. Therefore, does this mean that we should create a separate theory of civilizing processes for women that is substantively different from that which relates to men? Or, does it mean that females are a civilizing influence on men?

Or, is it the case, as Roper has argued in describing Elias's theory of civilizing processes that: 'It is largely male attitudes to women and the role of women in the male warrior psyche which he is describing ' (Roper, 1994, 163). In this section, therefore, I shall consider briefly the evidence regarding gender differentials in the propensity to aggress. I shall then comment briefly on Eliasian-influenced explanations for gender differentials in aggression and violence, concentrating on those explanations that highlight the creation of *macho* values and the way in which they can give rise to acts of aggression. I shall go further than these writers only in making known the anthropological evidence that supports the claims of these authors. Finally, I shall evaluate the implications of gender differentials in the propensity to aggress for Elias's theory of civilizing processes.

In all of the time periods discussed in my research it is males that are predominantly responsible for acts of violence. With regard to interpersonal violence for example, the evidence accumulated in Chapter Three suggests that a figure of between 80% and 90% of all cases of assault and homicide were committed by males in each of the periods selected for discussion. With regard to what I have called 'collective' violence, the same picture emerges although it is slightly complicated by the fact that our sources for, say, recreational violence, are sparse. Nonetheless, whether it be village and family feuds or 'foteball' games, it does seem that such activities were male dominated. The problem here, however, as historians and social scientists in general have pointed out, is that most of our pre-industrial sources were written by male chroniclers who may have focused on male-biased activities.

Yet the above evidence does not mean to say that violent and aggressive acts were exclusively male: incidents involving females do occur. We see this in collective rioting of an instrumental kind. Stone notes the unprecedented female involvement in the Civil War in which females protested against traditional (and predominantly male forms) of authority (Stone, 1990, 225). Women at this time challenged the authority of their husbands whilst a handful of 'proto-feminists' repudiated monarchical patriarchy and primogeniture. The role of women in taking a vanguard position in the food riots of the eighteenth century is also well documented (see, for example, Stone, 1990, 141).

As we have seen, during the seventeenth century women were predominantly involved as protagonists in some forms of violence such as infanticide. They could also disturb the peace as well as any man could. The following examples drawn from the assize records for Kent in the seventeenth century illustrate this.

The records state that on July 24 1654 eight women were fined for disturbing the peace. According to the assize record they were: ' "Common chiders" [someone who needs to be rebuked or scolded], brawlers, fighters, slanderers, sowers of seditious strife and discords among neighbours' (Cockburn, 1989, Assi 35/95/12, 1045). In similar fashion, on 21 July 1658, Catherine Barnes was accused of being a: 'Common chider, brawler, fighter, slanderer and sower of seditious strifes and accords' at Greenwich and 'other places', and on other occasions (Cockburn, 1989, Assi 35/99/12).

Overall, then, one can conclude that although women were not absent from violent confrontations and were not immune from committing aggressive acts, nonetheless, they account for only a relatively small proportion of violent/aggressive acts, whether the context be that of recreational games, interpersonal acts of violence or family and village feuds. In a sense therefore, we do have, ostensibly, an obvious proposition concerning the propensity to commit violence: males, on average, are more likely to commit acts of violence than females. Why, then, are there gender differentials in the propensity to aggress? The writings of Elias and Dunning provide a basis for answering this question.

In pre-modern societies the body was pivotal in socio-economic relations, warfare and punishment. But, it is the sexual dimorphism inherent in the human species in which males are on average (across a range of societies or cultures), ten to fifteen percent bigger than females (see for example, Leakey and Lewin, 1992, 117), that possibly first gave rise to values associated with masculine aggressiveness: what Dunning describes as *macho* values (see Elias and Dunning, 1986, 269). Leakey and Lewin argue that sexual dimorphism within primates is associated with competition between males for females and tends to occur (amongst primates) in polygamous cultures where the males are rarely genetically related to each other. In evolutionary terms, sexual dimorphism becomes more pronounced the further one goes back along the human evolutionary tree, so that for example, males in pre-*Homo* human species¹ were double the size of females (Leakey and Lewin, 1992, 89). The *Homo* species emerged with a difference in size between males and females of only ten to fifteen per cent; males in any cluster or grouping tended to be genetically linked in what were presumed to be monogamous societies (a similar sexual dimorphism is to be found amongst modern chimpanzees). What one may infer from this, is that these early cultures amongst the *Homo* species

¹The classification used here is the same as Leakey's. *Homo* refers to all of the human species or hominids that at one time populated the earth, essentially bi-pedal humans such as *Homo Habilis*, etc. Present-day humans are referred to as *Homo Sapiens Sapiens*.

were shaped, to some extent, by the social and economic conditions of the time where in pre-state societies, physical labour was hard and where physical prowess was a virtue in armed combat. As Dunning has argued (Elias and Dunning, 1986, 269), males, being bigger, have had an advantage over females (and weaker men) in that they could become more effective fighters. Therefore, it is likely that physical strength, physical aggression and fighting prowess were valorized within male cultures.

This is not to invoke an evolutionary explanation for male and female differences in aggression in a deterministic manner. Rather, the inference points to a nascent aggressive culture amongst males, *at some point in time* in pre-state societies, in which they possessed the biological means or potential to be more physically aggressive than females in what were highly physical societies. This is not to invoke a model of humankind that is continually at war and unceasingly violent either; it is more a question of *emphasis*.²

But why, then, have these values endured in societies where the evolutionary dimorphic advantage of males has long disappeared in 'non-physical' societies? The answer, I believe, lies with the way in which those values have been reproduced in each culture historically, especially among the lower classes where alternatives to hard physical labour and fighting prowess amongst peer groups to achieve status, etc., have not been historically so available. The manner in which the link between power and the values of masculinity has endured in the twentieth century can be illustrated by reference to one of the United States of America's presidents, F.D. Roosevelt.

In nominal terms, one of the most powerful positions in the world in the early twentieth century was that of the president of the United States of America. And yet, one such president, F.D. Roosevelt, who suffered from a visible, physical disease, polio, went to extraordinary lengths to present himself as an able bodied person³. This was in acknowledgement that the American people would not vote for a prospective president of the United States who was visibly disabled. And yet, it is unlikely that Roosevelt's inability to walk properly on both legs could have hindered his capacity to make judgements and decisions in office.

²Leakey in *Origins Reconsidered* argues that the fossil record as well as anthropological evidence, does not indicate that *Homo* was an especially violent or aggressive creature in pre-history. It is only with the rise of agricultural cultivation about 10, 000 years ago, that one finds evidence of war, destruction, etc.

³In public, Roosevelt had cultivated through sheer hard work a stilted type of walk complete with a walking stick and the careful support of his sons, so that in effect, Roosevelt was leaning on his sons flanked either side of him, both of whom were powerfully built. A similar point can be made with regard to J.F. Kennedy who suffered, from birth, an incurable spinal disease. This was concealed from the public as was the fact that he was often taken to a private hospital for convalescence, continually prescribed pain killing pills and wore a corset.

This culture of masculinity and physicality, in particular the symbolic link between executive power-holding and physical ability, was still prevalent in an age when the physical achievements were less pivotal in social-economic relations compared to those in previous eras; even less so in the sedentary occupation of president of the United States of America⁴.

That this culture of masculinity and physicality was prevalent in pre-state societies is indicated by a number of factors. In medieval England, collectivities representing male solidarity and aggressiveness were epitomised by the guilds; often clashes occurred between opposing guilds as by way of example, displays of violence in football matches. Women in thirteenth century Leicester did not belong to the 'Community' of Leicester, but to the County of Leicester reflecting their marginal status relative to males. Both Community and guild were exclusive male bodies where the traits of male aggressiveness were seen as virtues.

Such a perspective as this, however, is based on making a physiological distinction between the male and female sexes, an assumption that is contested by those writers who assert that biological and physical distinctions are social constructs and who further assert that to make a distinction between the categories of 'gender' and 'sex' is specious. For example, in a study of medical discourses in pre-modern societies, Thomas Laqueur (1990) argued that the pre-Enlightenment view of the body belonged to (what he terms) a one-sex model. Female genitalia were perceived to be merely an inverse of male genitalia, albeit an inferior version. Female and male genders were based, as it were, on the same conception of the biological body. Hence, female and male genders (and a third, an androgynous gender) were constituted by social differences, the medieval 'Great Chain Of Being' giving rise to a vertically ranked social hierarchy in which the male gender occupied a position higher than that of the female gender. Laqueur goes on to argue that by the late eighteenth century a new model of radical dimorphism emerged, one of biological divergence in which, in this two-sex model, anatomy and a physiology of incommensurability replaced a hierarchy of metaphysics in the representation of woman in relation to man. Physiological differences had been established in which the presence or absence of orgasm, unlike the previous era, became a signpost of sexual

⁴ Interestingly, Elias uses the example of Roosevelt (although he does not actually refer to him by name) to make the opposite point to mine, that is, the fact that a disabled person *was* actually elected into office demonstrates that, relative to, say, ancient Greek society, the link between the physicality of the body and social status/power is not as significant as was formerly the case. However, what Elias is suggesting is not incompatible with what I am suggesting, ie., perceptions of physicality still prevail in modern societies, a link still exists between the physicality of the body and social status, but this is not as strong as it once was (see Elias, 1986, 141).

difference (females it was discovered did not necessarily experience orgasm in intercourse). This allows Laqueur to conclude that in pre-modern societies, gender, as an ontological category, preceded biological categories and that only in the eighteenth century did people search for biological differences in order to make claims about cultural, gender differences. As Laqueur states: 'I want to show on the basis of historical evidence that almost everything one wants to say about sex - however sex is understood - already has in it a claim about gender. Sex, in both the one-sex and two sex models, is situational; it is explicable only within the context of battles over gender and power' (Laqueur, 1990, 11).

Laqueur's conclusion is pertinent to this debate but is nonetheless misleading. Biological claims concerning functional, anatomical and physiological differences, according to Laqueur, cannot be considered as 'objective' statements: biological claims in the one-sex model were epiphenomenal to gender or cultural categories. However, in contradistinction to Laqueur, I wish to argue that this position of Laqueur's is too extreme in its cultural relativism. That is to say, Laqueur's analysis, a discourse analysis, suffers from the same theoretical and methodological weaknesses as Foucault's analysis of discourses. Laqueur's study is based on an analysis of medical discourses that narrowly concern themselves with representations of (male and female) genitalia and how they were supposed to function. Accordingly, such an analysis ignores the experiences of people in their everyday lives and how they, themselves, perceived their own bodies, anatomical differences, etc. For example, Quaife's research (previously cited) shows how in the early modern period in England the populace equated female sexuality with lust and temptation. Female sexuality seemed to be perceived as both a cultural and biological manifestation. It is debatable in other words, as to whether the 'males' and 'females' saw themselves as biologically similar, albeit along an inferior/superior axis, or whether in fact they attributed anatomical features to cultural, social differences at all.

This is not suggest that the categories 'gender' and 'sex can' be discussed without some recourse to social constructivist theorizing. For example, the term gender describes the ways in which human behaviour is expressed (for example, the roles that human beings adopt in their interactions with each other), but it is not a property or category that is necessarily intrinsic to human behaviour. That is to say, what we ascribe to be 'male' or 'female' ways of behaving is indeed contingent on people's perception of what it is to be male or female. For example, in present-day English society, notions of 'maleness' or 'femaleness' are not likely to be

the same as they were a hundred years ago. The category 'maleness' describes particular values, norms and types of behaviour that come to be accepted by the wider society as masculine or 'male'-like, at any particular point in time. The precise nature and meanings of the norms and types of behaviour that constitute such categories are often contested, particularly by different age and class groups. Moreover, one of the implications of Laqueur's analysis, that physical and anatomical differences between the sexes are socially constructed, is convincing up to a point. For example, although it is relatively straightforward to describe biological and physiological differences between males and females (males are differentiated from females biologically in the sense that they possess smaller sex cells, and in the majority of cases possess only one Y chromosome instead of two X chromosomes)⁵, physiological differences are, nonetheless, socially mediated. Laqueur's theorizing, according to my interpretation of his writings, seems to point to this. Medical opinion in the Victorian era for example, was that female menstruation provided yet more evidence for physical weakness among females relative to males. Seen from our perspective today, in early twenty-first century England, such a conclusion can be perceived as merely reflecting the predominant Victorian attitudes of that time in which females were treated as the 'gentler' sex who could not, for example, participate in physical games and sports for fear of further damage to their physically weaker bodies.

This analysis, then, would suggest that what we often refer to as physical and anatomical phenomena are often influenced by cultural notions of gender behaviour and *vice versa*. That said, to *infer* behaviour from biological phenomena - for example, that the Y chromosome is responsible for certain types of male behaviour - is highly contentious and may well reflect ideological concerns. Any number of examples, including the controversies over evolutionary-based sociobiological theories today, give ample support to what some would label as a relativistic and class-mediated view of knowledge whereby biological ideas merely reflect and legitimate the dominant social and political values of a given society (see, for example, Gould's critique of sociobiological theories, 1981, 324)).

⁵ To be more precise, a female contributes in reproduction, unlike the male, a special cell called the gamete to the new organism which contains both genetic information and a store of food or energy source. Such a gamete is called an ovum or egg; the male's sperm on the other hand only contains genetic information. Many biologists consequently extrapolate that differences in male and female behaviour arise from this fact, giving rise, in effect, to male and female gender roles. It should also be added for the sake of accuracy that occasionally males, in any species, inherit an additional Y chromosome.

And yet, to argue *a la* Laqueur that in essence biological and gender categories are relativistic social constructions *tout court* is to ignore how physical, corporeal differences in female and male bodies in pre-modern societies shaped and constituted power differentials between the male and female genders. As suggested earlier, in pre-modern societies the physical, corporeal body was pivotal in social and economic relations. Males had to raise armies and fight in armed combat in order to acquire land, the main source of economic wealth in pre-state and warrior societies. I would further argue that The 'Great Chain Of Being' ideology discussed by Laqueur, an ideology that became predominant in the European medieval era, merely gave legitimacy to this social and material inequality. In other words, it is how the reality of the 'Great Chain Of Being' ideology in which men stood above women in the economic, social and political hierarchy, that Laqueur fails to explain. Physical, corporeal differences between what we term males and females do have an existence *independent* of our perceptions, in that, as I have argued earlier, physical, corporeal differences do give rise to material inequality and help shaped the distribution of power chances between the two genders. In other words, male and female biological categories are not merely social constructs that are constituted by the pattern of social inequality; they are not merely epiphenomena of culture, as Laqueur asserts. We should therefore avoid, as Elias does, the two extremes in this debate concerning gender differences: social constructivist theorizing at one extreme, and theories based on biological determinism on the other whereby social behaviour is regarded as merely epiphenomenal to biological traits.

In conclusion, one could say, as a generalization, that women have been dominated by men on two accompanying levels: on a level of socio-economic and legal rights, and secondly, on a level of personal relations in the sense that men have exerted greater levels of aggression over women and have less easily curbed their own aggressive impulses. This is not to suggest a unilinear conception of history or one that is based on 'progress', for there have been many complicating features here in which the ebb and flow of power relations has followed an unpredictable path. For example, as Stone has noted, women within the household seemed to suffer more during the early modern period in England during a time of companionate marriages because the extended network, that hitherto protected the female, disappeared. Nonetheless, my contention, following Elias and Dunning, is that women suffered initially from these inequalities as a consequence their weaker position physically during a time (in pre-state societies) when physicality, such as physical aggression and fighting prowess, were highly valued in such societies.

However, although physicality itself has become less pivotal in more technologically advanced societies, those values associated with particular aspects of physicality have only slowly receded in 'non-physical' societies. Moreover, compared to men, the empowerment processes of women at a socio-economic level have taken place at a slower rate. Perhaps the aggressive impulse of females was never developed in quite the same manner as men because of the domestic role afforded to women as a consequence of child-bearing. Consequently, high rates of suppression have not resulted in the extremes of temperament or the highly developed guilt complex that could be said to have characterized male behaviour. Hence, I would *hypothesize* that the relatively non-violent ways of women are in part to be explained not just by a repression of aggressive impulses but, perhaps, by the *weak* development of those impulses.

What Elias's theorizing demonstrates, then, is that inequalities in the balance of power between the two genders, in which over the time periods considered in this thesis females have had less economic and social power compared to men, have given rise to differing pressures on males and females to curb their affective behaviour. Elias's observations in this respect are very much supportive of my own findings. In *The Civilizing Process* Elias writes how in the absolutist court societies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the domination of the husband over the wife was broken for the first time in what he describes as a 'wave of emancipation'. (Elias, 2000, 155). Prior to this period, for example during the late Middle Ages, women were subject to physical abuse almost as a matter of course. There were far greater pressures on them to limit their impulses compared to men, and within society as a whole they enjoyed far fewer legal rights compared to men. This does not mean to say that Elias adopts a linear approach to history, for he cites the Roman Empire as a period of time when the upper class wives gained certain legal rights over inheritance and property within marriage, only to see, in the early modern period in Europe, these rights restricted as older forms of marriage were re-introduced. Also, during the seventeenth century the social power of the wife in aristocratic court society was now relatively more equal to the husband whilst extramarital relations, hitherto seen as legitimate for the man but not for the woman, gradually took on the appearance of legitimacy (Elias, 2000, 157).

Many of these characteristics are quite familiar in the research covered in the last three chapters. Until recent times, women did not possess the same rights as men with regard to acts of adultery and bastardy. During the early modern period and the Middle Ages women were seen as sexually voracious and yet it was

the man who had sexual licence and sexual freedom. Violence towards the wife by the husband during these periods was during the early modern period, if not acceptable, nonetheless common.

This, then, points to the essence of Elias's methodology with regard to studying differentials in aggression between men and women: the need to examine the balance of power between the two genders where, it is held, an inequality in the balance of power was based initially on the physical differences of people in pre-state and pre-modern societies, and how this unequal balance of power continues to affect gender differences in trajectories of emotional controls.

Chapter Six: Towards a Sociological Framework for Understanding Violence and Aggression

In this penultimate chapter I would like to explore in more detail some of the issues raised in previous chapters. However, one important objective is to clarify the framework, based on Elias's sociological paradigm, that I have sought to establish in this thesis, that would allow any given researcher of the subject of aggression and violence to pursue further lines of enquiry. Having done so, I shall then attempt to apply such a framework to what would appear to be rising rates of violence in England since the Second World War. Although this time period is outside the limits of my own research, I wish to develop specifically Elias's concept of processes of functional democratization and apply it to this period of time. Moreover, it is the link between the direction of trajectories of emotional controls and changes in the balance of power in present-day England, that requires further comment in relation to Elias's sociological paradigm. For example, the manner in which change in any given balance of power and change in the trajectory of people's emotional controls can create points of tension within any given society, requires elaboration. In attempting to describe these changes I am continuing a trend of Eliasian-influenced studies that are concerned precisely with explaining and understanding violence in post-Second World War England (see for example, Dunning *et al*, 1988; and Dunning, *et al*, 1992). In other words, the framework that I have established in the preceding chapters should be able to *contribute* to explanations for what would appear to be a rise in the rate of violent incidents in the last fifty or so years (see the empirical evidence referred to in Chapter One) in England. Furthermore, establishing such a framework can help us to arrive at a better understanding of the roots of violence and aggression at a general level than has been attempted so far and such a framework can be extended to modern advanced societies in general as I shall make clear later on in this chapter. Let me, then, clarify the framework for studying violence and aggression that I have sought to establish in the preceding chapters.

In setting out to establish a framework, three areas from the outset were identified within Elias's paradigm for further consideration and/or evaluation. Firstly, his (processual) historical 'methodology' as a way of investigating acts of aggression and violence; secondly, his ideas regarding drives, drive-controls and trajectories and gender differences in affective behaviour; and thirdly, his concept of civilizing processes. The former two considerations involved an evaluation of what I believe to be competing, and in

some cases alternative, perspectives to those of Elias. As concerning methodological issues – the subject of Chapter Two - I compared Elias's historical methodology with the historical methodologies of Foucault, Giddens and those associated with conventional historians. The rationale underlying this is the belief that it is only by examining our past does it becomes possible to establish the processes that enable any given researcher to understand present-day behaviour. Furthermore, I have argued that an Eliasian process methodology, which involves examining individuals in the round and how balances within the psyche and habitus undergo change, is a more useful way of examining changes in people's behaviour compared to the discontinuity methodologies put forward by both Giddens and Foucault. For example, with regard to Foucault, a limitation of his methodology is that it is wholly reliant on the study of discourses. That is to say, he assumes (see Chapter Two) that all knowledge is relative or, to be more precise, according to my conceptualising, relative in an ontological sense: he argues we can only, in researching the past, gain a knowledge of different competing perspectives regarding the way people behaved in the past. According to Foucault, traditional historians have only tracked, so to speak, those discourses that became dominant at some point in time. Accordingly we, as researchers, are only able to discover the prejudices and biases of the authors of archival documents: documents with which we, as contemporary researchers, work. This is not to say that Foucault's work is of no relevance to the contemporary researcher who is interested in historical phenomena as a way of understanding the present. For example, what is useful in Foucault's account is how he has highlighted the way in which historians have, as a result of their own values and beliefs, created historiographies based on a highly specific teleological concept of continuity in which present-day events are seen merely as the culmination of events and happenings in the past.

I have also argued that process concepts are to be preferred to those explanations that I have described as contingency-like. Contingency-like explanations are not without merit, but within the field of social history historians have based their writings on a false dichotomy: mono-causal explanations in which social phenomena are reduced to single causes – an approach which J. S. Cockburn ascribes, wrongly in my view, to the work of Lawrence Stone (see Chapter Two) – and explanations that emphasise that which is supposedly 'unique' and 'unrepeatable' in history. Elias's process-orientated paradigm, however, avoids the weaknesses inherent in both conceptions: structured processes are unpredictable but not random; multi-layered rather than mono-causal.

I have argued further, as was suggested in Chapter One, that, with regard to the study of violence and aggression, a particular legacy of *homo clausus* theorizing in this field of study is the proliferation of studies of violence and aggression that fail to examine violent, aggressive behaviour in the round; that fail to identify the elements which unify different acts of violence or fail to see that which is common to a number of different forms of violence. My assertion is that it is possible to establish common ground between different forms of violence to the effect that any form of aggression that results in an actual act of violence arises through an inability to obtain or acquire something that people desire or value through means other than violence. In processual terms, as external controls on people's behaviour gradually become internalised, the scope for acquiring or obtaining something of value through means other than a recourse to violence, widens. Whether it be hooligans indulging in acts of violence for 'its own sake' - for the sake of enjoyment or excitement - or governments committing civilians to war, violence is used to obtain something that could be conceivably acquired by other means. Hitler's recourse to force in 1939 existed in circumstances in which he was unwilling or unable to achieve what he thought to be a desirable outcome for the German people - German dominance in Europe for example - through diplomatic means. And yet, as chains of interdependencies have lengthened between and within European states since the Second World War, and as hitherto external controls on people's behaviour have increasingly taken the form of self-controls, attempts by European statesmen to use violence for, say, territorial expansion, are today less acceptable than, say, fifty years ago. Similarly, the hostile, impulsive behaviour of English people four hundred years ago (documented in Chapter Three) is not so evident now as controls have become more and more internalised. Consequently, people today in Europe have recourse to a number of means to obtain something considered to be desirable. Violence increasingly becomes something that is considered to be less attractive and necessary to obtain valued outcomes where greater levels of self-control of emotions are increasingly expected of people.

This is not to imply that a person or a group of people, given certain circumstances, necessarily have a choice of methods open to them: a person held at knife-point may consider that recourse to violence is the only choice available to him or her, or at least there is only in this instance a choice between life and death. And yet, even in these circumstances, what is today considered as an appropriate use of violence for purposes of self-defence differs from, say, twenty years ago. For example, in the relatively recent court case

of Tony Martin (who had shot dead a burglar on his property in, he claims, self-defence), Martin was judged to have shown an inappropriate and unacceptable display of force given the levels of self-control that are expected of people in England today. Similarly, the pursuit of excitement through physical sports is expected to take place within the context of higher levels of self-control than was formerly the case to the extent that aggressive behaviour in which a particular outcome is obtained through the use of violence, is usually condemned by people in wider society. However, in suggesting that violence was, and is, a means by which valued outcomes can be achieved, I am not suggesting that all incidents of violence arise from instrumental, goal-orientated behaviour; valued outcomes may be achieved as a result of aggressive impulses not being contained as when an individual reacts to provocation in a hostile manner. Similarly, football hooligans' pursuit of enjoyment, as I have argued in Chapter One, cannot be analysed merely in terms of the pursuit of instrumental goals.

Given Elias's commitment to studying individuals in the round – *homines aperti* theorizing - it is clear that an examination of violent, aggressive behaviour demands more than just a consideration of violence and aggression *per se*. That is to say, we need to consider, ontologically, people as both thinking and emotional beings; as possessing both cognitive attributes *and* emotions. In other words, in terms of developing a framework for the study of aggression and violence, a consideration of drives, drive-controls, and trajectories and gender differences in affective behaviour is called for. This was the subject of Chapter Five where I attempted to evaluate the writings of Elias, Giddens and Freud concerning these subjects. My assertion was that Elias's ideas were more reality-congruent than those of Freud and Giddens (both of whom present competing perspectives to Elias's) although Freud's influences on Elias are discernible as well as the influence of Elias and Freud on Giddens's work. Elias emphasised how drives and drive-controls are socially moulded and referred to drives and impulses rather than the term instinct, with its essentialist connotations, to describe sexual and aggressive behaviour respectively. Elias's concepts of advances in thresholds of shame and repugnance, one consequence of which is more privatized, intimate behaviour and individuation, and informalization processes, both satisfactorily explain, despite Giddens's claims to the contrary, changes in people's behaviour in modern European societies. Elias's concept of informalization processes suggests the manner in which extremes of informalized and formalized behaviour have become less discontinuous over time. In short, the freer, more expressive behaviour displayed in various permissive

eras, and more 'liberated' behaviour generally, can be explained by these concepts. My criticism here, was that Elias did not emphasise some of the consequences of this increasing privatization of behaviour, namely: the manner in which people come to *acquire* a stock of 'emotional capital', that is to say, a stock of emotional and cognitive resources and strategies that, in responding to potentially tense or hostile situations, allow them to avoid the use of physical force or aggression. I also suggested that Elias's notion of intimization, predicated on advances in the thresholds of shame and repugnance, is a 'civilizing' influence in its own right and has resulted in a 'liberation' of emotions – more sensitive, affectionate and expressive behaviour within the context of private relationships. However, it is the link or connection between processes of functional democratization, in which power differences between a number of groups are held to have diminished in Europe in the last century or so, and change in people's affective behaviour that requires further investigation. For example, to what extent have functional democratizing processes since the Second World War actually created points of tension, say, between males and females? But more generally, we need to know more about the way in which informalization processes, processes of functional democratization and the privatization of behaviour, have resulted in what I have referred to as an 'empowerment of the self' and what the implications of these processes are for displays of aggressive behaviour among people in modern England. But first, let me just establish the way in which Elias attempted to explain both falling and rising rates of violence.

Decivilizing processes in the work of Elias

For Elias, both falling and rising rates of violence can be explained by civilizing and decivilizing processes respectively (although, as we shall see later, rising rates of violence may be predicated on prior civilizing processes). The research data outlined in Chapter Three regarding the incidence of violence over a period of five hundred years in England, which served in a limited manner to test Elias's theory of civilizing processes, would point to a decline in certain forms of violence from the Middle Ages to the late Victorian period in England. This would seem to support Elias's concept of civilizing processes, as applied to European societies, in that over time, the aggressive impulses of people in European societies have become more constrained in the sense that external controls on behaviour have increasingly become internalized. Emotional displays of aggressive behaviour have become less discontinuous. Extremes of behaviour seen in,

say, the Middle Ages, are far less evident in modern Western societies. More accurately, my own research and the research of historians point to a change in sensibilities, so that by the late Victorian era cruelty to animals was no longer tolerated as it had been in earlier times; rough, disorderly recreations and pastimes were no longer as acceptable as they had been previously; and, state-sponsored punishments were becoming less physical and severe. With regard to acts of violence, feuds between warring families within the gentry class disappeared from England by the early and mid-seventeenth century. Furthermore, the rate of 'interpersonal' acts of violence, as indicated by rates of homicide, had declined - dramatically so after 1680 - in each of the eras examined. Moreover, the impulsiveness that can be said to have characterized the behaviour of the people of the Middle Ages and the early modern era was less pervasive by the beginning of the nineteenth century. Prior to this period people's tempers flared quite easily and could easily be ignited by a crossed word. Furthermore, compared to their counterparts today, the masses actually enjoyed watching cruel, violent spectacles, whether the spectacles in question were hangings at Tyburn or bear-baiting. Sporting pastimes allowed people to display their emotions in the raw and such activities were often a site for fairly uncontrolled and unrestrained violent incidents involving large numbers of participants.

Falling rates of violence in England in the last five hundred years can be explained in terms of an Eliasian sociological paradigm in the following ways. Firstly, we can establish the manner in which over time external controls on people's behaviour become internalised, predicated on lengthening chains of interdependencies; secondly, we can investigate the way in which processes of functional democratization, or equalising tendencies within societies, take place; and thirdly, in a specifically European context, we can examine processes of state-formation and the way in which states' control of the means of violence and taxation allow processes of internal pacification to take place. It can, therefore, be seen how each of these elements, or a combination of them, can enable us to examine why incidents of violence and aggression in their various forms have diminished in European societies in the last five hundred years or so. My particular concern in this respect, as outlined in Chapter Four, was how change in people's sensibilities had taken place and how notions of citizenship had advanced over the time-periods in question. I also examined how notions of disorderly behaviour gradually widened in scope over the time-frame selected for discussion.

Conversely, the same elements identified above can be utilised to explain rising rates of violence whenever they occur. The theory of civilizing processes does not lead one to actually predict a fall in violent

incidents, rather, it can be inferred that as people's sensibilities change so do, *ipso facto*, the occurrence of such violent incidents. However, one implication of civilizing processes is that statistics for some forms of violence should rise in that, as thresholds of tolerance advance (that is, as a given people's willingness to tolerate certain forms violence and aggression diminishes), new laws are brought into effect such as legislation that makes it an offence to rape another's spouse within marriage. Also, as Dunning *et al* have argued (1992, 47-48) displays of aggression that at one time would have been referred to as 'rough behaviour' by the authorities are more likely, today, to be categorised as indictable offences where rough behaviour, for example, becomes classed as assault. However, it is Elias's concept of decivilizing processes that accounts for periods of *sudden*, rising violence.

In *The Civilizing Process*, Elias referred to 'decivilizing spurts', those occurrences where the 'armour of restraints' is removed or where civilizing processes go into 'reverse gear'. In theoretical terms, there are a number of reasons why decivilizing spurts should occur (Elias was to return to this subject in more detail in *The Germans*) and a number of figurational writers have contributed to a body of work on the concept of decivilizing processes. For example, Fletcher (1997) summarises the manner in which decivilizing processes can occur in the following way. First, logically, if chains of commercial, emotional and cognitive interdependencies break down then a so-called armour of restraints would, by definition, disappear, as the main mechanism for curbing impulsive behaviour would no longer function. Secondly, decivilizing trends can occur if the state ceases to monopolise the means of violence and/or the state's legitimacy is called into question. Regarding the state's legitimacy, Elias argued that this is precisely what happened in Weimar 1920s Germany. Thirdly, outbreaks of violence may occur due to processes of functional democratization whereby groups, hitherto relatively powerless, acquire more and more power and assert their rights against intransigent dominant groups, or, perhaps, a particular group's aspirations are raised to the extent that discontent occurs.

Fletcher goes on to point out (Fletcher, 1997, 83) that decivilizing processes or spurts (the latter being a more rapid version of the former) can be judged by three criteria. Firstly, where there is a shift in the balance between constraints by others and self-restraint in favour of the former; secondly, where there is a development of a social standard of behaviour which generates the emergence of a less even, all-round, stable and differentiated pattern of self-restraint; and thirdly, where there is a contraction in the scope of

mutual identification between constituent groups and individuals. A 'dominant' process can occur whereby, say, a decivilizing spurt comes to dominate a civilizing process in any given society at any point in time. In other words, both processes can be occurring simultaneously in the same society but one becomes dominant over the other. Perhaps the most useful understanding of Elias's use of the term 'decivilizing processes', however, can be gleaned from his work in *The Germans* (1996), where he analysed the rise of Hitler, Nazism and the Holocaust in terms of 'dominant' processes: where one particular process - a civilizing or decivilizing one - became dominant over the other.

Ostensibly, Elias's analysis of the rise of hitherto unprecedented levels of violence in mid-twentieth century Germany, culminating in the Holocaust, appears to contradict or at least ignore the decivilizing criteria that were stated above: the state's monopoly of the means of violence did not break down, nor was its legitimacy called into question. Moreover, chains of interdependencies did not seem to shorten. There are at least two aspects to this. Firstly, civilizing processes made *possible* the Holocaust itself in that the operation was predicated on an advanced state of bureaucracy, rationality and detachment (cf. Bauman, 1988). In other words, it was conducted by people who were at a relatively advanced stage of the European civilizing process. Secondly, Elias stressed the idea that decivilizing processes occurred amongst *particular* groups of people and preceded the rise of Hitler. That is to say, Elias stressed prior, sequential processes, continuities, in which a 'culture of violence' was made possible amongst certain groups in the period 1871-1919 and (in different circumstances) the period covered by the Weimar Republic. By 1933 an efficient, organized state operating in semi-violent conditions was ready for another group (the Nazis) to utilise it for their own ends. In short, Elias's analysis points to long-term processes of integration and differentiation giving rise to tensions, such as those associated with the rise of Nazism, and the way in which civilizing processes make possible the conditions for decivilizing ones.

Such an analysis as this *may* be useful in providing a framework for analysing occurrences of violence in post-Second World War England. However, a development of such a framework is required in order to help us understand rising rates of violence and aggression in England in the last thirty years or so, and certainly, a number of attempts have been made to develop such a framework.

However, in this particular instance, I want to pursue some of Elias's ideas regarding functional democratization further than he did. Here, I shall return to some of the ideas already outlined in Chapter

Five concerning trajectories and gender differences in emotional controls on the one hand, and change in the balance of power on the other. In other words, what follows can be regarded as a contribution to the literature on decivilizing processes, but I am not suggesting any complete answers here; rather, I wish to suggest *further* lines of enquiry.

Developing the Eliasian paradigm

Following Elias, my central argument is that changes in power ratios in the twentieth century, in which those classes with hitherto low levels of power potentials have seen an increase in their power potentials, have given rise to what I have referred to as a process of emotional self-empowerment involving people acquiring 'emotional capital'. On the one hand, the empowerment of the self concept is my attempt to highlight the manner in which over time, individuals have become more aware of their own private emotional needs. But more than this, it refers to the acquiring of emotional resources, social skills and a stock of strategies, so that in reacting to outside events or stimuli, individuals can draw on a range of emotional resources and responses rather than being dependent on, say, extrinsic or external normative referents to guide their actions. It is, in one limited sense, a counterpart to the Eliasian idea of individuals curbing or restraining their own impulses (over time), for the emphasis is on how individuals *acquire* emotional resources or how 'social skills' or 'emotional capital' come to be acquired. I have already identified (see Chapter Five) the way in which intimization processes, predicated on advancing thresholds in shame and repugnance, allow the possibility for acquiring emotional resources within private relationships, and yet, for a given individual who does not possess sufficient 'emotional capital' relative to others, recourse to aggressive, uncontrolled behaviour ensues whenever situations of tension occur. However, for individuals who possess the necessary emotional capital, when provoked, the immediate reaction is not one of aggression; individuals, as a consequence of having acquired a stock of emotional capital have less need to resort to aggressive, violent behaviour.

I would further argue that the linkage between changing power ratios and changes in the trajectory of emotional controls was recognised by Elias but remained underdeveloped. It is recognised, for example, as we have seen, through his concept of informalization processes: the way in which, it is held, emancipatory tendencies in twentieth century European societies gave rise to behaviour that was less formal and less

discontinuous, etc. In short, an overview of social and psychological behaviour in the last fifty years in contemporary western societies would suggest that significant changes in both emotional controls and the balance of power have occurred.

In attempting to explore these ideas regarding changing power ratios and changes in the trajectory of emotional controls, one other concept may be of relevance here: what Foucault refers to as an 'investment' of power. Parental figures within the family and authority figures within any given community can empower people by 'investing' in them. Foucault, for example, refers to an investment of power in terms of the body. Hence, to take the example that he uses, a person weight-training in the gym is empowering him or herself; it is an investment in, and of, the body. This is an investment of power in the sense that, 'mastery and awareness of one's own body can be acquired only through the effect of an investment of power on the body: gymnastics, exercises, muscle-building, nudism, glorification of the body beautiful' (Foucault, 1980, 56). The difficulty with this idea, as I have argued in Chapter Two, is that Foucault's concept of power is too metaphysical, he does not actually provide an explanation of a concrete nature as to where power is derived. My refinement of this idea is that time and (emotional and physical) energy can be invested in empowering people, in creating emotional capital, in the sense of enabling them to draw on a variety of emotional strategies in dealing with situations of (potential) conflict. Consequently, I would argue that authority figures within the state, the family and the community can all invest time and energy in empowering individuals.

If one conceptualizes an investment of power as something that is not metaphysical – as something that can take place to alter the emotional state of individuals, we can see how such investments have taken place over the periods discussed in this thesis. For example, one important implication of my primary research and analysis presented in Chapter Four is that state legislators in England gradually became more socially interventionist in terms of the range of behaviour deemed to be worthy of intervention. So, for example, cruelty to animals in the eighteenth century was no longer considered a purely private matter, engaged in by 'private' individuals outside the parameters of civil society. These trends have continued to this day: sexuality within marriage, if it is harmful to the woman, is no longer considered a private matter outside the jurisdiction of the state. These are not once and for all gains either. For example, legislation was enacted in eighteenth century Britain to lessen the amount of cruelty suffered by women in marriage (see Stone,

1998). One has to view these changes as part of a process rather than as one-off events. The criterion for intervention today would appear to be that if the behaviour of private individuals causes harm to other individuals, it is the prerogative of the state to intervene. Such interventions, as we have seen, did occur in the Middle Ages, but only to a much more limited extent. However, over time, there has also been a gradual withdrawing (unless harm is involved) of state legislation from the control or regulation of behaviour for moral purposes. Legislation to regulate sexual behaviour in the early modern period may have been fairly ineffective in practice, but nonetheless, in the present era, such like-minded attempts to regulate sexual behaviour according to moral criteria would be inconceivable.¹

But state legislators are not the only people responsible for investments of power. For example, following Stone I have already highlighted, the way in which in the early modern era in England – the so-called 'age of patriarchy' – the paternalistic heads of households took a greater interest in their children than was the case formerly, literally investing time and energy in developing their emotional resources, but that this led, paradoxically, to increased acts of brutality as fathers punished children in an attempt to regulate their behaviour for what they regarded as desirable purposes. Relatively severe punishments were administered in the hope that their children would not become ill-behaved. This 'age of patriarchy' in fact, was characterized by state legislators' interest in its citizens when what we refer to today, as civil rights, were at best rudimentary.

Of course, there is no linear development or idea of progress here with regard to these processes of empowerment, but there is a *direction*: present-day England is, for example, less ascriptive, less deferential compared to say, the fourteenth century. Historically, rights have been fought for as the powerless have gained relative to those with greater power. That is to say, there have been an ebb and flow of power tensions in England in which the lower classes have sought, and gained, increased civil rights as a consequence of processes of functional democratization.

My argument, therefore, is that the advent of civil, social, political and economic rights – for Elias, the surface manifestations of processes of functional democratization – is closely linked to changes in self-empowerment. The gaining of various rights: the right to a franchise; to contractual rather than bonded

¹The spread of the HIV virus would appear to be, ostensibly, an exception to this rule in that it is an area where states have intervened to change people's sexual/moral behaviour. But in fact it is another example of the state intervening where harm – the full blown AIDS virus – to other people is involved.

labour; to civil disobedience, etc., has resulted in greater equality of opportunity and made it easier for individuals to acquire emotional capital. Mirroring these changes has been a weakening of social rigidities within society. These rigidities refer to the following: the extent to which a given society lacks opportunities for social mobility; the degree of equality of opportunity in a society; and, the extent to which life-chances are determined by ascription rather than achievement. By acquiring the above socio-economic rights, individuals could more easily 'retreat into privacy', take greater control over their own actions (rather than being reliant on external forces such as tradition to guide their actions), and 'indulge' in their own needs. The self, or rather, an individual's perception of his or her self, becomes inviolable, something to be protected.

But what exactly is the relationship between people's propensity to aggress and these empowerment processes? There would appear to be, at least ostensibly, a paradox concerning behaviour in post-war England: many forms of violence since the Second World War would appear to be on the increase, particularly interpersonal acts of violence and collective forms such as riots (at least in the 1980s). And yet sensibilities have continued to change so that the majority of people in England today are, in general, more sensitive to acts of violence and cruelty than was the case formerly. For example, increasing concerns with animal welfare, bullying in schools, the outlawing of rape within marriage, the concern with the smacking of small children, etc., all point to this. There would also appear to be a continuation of the trend towards social and personal empowerment: increased civil rights for gay people; greater toleration of non-traditional forms of sexual-affective relationships, but increased *intolerance* towards relationships that do not satisfy. Furthermore, empowerment has occurred in other areas of life. There is circumstantial evidence for example, that people are no longer as deferential towards establishment institutions (such as the monarchy) as they were twenty years ago; in the workplace, Japanese-type worker empowerment schemes are becoming a reality: business studies textbooks now routinely advocate the virtues of worker empowerment in a non-ideological manner for example. Moreover, the informalization processes identified by Elias would seem to have continued to take place and there would appear to be an increased tendency towards the privatization of behaviour. Why, then, does there appear to be the occurrence of two seemingly contradictory processes – civilizing and decivilizing processes?

What is therefore at issue in this context– explaining rising rates of violence in the modern era - is what has happened to *relative* levels of empowerment: people today enjoy more rights compared to, say, their medieval counterparts, and have been empowered in a number of respects. And yet it would appear that some groups are not experiencing rates of self-empowerment to the same degree as other groups in today's society, and, in comparison with other groups, have relatively low levels of emotional capital. There are many complex factors that would suggest that whilst people's sensibilities continue to change, as sensibilities continue to become more refined, not all groups in society benefit from these processes of empowerment equally. That is to say, where social rigidities are still relatively strong (Cf. Dunning *et al*, 1988, 244), particular groups in society lack the necessary skills which would enable them to respond to situations of conflict without a recourse to violence.

Therefore, specifically, what requires further investigation is the manner in which investment strategies – that create stores of emotional capital - work and, how it is that insufficient investments can lead to outbreaks of violence. That is to say, what is called for is an examination of why empowerment processes do not affect all groups equally, and how some groups more readily acquire emotional capital compared to others. These, then, are the areas where further investigation is required. A work that does provide some ideas and explanations concerning these issues, and which can be loosely placed within the framework of this thesis, is that of the psychologist, Oliver James (James, 1997). It is to his work that I now want to turn.

Oliver James and relative deprivation studies

What is striking about James's research is that, although he does not appear familiar with Elias's work, he does recognise that the further back you go in time the more people were willing to accept levels of violence higher than the present. Also, James's work, like Elias's, points to the linkages between violent, aggressive behaviour and the emotional and psychological state of individuals. For example, James's thesis is that since 1950 levels of clinical and non-clinical depression have increased in the Western world and that this is an explanatory factor in rising rates of violence. James highlights the increase in rates of violence of an interpersonal nature since 1950 that is said to have occurred amongst all Western countries with the exception of Switzerland. He cites data demonstrating that violence against the person has risen in all developed nations (except Japan). In the USA it has purportedly increased fivefold and in England and

Wales by an average of 10% a year, accelerating particularly sharply since 1987. Due caution, to say the least, is required here given the manner in which crime statistics are created. Not least, is the aforementioned idea that one would expect statistical rates to increase, *ceteris paribus*, given changed thresholds in sensibilities and increased expectations for crimes to be solved, particularly where the crime is of a violent nature. And yet other studies also point to increased rates of violence that cannot just be explained by these phenomena (see footnote one in Chapter One). According to James's research, women are twice as likely as men to say they are depressed and tend to direct their aggression against the self in the form of attempts at suicide (para-suicide). Men, by contrast, are more likely to medicate frustration and anger with alcohol. In Britain, three-quarters of men convicted for violent crime are clinically depressed. Suicide rates (suicide being a type of violence against the self) are particularly high amongst this group.

Oliver James has also identified a number of explanatory factors. First, what he calls 'gender rancour'. Males and females have sought, particularly in the last fifty years or so, to establish new roles and new ways of behaving as traditional roles in the workplace and within the family unit have broken down. This has resulted, according to James, in increased levels of anxiety amongst children in the wake of rising rates of separation and divorce. Such homes are more likely to result in the kind of child care which is violence-inducing: severe and frequent, but unpredictable; physical punishment amounting to abuse. As James argues: 'It is no coincidence that the most common comment preceding a city-centre violent crime is "What are you looking at?" In most cases, the assailant has imagined a slight because psychically, he is still living in a place (his original family) where the next unprovoked assault is just a look or a movement away' (James, 1997, 27).

The second factor identified by James is that of relative deprivation. By examining the evidence from numerous so-called relative deprivation studies – that seek to correlate across a number of countries and across a number of generations income levels with people's subjective experience of well-being and happiness – James argues that people in modern advanced nations do not admit to feeling 'better off' in terms of well-being despite experiencing a rising standard of living; as James puts it: 'Overall, the evidence shows that between 1950 and 1990 people's material and psychological expectations increased along with their affluence, yet their overall well-being did not increase and in some respects, for some groups, it

decreased' (James, 1997, 86). He goes on to argue that consumerism, and the media in particular, has raised expectations in social relationships and at work with the media being responsible for unrealistic images.

Thirdly, as levels of income inequality have widened in the 1980s, and as competition in the market place for jobs has increased, levels of anxiety (as indicated by a number of measurements: the rate of suicide, the number of people suffering from clinical depression, and alcohol and drug consumption), particularly amongst young adults, have been raised with a greater proportion of children being raised in low income households and with violence-inducing child care. James is not arguing that overall rates of absolute poverty have increased, but rather relative poverty and the self-perception of those in poverty has risen compared to fifty years ago. James further argues that, 'the solution of these young adults [predominantly male] is often to create alternative subcultures in which their attributes – impulsiveness, aggression, nothing to lose – are valuable' (James, 1986, 26).

Overall, James argues that modern capitalism has failed to meet our 'evolved needs' for status and attachment. Capitalism here is mainly analysed in terms of a (private) profit motive and hence, anti-social forms of behaviour and the insecurity that goes with it become profitable industries for the pharmaceutical industry through the intermediary of the welfare state. In short, the pharmaceutical industry has a 'stake in misery'. Secondly, James stresses the competitive market element of capitalism (at least in Britain) which induces increased inequality of income, increased anxiety for children, etc.

Although this is but a brief resume of James's more pertinent points, the limitations of his analysis are immediate. For example, it is not clear which groups in society are more prone to commit acts of violence. Evidence would suggest that violence still occurs most consistently amongst the lower classes (see for example, Dunning *et al*, 1988). Also, James does not address the crucial issue of how criminal statistics are socially constructed: to what extent are the rising rates of violence a phenomenon of improved police techniques and rising expectations? Also, capitalism is not considered theoretically as a mode of production but merely as a set of market forces where private profit is maximized. However, what James's analysis does highlight is the way in which (in terms of the framework put forward in this thesis) there would appear to be a number of trends that make it difficult for an investment of power to occur even though sensibilities have become more sensitive for, perhaps, the majority of the population. There is good reason to assume

that conflict, tension and violence reside within some lower class groupings where there is a residue of a strong masculinist culture and where emotional resources are least developed.

That is to say, what James's study implies, as regards rising rates of violence and aggression in today's society, is the need to study a number of the factors that were identified earlier in this thesis, namely: empowerment processes, investment strategies and changes in emotional trajectories. By way of illustration it would appear that a number of tensions have resulted from processes of empowerment. That is to say, one implication of James's work is that empowerment processes have exacerbated tensions in English society. For example, increased empowerment amongst women, as a group, has seemingly contributed to the 'gender rancour' described by James. And yet another implication of James' work, I would argue, is the need to know if increases in inequality of income and wealth, and people's self-perception of their position in any given hierarchy based on income, wealth and status, are correlative with growing disparities in the distribution of 'emotional capital' and whether there is a cause and effect relationship here.

We also need to investigate the manner in which people's changing expectations may actually create points of tension within any given society. For example, the way in which people resort to violence, whether for reasons of pleasure, 'for its own sake' or for instrumental reasons (certain forms of homicide for example), as a consequence of increased relative deprivation and rising but unfulfilled expectations, requires further investigation. Rising expectations may well be a feature of all societies at various stages of development and should be considered in processual terms, but what requires further investigation is the manner in which rising expectations may give rise to discontent if people do not possess the resources or the social skills to obtain their desired outcomes. For example, the role of expectations has been, for a number of writers, an important element in explaining why people riot who are not necessarily the poorest in society. It is held that tensions are created, triggering flashpoints, when people with high expectations or aspirations experience discontent in situations where their expectations have not been fulfilled (see for example, Dunn, 2002, and Benyon and Solomos, 1987). Moreover, following James, the way in which the media can create unrealistic expectations is a key variable that requires further analysis. To some extent figurational writers *have* attributed an important role to the media in accounting for rising levels of violence. For example, Dunning *et al* (1988) examined the role of the media in post-Second World War Britain in terms of its contribution to escalating violent confrontations between football hooligans. However,

what I am suggesting here, *via* James's work, is that we need to look at rising expectations, and the ensuing potential for discontent, amongst all groups in society, and specifically, the role of the media in creating such expectations.

Another study that shares similar concerns to James's is that of Gilligan's *The Causes of Violence* (2000) and *Preventing Violence* (2001). In particular, what I would like to consider here is Gilligan's application of the concept of shame to the violent behaviour of people in contemporary industrial societies for, I believe Gilligan's application of the concept can illuminate our understanding of violent, aggressive behaviour in these societies.

The concept of shame in the work of Gilligan

Gilligan's studies moreover can, I think, be embraced within the Eliasian framework that I have attempted to outline. Gilligan's concerns with regard to the study of violence and aggression are certainly ambitious. Gilligan is largely concerned with the study of violence in modern, Western societies, particularly the United States of America, and although he is mainly concerned with the subject of interpersonal violence (as measured in this instance by rates of homicide), he also examines certain forms of 'collective' violence, namely those which are associated with inter-state wars. It is also evident that his concerns are similar to my own for he is seeking to understand the roots of violent and aggressive behaviour. His approach is also quite eclectic, for he is a practising psychotherapist who, nonetheless, emphasises the wider 'social' aspects of behaviour, and although he does not appear to be familiar with Elias's work, he is nonetheless familiar with the work of an Eliasian-influenced writer, Thomas Schlegel.

Gilligan's thesis I would argue, can be seen to be sympathetic to an Eliasian framework, particularly in the way he chooses to study aggression and violence in terms of guilt and shame complexes. Gilligan's thesis is that violent behaviour is concentrated predominantly, although not exclusively, amongst the lower socio-economic groups in society and is linked to high rates of shame experienced amongst these people. For example, in referring to the experiences of his patients (in the United States of America), homicidal killers in prisons, he says: 'These experiences, and many others like them, convinced me that the basic psychological motive, or cause, of violent behaviour is the wish to ward off or eliminate the feeling of shame and humiliation – a feeling that is painful, and can even be intolerable and overwhelming – and replace it

with its opposite, the feeling of pride' (Gilligan, 2001, 29). In Gilligan's analysis shame is equated with a loss of the self, a sense of feeling slighted or of feeling inferior relative to others. This idea is captured in certain remarks of his patients who had at some time assaulted or even killed someone: 'He disrespected me' or in its popular abbreviation: 'He dis'ed me'. For Gilligan, the degree to which a person experiences feelings of shame depends on two variables: the way other people treat him or her (either with admiration and respect, or with contempt and disdain) and the degree to which a person already feels proud or ashamed. Hence, Gilligan argues that people commit violent acts – at least with regard to homicides - in order to force respect from other people. For people who have already been shamed during their lifetime by other people, by parents, teachers, etc – even a minor sign of real or imagined disrespect can trigger a homicidal reaction. However, Gilligan argues that several preconditions need to be in place before people resort to violence. Firstly, violent reactions will only occur amongst those people who have not developed a capacity for guilt feelings or remorse over hurting someone else, or who have not developed a rational, self-interested fear of retribution that violent behaviour provokes from others. Secondly, he argues that those who commit violent acts do not perceive themselves as having available non-violent means by which to maintain or restore their self-esteem and self-respect. In other words, they do not possess the skills or qualifications that would enable them to achieve that which is respected by others. Hence, Gilligan argues that the most violent people in contemporary societies are lacking in non-violent sources of self-esteem: they are overwhelmingly poor, uneducated, even illiterate and tend to come from those classes with the lowest social and economic status in society. Linked to this analysis is the idea that such people do not perceive themselves as having any sense of 'net worth' in societies that Gilligan describes as materialistic and 'capitalist' (Gilligan, 2001, 37).

Gilligan then goes on to examine what he sees as the 'social causes' of shame that create the conditions for widespread violence within any given society. He argues that the social causes of shame can be analysed in terms of firstly, socio-economic inequality – the hierarchical division of societies into classes in which those at the bottom of the hierarchy perceive themselves as suffering from relative deprivation - and secondly, the assigning of gender roles in patriarchal societies. Hence, with regard to modern Western societies, men are taught that violence is successful as a strategy and are shamed for not being violent enough (for example they can be called cowards or deserters in times of war). Conversely, they are often

rewarded in the form of medals, titles and estates for being violent. Women on the other hand, are shamed for being too active and aggressive and are honoured for being passive and submissive - violence is much less likely to protect them against feelings of shame. Regarding the former point, Gilligan stresses that it is not poverty or deprivation *per se* that give rise to people committing acts of violence. Rather, feelings of inferiority are created by people's perceptions and awareness of deprivation relative to others. In those societies where inequality of income and wealth is most pronounced (or where relative deprivation worsens), rates of violence are relatively high. But it is not just a sense of feeling deprived in terms of income and wealth that can induce feelings of shame among a given population. For example, Gilligan analysed the Columbine high school murders that took place in Littleton, Colorado, in the year 2000, in terms of non-material factors. It is held that some seemingly well-educated and relatively affluent children suffered from feelings of inferiority because they felt slighted by, and alienated from, the school's academic and sporting elites (the 'jocks' and 'preps'). The children who had felt slighted were able to assert their self-respect initially by bringing in guns – a sign of status in the eyes of the other children – and then by killing those perceived to be responsible for their low self-esteem.

Gilligan's central argument moreover, is that relative poverty and widening levels of inequality in income and wealth provide the conditions for shaming experiences in any given society. Hence, using various data with regard to the USA and Britain, he argues that there exists a sufficiently strong correlation between rates of homicide and relative poverty to suggest that whenever inequality in income and wealth increases, the rate of homicide correspondingly rises. That is to say, the rate of homicide is correlative with increases in the level of inequality. For example, Gilligan argues that the rate of homicide increased in the USA during the 1980s which corresponded to an increase in inequality of income. And yet, whenever the rate of unemployment (an indicator of income) in both America and Britain has decreased, as it did in the 1960s, the rate of homicide has fallen (Gilligan, 2001, 40).

Moreover, Gilligan also attempts to account for differences in the rate of violence between different cultures. Here, he talks of shame and guilt cultures where high rates of interpersonal and collective violence are to be found in cultures whose members are especially vulnerable to feelings of shame and humiliation. Gilligan's categorisation of cultures derives from Ruth Benedict's concepts of shame cultures and guilt cultures (also an influence on Giddens's conceptions of shame and guilt) which she introduced in a study of

the culture and personality of Japanese people of the early 1940s, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (1946). Gilligan argues that these guilt and shame conceptions represent polarities within a continuum rather than either /or dichotomies. In shame cultures:

The feeling of shame actually occurs in oneself, of course, and can occur when one is alone, but it is characteristically perceived as something that occurs before an audience, an external judge in whose eyes (and by comparison with whom) one appears weak, failed, foolish, incompetent, ridiculous, rejected, inferior, contemptible – in short, shameful. Thus shame motivates concealment of those traits in oneself of which one is ashamed, since shame is only intensified by exposure to others (Gilligan, 2001, 51).

An example of a relatively pure and extreme shame culture cited by Gilligan is the Kwakiutl Indians of Vancouver Island, as described by Ruth Benedict in *Patterns of Culture* (1934). According to Benedict: 'The object of all Kwakiutl enterprise was to show oneself superior to one's rivals. This will to superiority was carried out with uncensored self-glorification and with gibes and insults poured upon the opponents....The Kwakiutl stressed equally the fear of ridicule, and the interpretation of experience in terms of insults. They recognised only one gamut of emotion, that which swings between victory and shame.' (cited by Gilligan, 2001, 51). The Kwakiutl engaged in headhunting, cannibalism, burning slaves alive and indiscriminating, merciless war and murder, even against people who were perceived to be totally innocent such as friends or hosts. By way of contrast, a guilt culture is, 'one in which the source of moral sanctions and authority is oneself, one's own internalized conscience and the moral law one imposes on oneself, violation of which leaves one feeling guilty and sinful in one's own eyes' (Gilligan, 2001, 51). People who live in guilt cultures may experience excessive feelings of guilt and sin and responsibility, and a vulnerability to depression, masochisms, martyrdom and suicide. Hence, in guilt cultures the institutionalised role of confession plays a prominent part in people's lives. Gilligan cites the Hutterites as an example of a guilt culture. The Hutterites emigrated from eastern Europe to escape religious persecution circa 1874 and have lived in communal farms in south Canada and the north-midwestern United States for more than a century. They consider themselves as living the only 'true' form of Christianity, one which involves the communal sharing of property. Gilligan cites a contemporary medical and social report of their behaviour to the effect that since their arrival in North America no history of warfare has been found nor is there evidence of a single case of murder, assault or rape.

Gilligan's thesis is compelling and moreover, fits loosely into the framework that I have put forward in this thesis. Specifically, there are three points of congruence with an Eliasian-based framework. Firstly,

violent behaviour is examined in terms of people's emotional responses and in terms of shame and guilt complexes within the psyche. This is in contrast to those models, cited in Chapter One, in which, *pace* Weber, violent behaviour is examined in terms of people's pursuit of rational, instrumental-type goals. Although Gilligan is less analytical than Elias with regard to the concept of shame, their analyses both share similar characteristics. For Elias, as was argued in Chapter Five, shame is experienced whenever an individual fears he or she is lapsing into inferiority amongst superiors, or at best among equals, and hence is similar to Gilligan's conception of shame as involving a sense of loss of self-respect, a sense of inferiority experienced whenever individuals are among superiors. Gilligan's conception of guilt is also substantively similar to Elias's implicit conception in that Elias examined guilt feelings in terms of, to use Freudian language, the conscience or super-ego; people at an advanced stage of a civilizing process, relative to those at a less advanced stage, come to experience a habitual sense of guilt whenever they transgress their own internalised codes, which of course, are formed in interdependencies with others. That is to say, relative to their counterparts at a less advanced stage of a civilizing process, they no longer experience feelings of excitement or pleasure whenever, say, they witness displays of violence. Gilligan's conception is similar in that he argues that, for people who experience feelings of shame at some time in their lives, it is their guilt complex that prevents them from committing violent acts. Secondly, like myself, as stated earlier, Gilligan links people's propensity to commit violent acts to the resources with which they are equipped: skills, qualifications etc, those attributes that would enable them to gain respect in non-violent ways. Thirdly, Gilligan, like Elias, avoids an economic deterministic analysis in his approach to the study of violence for, he does not link aggressive, violent behaviour solely to economic variables such as poverty or income or wealth but rather, to people's self-perception of deprivation. That is to say, for those people who experience relative material poverty it is the meanings that they attach to their experience of deprivation that is important as tensions may ensue as a consequence of people, unable to fulfil their aspirations, feeling dissatisfied and discontented. Conversely, in a society with rigid caste or class hierarchies, particularly where ideologies legitimating such inequalities are strong, it may not feel so shameful to be poor since poverty may be perceived as arising from external factors that individuals have no control over (for example, if it is perceived to be God's will).

However, Gilligan's analysis, in terms of the framework outlined in this thesis, suffers from a number of limitations. Firstly, he does not examine behaviour in 'the round' and consequently only targets rates of homicide as his main indicator of violent behaviour. There are of course problems here regarding the social construction of criminal statistics, as there are in James's work, which are not addressed by Gilligan. However, my main point here is that his claims regarding the causes or roots of violent behaviour are based only on narrow, albeit important, measurements of violence. For example, to substantiate his thesis Gilligan cites evidence with regard to Britain in the late 1990s, where both the homicide rate and the rate of unemployment fell. Gilligan is claiming a cause and effect relationship here. And yet other indicators suggest that at least some groups in Britain society were becoming more violent. For example, it is held that cruelty to animals has increased substantially in England in the last few years or so; that football hooliganism would still appear to be a 'structural' problem; and that juvenile disorder is becoming more prevalent. Or to take another example, in the 1960s the British people experienced a sustained period of full employment whilst at the same time the rate of homicide fell (according to Gilligan's data), seemingly endorsing Gilligan's thesis. However, other evidence suggests that football hooliganism was more of a problem during this period than, say, in the 1930s or 1950s (see for example, Dunning *et al*, 1988).

A second limitation is that in his writings Gilligan does not adopt a processual methodology. As a consequence a number of weaknesses emerge in his analysis. For example, he does not examine data regarding levels of interpersonal and collective violence in pre-modern societies. By failing to comment on such data he is unable to explain why levels of violence today are different from those of the past. The high rates of violence in England's past relative to today, would seem, ostensibly at any rate, to support Gilligan's thesis. One could hypothesise that in societies where inequality of income and wealth was more advanced than it is today, and where the social and economic social structure was more hierarchical and rigid - what Gilligan refers to as 'caste' societies - feelings of shame should be more prevalent and as a consequence rates of violence higher than in more open and egalitarian societies. And yet the problem for Gilligan here is that he argues that it is people's self-perception of deprivation, their awareness of it, that give rise to high levels of shame. In short, if one examines the implications of his thesis it is not clear that one would expect to see relatively high rates of violence in pre-industrial societies.

Regarding his concepts of shame and guilt, although Gilligan eschews dichotomous conceptualizing and views these concepts as polar opposites within a continuum, he does not examine these concepts in a processual manner. He is therefore unable to see that thresholds in guilt and shame have advanced in Western societies. In particular, Gilligan's treatment of shame is different to that of Elias's. Elias was concerned with changes in thresholds of shame and repugnance and related these changes to lengthening chains of interdependencies. For example, in European societies before the sixteenth century it was considered shameful for a lower class servant to expose himself or herself naked in front of a person of higher standing, and as the upper classes gradually became more dependent on the inferior classes, members of the upper classes could no longer appear in front of their servants naked. Gradually, people began to internalise these habits from childhood onwards until all classes sought to avoid behaviour that had come to be regarded as shameful. In other words, shame, in Elias's work, can be regarded as a series of taboos or actions that people come to avoid for appearing shameful. Gilligan, however, treats the idea of shame non-processually, for he regards shame as a universal and ahistorical concept that has been with us, he implies, since humans appeared on the earth (Gilligan, 2001, 31). He is not interested in how thresholds advance but rather, how at any point in time people are affected by the actions of others. For example, according to Gilligan, a person feeling slighted by someone else experiences feelings of shame. Or, a person comes to feel humiliated or inferior simply by living in a society where extreme inequality exists and is perceived to exist. And yet the central problem for Gilligan, one that arises from his non-processual conceptualising, is that he cannot explain why it is that in societies where everyone experiences shame at some time in their life, only a minority of people resort to violence. Gilligan is correct to recognise that a sense of guilt prevents the majority of us from committing violent acts. And yet it is precisely this idea that requires explanation. By conceptualising both shame and guilt processually, Gilligan would see that people's propensity to commit violent acts has changed and is constantly changing, and that what we actually regard as shameful behaviour is socially constructed. The difficulty here for Gilligan, is that his concepts of shame and guilt are based on Benedict's dichotomous construction. Elias however, treats the concepts processually and in terms of balances. For example, the concept of 'guilt culture' is more appropriate to societies where there is a strong internalization of taboos, that is to say where self-controls predominate relative to external constraints. The concept of 'shame culture' however, is more applicable to

societies, such as seventeenth century French court society, where external controls predominate relative to internal ones (see Dunning, 1967, 889 and Mennell, 1992, 304). Nonetheless, Gilligan's thesis remains invaluable in that he examines violent, aggressive behaviour in the context of people's emotional states, and examines such behaviour within a structural context – wider inequalities, etc, and how people subjectively perceive their structural positions. In other words, it has much in common with the framework advanced here.

In conclusion, the Eliasian framework posits a model of society in which balances in power are constantly changing. It also posits a model of society in which emotional trajectories are changing. The way in which empowerment processes allow for the possibility of less aggressive behaviour, but at the same time may actually exacerbate tensions, are fruitful areas for investigation. Exactly how levels of inequality and people's perceptions of deprivation can result in differing emotional experiences for people – perhaps by creating inequalities in people's acquisition of 'emotional capital', or by creating tensions and discontent - are also areas for further study. I wish, however, to explore my final conclusions concerning an Eliasian framework for the study of violence and aggression in Chapter Seven, my final chapter.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

In this final chapter I shall attempt to put forward what I believe to be the main conclusions arising from this thesis, that is to say, what I consider to be my main conclusions concerning the development of a framework for the study of aggression and violence. I shall also indicate the areas in which I believe further progress and research are required. More specifically there are four areas in which I believe an Eliasian framework ie., a developmental approach to the study of societies and the individuals who constitute them, can enable us to arrive at a more reality-congruent understanding of violence and aggression than has been achieved so far.

Firstly, the adoption of process theorizing allows for the possibility of the researcher, when examining societies in both the 'present' and the past, to observe both continuities and discontinuities in patterns of aggression and violent behaviour where discontinuities refer to the sense of a rupture or disruption or the sense of a differentiation – something that takes a different form from that which preceded it and yet cannot be considered to have characteristics that are entirely new – rather than the sense employed in the works of Giddens and Foucault respectively of an absolute break with the past.

By comparing acts of aggression and violence in societies of the past with those in modern present-day societies, and by examining violent behaviour, collective and interpersonal, in terms of a continuum, we are able to conclude that many continuities concerning aggressive and violent forms of behaviour exist with the past. By way of illustration many of the characteristics of predominantly expressive forms of aggressive of behaviour in pre-industrial England – causal and impulsive – are still present among particular groups in present-day England. A number of Eliasian studies have demonstrated this (see for example, Dunning *et al* 1988). We can also make the same observation regarding predominantly instrumental forms of violence behaviour. For example, the wars currently taking place across eastern Congo between rival Congolese, Ugandan and Rwandan-backed militias *seem* to share many of the characteristics of the feuds between the families of the nobility in pre-mid-eighteenth century England: multiple killings as a result of vendettas; the predominance of kinship ties between rival groups; and disputes over territory and property. Moreover, both types of conflict have taken place in societies where the state is perceived to be militarily weak and/or lacking in legitimacy.

Another continuity in this regard, and one that is implied by civilizing processes, is the long-term movement from predominantly affective forms of violence to predominantly instrumental forms that has been occurring in what are now modern advanced societies. We can, for example, observe this changing balance taking place with regard to sports: a number of writers argue that violence within modern-day sports has become more instrumental and less affective than used to be the case (see for example, Elias and Dunning, 1986). Or to take another example, in this century and the last, wars between and within states account for more killings than from any other single cause (*The Observer*, 15 June 2003) although this does not mean to say that we should infer that a long-term change in people's sensibilities has taken place; advances in technology for example, have simply made possible an increase in the means of killing.

Also, consonant with these patterns has been a steady decline in the rate of affective-based killings over the centuries in a number of what are now considered to be advanced societies. By way of illustration, the homicide rate (as we have seen in Chapter Three) has declined in England over the duration of the time-frame discussed in this thesis. However, that said, there would appear to be a number of patterns and characteristics concerning violent and aggressive behaviour that could be described as having discontinuities with the past. For example, many studies, as we have seen, are suggestive that not only has the rate of violence (as measured by, say, the rate of homicides) increased in most modern advanced societies since the Second World War, but that the violence we are presently experiencing in Britain is in a number of respects different from that which has occurred in the past. By way of illustration we can perhaps observe this regarding patterns of behaviour among particular groups of juvenile delinquents in Britain today. Their patterns of behaviour are different from those that characterized particular groups of juveniles in the periods of the 1930s and 1950s. I shall, however, come back to this point later.

A second advantage of an Eliasian sociological paradigm for the theorist of aggression and violence is that his paradigm is characterized by a number of concepts – interdependencies, functional democratization – that reveal to the researcher the dynamic, 'ever-shifting' quality of power relations that are present in all societies. By examining power as a set of relations we are able to conclude that the potential in any given society for discontent, tension and conflict is likely to occur on a frequent basis as, say, when a group's or individuals' power potentials increase and another group's or individuals' power potentials decrease. More specifically, functional democratization processes allow us to observe the way in which discontent can occur as groups become more or less empowered. Moreover, I have already

identified three contexts in which the potential for discontent can occur as a consequence of changes in the balance of power.

The first context refers to situations in which those groups or individuals who have become recently empowered come into conflict with those groups or individuals who have perhaps seen a fall in their power potentials; an example that perhaps illustrates this is the modern-day 'gender rancour' described by Oliver James (see Chapter Six) whereby, it is held, in the last forty or so years males in modern advanced societies have failed to adapt fully to their changing roles *vis-à-vis* the changing roles of females.

The second context refers to situations where people who do not possess either the social resources/skills or the 'cultural capital' to obtain their desired outcomes experience rising expectations that cannot be straightforwardly fulfilled. Discontent and conflict may ensue particularly among people who are relatively disempowered.

The third context refers to situations in which people who are relatively lacking in stores of 'emotional capital' (the emotional and social strategies that are used by any given individual to cope with situations of conflict) as well as cultural capital, are unable to resolve differences with other people without a recourse to violence.

In short, Elias's paradigm provides us with a framework by which we can examine the shifting nature of power relations in any given society and thereby the likelihood of conflict. To say this is not to imply that discontent necessarily manifests itself as violence; only that it creates the possibility of violent behaviour taking place. Equally important in this analysis however, is the insight made by a number of Eliasian writers that those people with, in effect, relatively low levels of 'emotional capital' actively seek out *tension* and excitement through participating in rituals of a violent nature such as, for example, those associated with football hooliganism.

What, therefore, I believe requires further discussion and investigation is that of the various relationships that are held to exist between material inequalities and people's propensity to commit violent acts. Arguably, the issue of inequality has been become a somewhat marginalised area in both political discourse and social science research possibly as a result of the limitations of economic deterministic theorizing, held to be inherent in Marxist perspectives, that dominated approaches to the study of inequality in the 1960s and 1970s. A fresh approach is therefore called for. James's research for example (see Chapter Six) on relative deprivation seems to indicate that people today in British society feel more

deprived than people did in the 1950s. James argues that people's self-awareness of relative deprivation is a 'cause' of discontent in modern advanced societies. Furthermore, as we have seen, Gilligan identifies widening rates of inequality in advanced societies as a 'cause' of rising rates of homicide insofar as people who live in societies where an increase in the rate of inequality has taken place suffer from feelings of shame. According to Gilligan, for people who suffer from feelings of low self-esteem and who do not have a fully formed conscience or guilt-complex, violence becomes a means of asserting one's self-esteem. These feelings of shame are often generated by people's self-perceptions of deprivation in societies where extreme inequality is held to exist: a conclusion that is in some respects similar to James's. My point is, however, that we need more research on self-perceptions of deprivation i.e., how people come to see themselves in any given hierarchy based on status, income and wealth, and the meanings people attach to their experience of relative deprivation. Secondly, we need to investigate further the ways in which material inequalities affect the reproduction of inequalities in emotional and cultural capital and of people's social skills. Is there a cause and effect relationship here or is it more of a dynamic feedback relationship in which those groups of people who possess low levels of cultural and emotional capital reproduce their existing material conditions? Again, the researcher of violence and aggression is interested in how these patterns can contribute to an increased propensity to commit acts of violence and aggression.

A third advantage of an Eliasian framework for the researcher of violence and aggression is that, as we have seen in Chapters One and Six, it is one of the few perspectives in which the study of emotions is not conceptually separated from the study of cognitive processes; that is to say, emotions are not treated by the researcher as a deviation from an 'ideal-type' construction of rational behaviour as they are in Weber's writings. Nor did Elias study merely the ontological meanings attached to violent behaviour, examples of which are to be found in works as diverse as Willis (1977) and Guilianotti (1989). A framework that treats rational, cognitive behaviour and emotional behaviour as interrelated offers a number of possibilities to the researcher of violence and aggression. It allows us, for example, to explore the manner in which people's sensibilities change and the way in which emotional trajectories and drive-controls have changed and continue to change. This is important because at a fundamental level acts of violence and aggression involve a display of emotions (to a greater or lesser extent) or, viewed from a different perspective, a failure to control emotions. I have already written at length in Chapter Five how emotional controls in the last one hundred years or so have changed and the implications of this for acts of violence and aggression.

Whereas Giddens posits a freer individual in the West emotionally liberated from a Freudian tyranny of guilt complexes, Elias posits an individual who has become emotionally calmer but at the same time more private and intimate in his or her emotions. There is also a developing body of work on informalization and formalization processes and how such concepts can illuminate our understanding of changes in the affective behaviour of people in the West in the last thirty or forty years or so. These concepts allow us to observe how the potential for conflict may increase in societies where the formal rules that once guided people's behaviour have largely disappeared in modern societies (see Wouters, 1986, for example). This is another area in which further research is required.

Lastly, as I have argued in Chapter Six, through his concepts of guilt and shame Elias provides a narrative for examining the roots of aggression and violence. People's propensity to commit acts of violence and aggression is a manifestation of the manner in which their guilt and shame complexes operate. For those people at a relatively advanced stage of a civilizing process and who have experienced advances in their thresholds of shame, it is their guilt complexes operating at an unconscious level and their capacity to experience feelings of shame whenever internalized codes are transgressed, that refrain them from acting out feelings of aggression that would otherwise give rise to acts of violence. Conversely these concepts of guilt and shame allow us to make judgements as to why some groups of people *do* act out their feelings of aggression. A further corollary of his analysis of shame is that it suggests that in western societies a channelling of emotions has taken place in which emotions are no longer as openly expressed as they once were, and which may encourage behaviour that comes to be seen as less egregious than was the case formerly. I have specifically suggested that intimization processes may encourage the acquiring of 'emotional capital' and may be seen as civilizing influences in their own right.

Moreover, there are two areas I believe in which further research would allow progress in our understanding of the roots of violence and aggression. Firstly, as I have noted in Chapter Six, compared to his treatment of the idea of shame Elias devoted relatively little attention to the notion of guilt in his writings; there is therefore scope here for further analysis and exploration of the concept of guilt in the writings of Elias. Secondly, there is scope for further research on the concept of shame and its application to people's behaviour in modern advanced societies and how it may give rise to acts of aggression and violence, as Gilligan, for one, has plausibly demonstrated. The common currency of the noun 'disrespect' (or its abbreviation 'dis'ed') among particular groups of young people in Britain today and its invocation

by those people who commit violent crimes as a motivation for their behaviour, indicates that the concept of shame and its application to modern-day forms of aggression is something that is worth exploring further.

In terms of our present understanding of violence and aggression, the social sciences would appear to be divided between those perspectives, sociobiology, evolutionary psychology, and ethology for example, in which aggression and violence are examined in terms of essentialist biological concepts (for example, those writers who describe the propensity to aggress in terms of, say, instinctive behaviour and/or the evolutionary, 'adaptive' requirements of aggression),¹ and the rest of the social sciences that provide us with either fragmentary, partial accounts of particular aspects of violence: accounts that provide us with few analyses of a substantive nature regarding people's propensity to aggress, or, as in the case of Marxist perspectives, accounts that reduce explanations for violence and aggression solely to economic factors. My contention is that Elias, while avoiding essentialist explanations and concepts, has nonetheless, provided us with concepts of a substantive nature (such as for example, his concepts of guilt and shame) that can help us to explain why people aggress. On the one hand, the Eliasian paradigm allows us to recognise that many different forms of violence have existed – terrorism, football hooliganism, duelling etc – and that by examining these various forms of violence in historical context and processually, to conclude that each has its own separate genesis and its own separate 'causes'. On the other hand, the holistic nature of the Eliasian paradigm enables us to conclude that these various forms of violence are interrelated in the sense that all aggressive actions involve varying degrees of calculation and emotional responsiveness. The Eliasian paradigm thus allows us in a sense to gauge the way in which this balance has changed and continues to change. Hence, it could be said that while tension or the potential for tension is a constant in all societies, at any given point in time, what is historically variable is the way in which generation responds to conflict. How people today respond to personal 'affronts' is decidedly different to how people – who were at a different stage of an English civilizing process – responded in medieval and early modern England

¹ See for example, Chagnon, 1979; Ellis, 1990; Wilson, 1975; and Barash, 1982

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