

**SEARCHING FOR THE ROOTS OF JUVENILE  
DELINQUENCY\***

**AN INTEGRATED APPROACH**

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**ABSTRACT**

The author attempts to delve into the roots that fuel juvenile delinquent behavior. In doing so, he provides a brief overview of the main theories on juvenile delinquency, including theories on critical criminology, and integrates them into a unified interpretative framework. The axes of this unified scheme include the individual characteristics of the offender, his family environment, the school and peer environment, and, finally, the

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broader values and institutional conditions of a society.

Moreover, he believes that these conditions, as a "permeating atmosphere," diffuse within the institutions of society and significantly influence them. He also maintains that in case that these conditions are governed by utilitarian perceptions of quick and flawless success on a personal and professional level, they may lead to the search for ways and methods to overcome any obstacles beyond legitimate and lawful paths, thereby pushing young people towards delinquency.

**Key Words:** Integrated Criminology, Criminological theories, Offender's personal characteristics, Peers, Family, Social institutions, Social values

### Introduction

1. Since the time of Durkheim and other pioneers of so-called "*traditional criminology*", crime has been perceived as a distinct violation of society's basic values: the values<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See *E. Durkheim*, *De la division du travail social*, Paris: P.U.F., 1960 (1893), 35-39, 43-48, 64-68, republished under the title "*Définitions du crime et fonction du châtement*", by *D. Szabo (ed.)*, *Deviance et criminalité*, Paris: A. Colin, 1970, 88-99: 90. In the discussion that follows, the term "value" is used in the traditional sense to mean the way a person or group of persons perceive something as desirable, which in turn influences them in their choice of available methods, means and goals of action. See in particular *C. Kluckhohn*, *Values and Value-Orientations in the Theory of Action: An Exploration in Definition and Classification*, in: *T. Parsons/ E.A. Shils (eds.)*, *Towards a General Theory of Action*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard Univ. Press, 1951, page 395, mentioned by: *Jan W. Van Deth/ Elinor Scarbrough*, *The Impact of Values*, Oxford/ New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995, page 27.

For the meaning and structure of values, I would suggest the following works: *Karl E. Scheibe*, *Beliefs and Values*, New York/Chicago etc.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1970, mainly p. 40 ff.; also *Milton Rokeach*, *Beliefs, Attitudes and Values. A Theory of Organization and Change*, San Francisco/ Washington/ London: Jossey-Bass Inc., 1972, *Ben Reich / Christine Adcock*, *Value, Attitude and Behavior. Change*, London: Methuen, 1976, *Dennis C. Foss*, *The Value Controversy in Sociology*, San Francisco/ Washington/ London:

generally recognized by its citizens as maintaining and promoting social coexistence. As early as the sixties, however, supporters of the so-called “*criminology of social reaction*” and of the Marxist orientated “*critical*” or “*new criminology*” had begun to question the existence of commonly held values in modern societies, maintaining instead that the rules of criminal law constitute, simply, an expression of a certain class or group of individuals’ superiority over others, usually of lower financial standing. These theoretical contradictions have, of course, given the science of criminology fresh vigor, since they have revealed a series of important questions that had been formerly overlooked; such as the factors influencing the criminalization or de-criminalization of behavior and the discriminatory judicial response observed towards certain socioeconomic groups. At the same time, these contradictions have proved largely unproductive and groundless in final analysis, mainly for two reasons: First, because the two theoretical approaches in question have been rejected as utterly incompatible<sup>3</sup> - although, as I have endeavored to show since 1985<sup>4</sup>, *the antithesis between them is not insurmountable*; and secondly, because the respective recognition or rejection of the values allegedly comprising the basis of criminal law has been applied in abstracto *to the whole set of these values*, without specific research

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Jossey-Bass Publ., 1977, mainly p. 112 ff., also, *Brenda Almond/Bryan Wilson* (eds.), *Values. A Symposium*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press International, 1988, mainly page 75 ff., also, for an interesting comparison of the system of values in the USA, Europe and Japan, *Gottlieb Brunner*, *Grundwerte als Fundament der pluralistischen Gesellschaft*, Freiburg/ Basel/ Wien: Herder, 1989, *Steven Lukes*, *On Trade-Offs Between Values*, Florence: European University Institute, 1992, *Eric Carlton*, *Values and the Social Sciences. An Introduction*, London: Duckworth, 1995.

<sup>3</sup> For the relative scientific discussion, see, for example, *Thomas J. Bernard*, *The Consensus-Conflict Debate. Form and Content in Social Theories*, New York Columbia Univ. Press, 1983.

<sup>4</sup> *N. E. Courakis*, *The contemporary perspectives of Criminology* (in Greek), in: “*Armenopoulos*”, 38: 1985,924-928 and re-published in: *by the same*, *Criminological Horizons* (in Greek), I, Athens/ Komotini: A.N. Sakkoulas, 1991,161-169.

into their particular type, practical applicability or effect on the life of a society. The same applies to the particular *socializing institutions* that constitute a manifestation of those values; mainly those centered around family, school and work. Examination of their importance to criminality has usually been fragmentary, without providing a general connection between the way in which these institutions actually operate and the values they were originally built on.

2. Although there have been some interesting proposals in recent years regarding so-called *integrated approaches towards crime*<sup>5</sup>, the above mentioned problem still persists since these approaches do not attempt to achieve the harmonious reconciliation between the views of “traditional” criminology and those of the “criminology of social reaction”/ “critical criminology” that the multi-faceted and complex reality of the criminal phenomenon demands<sup>6</sup> (usually several theory based models of traditional criminology are merely connected); nor is the relation of these approaches to the value structures and institutions of each country and society in particular examined, and this, *in spite of the differences that naturally exist from country to country and from society to society*. Consequently, in the discussion that follows, I will undertake to propose such a multilateral theoretical approach towards juvenile delinquency, emphasizing the importance of

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, *Donald J. Shoemaker*, *Delinquency Theory: An Integrative Approach*, in *by the same: Theories of Delinquency. An Examination of Explanations of Delinquent Behavior*, New York/ Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2000<sup>4</sup>, 260-279, *Rich. F. Catalano/J. David Hawkins*, *The Social Developmental Model: A Theory of Antisocial Behavior*, in: *J. David Hawkins (ed.), Delinquency and Crime. Current Theories*, Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996, 149-197 and *Rich. E. Tremblay/ W.M. Craig*, *Developmental juvenile delinquency prevention*, in: *the European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 5.2:1997. 33-49 (N.B. the whole of this issue is devoted to matters of prevention of juvenile delinquency).

<sup>6</sup> Cf. *David Downes/ Paul Rock*, *Understanding Deviance*, Clarendon Press, 2003<sup>4</sup>, mainly p. 352 ff.

utilizing the positive points of each theory, notwithstanding the fact they may contradict each other. In an upcoming further study, I will (i) present the basic values in Greece and the way of life espoused by these youngsters: as well as (ii) delineate the deficiencies displayed by certain socializing institutions in Greece such as the family unit, school, and work; and finally (iii) evaluate the available data pertaining to the aforementioned delinquents in order to arrive at some basic conclusions about the relationship of delinquency to the framework of values and their institutionalization in contemporary Greece in what could be considered a sample of “*applied integrated criminology*”. Where it is necessary, these arguments will include elements belonging to the value systems and life styles of Western European youngsters whose cultural traditions coincide to a large extent with their Greek counterparts.

### **The theoretical (integrated) approach towards juvenile delinquency**

3. The main axis of the theoretical or integrated approach which is attempted here, supports the idea that the exhibition of deviant or non deviant behavior as *the result of a series of conflicting motives, some of which drive the individual to delinquency (risk factors) and others which conversely act as inhibitors (protective factors)*. It is evident that those motives responsible for staving off delinquency belong to a way of thinking that either spontaneously (through a sense of shame) or intellectually (the result of reasoned thought and decision) compels conformity to criminal law; while on the other hand, the motives that lead to delinquency (even when these may assume unreasonable forms, such as vandalism), consist in essence of an attempt to escape from real or imaginary pressing

personal problems of various kinds, usually of a *psychological* nature, such as the need for relief or pleasure; or *social* problems, such as the desire for self-assurance and acceptance by others; or *financial* considerations, such as the wish for acquisition of basic and additional material goods. Obviously, the greater the power of the socializing motives and/or the smaller the power of opposing motives, the smaller the chance that someone will break the criminal law, and vice-versa<sup>7</sup>. However, the final outcome of this struggle of whether one will arrive at the point of taking action by actually committing an offence or not (acting out), depends to a certain degree, both on the existence of opportunities, and availability of victims to ensure the success of criminal endeavor, and on factors that may affect its outcome in a particular way, such as security system installations (situational crime prevention)<sup>8</sup>.

4. The motives that impel an individual towards delinquency are influenced and shaped by three main groups of factors that are in explicit interaction with each other. These are: (a) the offender's personal characteristics, (b) the socio-psychological conditions under which the individual lives, and (c) the wider values and institutions of the society in question.

A number of important theories have been posited in the past relating to these factors, whose basic elements, in spite of their apparent contradictions, can be placed within a more general framework. More particularly:

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<sup>7</sup> The importance of the role played by emotional impulses in containment, or conversely, the execution of criminal acts, has already been clarified (starting in the sixties) by the American *Walter C. Reckless*, mainly in his book *The Crime problem*, New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1967. See also *D.J. Shoemaker*, *Theories of Delinquency*, 2000<sup>4</sup> (op. cit.), p. 161 ff.

<sup>8</sup> On this subject see e.g. *R. Clarke*, *Situational Crime Prevention: Theory and Practice*, in: *British Journal of Criminology*, 20:1980.136 ff.

**(a) *The offender's personal characteristics***

5. Personal characteristics refer to biological particularities and the offender's inherent personality: age, sex, possible childhood traumas or sexual anomalies that lead to psychological problems, possible drug addiction and so forth. It is evident that these particular features have a profound effect on the shaping and emergence of criminal behavior. Under normal circumstances, however, individual's biological characteristics play their most significant role during *adolescence*, due to the radical changes taking place in the physical structure, the psychological / intellectual faculties, and, by extension, the teenager's socio-cultural development. (The remarks that follow are based *on the premises of developmental psychology*). During the period between the years of about 12 to 16, which in the terminology of Piaget and Kohlberg's<sup>9</sup> "moral judgment" is habitually referred to as the "second stage of pre-conventional level"<sup>10</sup>, teenagers *do* have relationships of mutual understanding with others, i.e. they can understand the viewpoints or positions maintained by other people. However, their socio-ethical leanings tend to have a primarily egocentric bias, which, in turn, makes them more likely to overlook any punishment they may receive when the hoped-for benefits of their delinquent behavior appear greater. Yet, the benefits they would receive are not primarily materialistic, but are related to a more general desire to acquire some kind of identity and to carve out their own independent and individual path, in

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<sup>9</sup> See, for example, the following work: *F. Clark Power/ Ann Higgins/ Lawrence Kohlberg (eds.), Lawrence Kohlberg's Approach to Moral Education*, New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1989.

<sup>10</sup> For the discussion that follows, see *Nicholas Emler/ St. Reicker, Adolescence and Delinquency. The collective management of reputation*, Oxford/ Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1995, p. 32 ff., 52 ff., 99 ff., 205 ff., where there are further references to be found.

which processes they question every kind of authority and power.<sup>11</sup>

6. During this period, the psychological support given to adolescents by their *families* and *peers* is of decisive importance. However, the teenager's reaction to these two groups usually involves a balancing of different and largely contradictory roles. Indeed, to some degree teenagers wish to detach themselves from the family hearth, which represents the most direct form of control in their environment. This is why the phenomenon of teenagers coming into confrontation with their parents and leaving home, albeit temporarily, is a frequently observed occurrence. In such situations, teenagers seek emotional refuge in their friends, who act as a substitute for the family. Yet these youngsters do not desire total detachment from their parents: they still retain an awareness of the extreme importance of the parental bond. In this way, *teenagers are forced to balance precariously between two diametrically opposed roles*, first, the role of the submissive or at least non-confrontational teenager, who, in fact, loves his or her parents and is sensitive to their reactions, and, secondly, the role of the rebel, the "tough nut" of his particular peer group. (For conventional reasons, this holds less with girls, although it is equally important for them to balance these opposing roles). By assuming the first role, teenagers follow a pattern of mild

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<sup>11</sup> In the current frame of discussion, the work of *E.H. Erikson*, *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, New York: Norton 1968 continues to be seminal. According to Erikson, adolescence comprises the fifth stage of a person's evolution and is characterized by the person's liberation from the protective shell of childhood, the taking of decisions regarding his future roles and the shaping of a code of necessary values, in order that the young person can overcome the crisis of identity and communicate with his environment. See. *Reimer Jensen*, *The development of identity during adolescence*, at *I. Tsiantis et al.* *Adolescence. A transitional stage in a changing world*, Athens: Kastaniotis, 1994,35-46, where there are further pertinent studies on the same subject to be found. In general, as Aristotle pointed out in his «*Rhetoric*», adolescents are characterized as having an attitude towards life that is more optimistic and idealistic, as well as more morally and emotionally complete (see *Aristotle Rhetoric*, 1389a 4 ff.



behavior, fulfilling their parents' expectations for their education and professional success, believing that by so doing, they are securing their own futures as well; a consideration that they see as a concern of special importance. On the other hand, by assuming the second role, teenagers gain acceptance and acquire emotional support from their friends from peer group, thus developing a larger sense of self - confidence.

7. If, at this point, parents confront teenagers with unjustifiable violence or neglect, depriving them of the attention they need and of the socio-ethical models and psychological support parents are expected to offer, and/or their friends from peer group have a particular leaning towards delinquency, then it is not unusual for the first situation outlined to provoke a reactionary response to the second. This will probably result in the adolescent dismissing the thought of potential punishment: the reasoning prevailing in this "second stage of conventional level" being that; why, after all, should teenagers fear or be concerned with their parents' reactions when the parents do not exhibit real concern or involvement to their offspring. This train of thought can, in turn, lead these teenagers to commit a criminal act. Besides, *it is during these years that the greatest proportion of delinquent activity is recorded.* Moreover, it must be emphasized that the restless or delinquent behavior exhibited by teenagers indicates more a game of setting their own terms of freedom rather than a conscious and wholesale rejection of social norms, and under normal circumstances will not extend past the end of the second stage of pre-conventional level, i.e. the age of sixteen or seventeen<sup>12</sup>. Naturally, the exact duration of this stage is influenced by the factors

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<sup>11</sup> See the relevant findings of research conducted by *G. Schneider/ P. Sutterer/ T. Karger*, Cohort Study on the Development of Police-Recorded Criminality and Criminal Sanctioning, Parts I & II, in: *Crime and Criminal Justice*, 1988, 72-88, 89-114, mentioned by *Christina Zarafonitou* in her work *Empirical Criminology* (in Greek), Athens: Nomiki Vivliothiki (Law Library), 1995, page 95 ff.

governing the particular psychological properties of each youngster, as well as the family and more general social environment.

Consequently, teenagers move on to the next stage of their moral judgment. In the first stage of “conventional level” they attempt to reconcile their own demands with society’s ideas of what is right and proper. Then, in the second stage of this development, teenagers endeavor to align themselves, as far as is possible, with the existing social structure and its rules. Finally, at a later stage known as the stage of “post-conventional reasoning”, which will not necessarily be reached by every teenager, the youngster, after a period of intense questioning, undertakes to supersede the existing social structure, adopting more liberal and generally recognized ideas: ones that give greater consideration to the individuality and complexity of particular social groups and interests.

**(b) *The socio - psychological conditions***

**8.** These conditions refer to the teenagers’ immediate environment, i.e. their relations with family, school, neighborhood and employer (if they work) on the one hand, and their relations with friends of their own age and peer – group<sup>2</sup> on the other. As a rule, the first of these categories, so long as it does not present any deviations, exerts strong social control over the adolescent, acting as a deterrent to delinquent behavior. This is why the study

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<sup>12</sup> For what follows, see mainly *David Downes/ Paul Rock*, *Understanding Deviance*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2003<sup>4</sup>, 224 ff., where there are more specific critical observations on the works of authors mentioned here. A review of the basic sociological theories of crime is also made in various criminological works, such as *Marshall B. Clinard/ Robert F. Meier*, *Sociology of Deviant Behavior*, Belmont, CA (USA): Wadsworth, Cengage Learning, 2011<sup>14</sup>.

of delinquency is usually placed within the frame of “*social control theory*”<sup>13</sup>. However, it should be noted that the meaning behind this concept is treated in a different way by the various social control theories. Some simply amount to the idea of “*external supervision*” and surveillance of the adolescent in question. Harriet Wilson and G. Herbert (1978), for example, give emphasis to the question of whether or not teenagers should be allowed to roam the streets and come home late at night. Others, on the contrary, give importance to the “social bond” developed (or not) between the adolescent and other members of society, the adolescent’s employer and society’s rules in general (Hirschi, 1969). As a result, the social bond has, in this frame, a more basic tenet and depends on the teenagers’ “*self-control*”, so that the former, feeling that they have emotional support from those around them or from their work, as well as having faith in the social regulations that they implicitly abide by, can conform to the rules of social coexistence with greater ease. Conversely, lack of affection and parental supervision, especially that of the mother’s, a more general lack of unity within the family (according to the research results of the Glueck couple in 1950, which are still relevant today), as well as failure at school and at finding work<sup>14</sup> are considered to have negative repercussions on the formation of relations between adolescents and society in general, and to gradually predispose them towards delinquency, although in this case it is not necessarily inevitable that they will commit a criminal act.

9. As previously outlined, the main factor responsible for this negative outcome is *the adolescent’s adherence to a group of similarly-aged friends who pursue delinquent patterns.*

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<sup>13</sup> For theories of social control see *Linda B. Deutschmann*, *Deviance & Social Control*, Scarborough, Ontario/Canada: Nelson, 1994, p. 263 ff., and *Katherine S. Williams*, *Textbook on Criminology*, London: Blackstone 1994, p. 320 ff.

<sup>14</sup> See *David Downes/Paul Rock*, *Understanding Deviance*, op. cit. [note 5], 2003<sup>4</sup>, p. 166 ff.

Usually, the more particular role played by this group of young people in the development of juvenile delinquency is examined within the framework of “*subculture theories*” (Albert Cohen, 1955, Wolfgang and Ferracuti, 1967), “*Culture conflict theory*” (Sellin, 1938), “*Differential Association theory*” (Sutherland, 1924/1979), and “*Differential Opportunity Structure theory*” (Cloward and Ohlin, 1960), all of which use the particular group within the subculture that one belongs to as a base. More specifically, it is thought that *subcultures* form in reaction to the problems generated by a society’s official culture. This reaction can begin from being simply a variant of the official culture, escalating into a direct opposition of it. Therefore, subcultures do not necessarily have delinquent tendencies, nor do they align themselves with the political values of a particular socioeconomic order or group. Most usually these subcultures consist of *boys* (who, after all, comprise the majority of juvenile offenders) who give central importance to ideas such as the pursuit of intense emotion, the abhorrence of routine and the exhibition of “macho” masculinity which is especially directed against weaker social groups, such as minorities (W. Miller, 1958, D. Matza, 1964, P. Willis, 1978).

Therefore, the actions of these teenagers, rather than being ruled by a desire for material gain, are governed by a leaning towards pleasure- seeking and unscrupulousness, and are oversensitive to real or imaginary insults (Albert Cohen, 1955). Naturally, this does not exclude the possibility that this delinquency will not, at a later stage, develop into some other more self-serving activity (Janet Foster, 1990). In these groups, teenagers are confronted with a common way of thinking and gradually become part of the group and utterly dependent on it: to the point where it becomes very difficult for one of its members to act differently, even when the group’s activities take on a deviant aspect (such as vandalism, bullying, petty theft,

bodily harm and drug-involvement)<sup>15</sup>. On the other hand, as previously mentioned (para., 7), involvement in these activities is, as a rule, *only temporary, and does not constitute a conscious questioning* of the society. For this reason, the State's judicial response to less serious juvenile offences must not involve media publicity or sentences of detention that may stigmatize the offender; the only criterion should be the re-integration of these delinquents into the social body as quickly as possible. Should this fail to happen, there is a real danger that these adolescents will be driven towards following an irrevocable path leading to a criminal career (E. Lemert, 1964 and theory of symbolic interaction). Besides, research has shown that adolescents who commit petty theft and whom the State consequently deals with in ways other than institutionalization, possibly even deviating from laws already in place, rarely run into further legal problems over the next ten years<sup>16</sup>.

**(c) *The general values and institutions in society***

10. The values and institutions of a society comprise what Hippolyte Taine<sup>17</sup>, as early as the nineteenth century, perceptively called the “all-pervading atmosphere”: namely the economy, politics, culture and religion. This evidently refers to those factors that concern the adolescent's wider social environment, as well as those that have a direct correlation to his own adopted values and his attitude towards socializing institutions such as the family, school and work. More specifically, the problems associated with these factors belong chiefly to the area of “*modernization theories*”, (Clinard/Abbott, 1973, Shelley, 1981), and

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<sup>15</sup> See Nick Elmer/St. Reicher, *Adolescence and Delinquency*, op. c. [ note 9], 1995, p. 58.

<sup>16</sup> See mainly Fr. *Schulenburg*, *Minderjährige als Täter von Kraftfahrzeug-Diebstahl und Kraftfahrzeug-Mißbrauch*, Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1973.

<sup>17</sup> H. Taine, *Philosophic de l' Art*, Paris 1872, p. 16 ff.

“*theories of anomie*”, (Durkheim, 1893, and Merton, 1938 and 1949). These theories support the view that the radical industrialization and urbanization that took place at the end of the nineteenth century and later, overturned the traditional social structures and moral “virtues” of the Victorian period, allowing considerable social mobility and accumulation of wealth, which in turn became a basic criterion for judging social success and fulfillment. In both Europe and America, the former to a far lesser degree than the latter, the idea that one could have humble beginnings yet still reach the top of the socio-economic pyramid became the “dream” and goal of whole generations. However, it becomes obvious that even the “inbetween” stages of the pyramid have a limited amount of rungs that can be occupied, and that consequently, modern societies exhibit an evident *discrepancy between the goals that are set and the available legal means by which these goals can be achieved* (Merton). Whichever people, the young in particular, adopt these goals and show originality in their aims and the means by which to realize them, are likely to succeed. The remainder of the population will either be driven to illegal activities, invoking henceforth a number of excuses attempting to “rationalize” their criminality (Matza, 1964), or they will be forced to give up the fight altogether, driven out to the margins of society. People belonging to lower income classes are more likely to grow weary of this attempt to succeed, thereby suffering society’s economic inequalities more profoundly than other groups, as well as enduring the discriminatory attitude of the laws and their application. Therefore, the only long-term, plausible solution for the problem of delinquency, according to the connected *theories of “radical criminologists”* (Taylor, 1973), would be to change the actual social structures themselves.

11. However, all these theories were posited during a period where the opposition

between capitalism and the communist socioeconomic system was at its peak, during which the economic and ideological differences seemed insurmountable. It is my belief that these theories are now due for an overhaul, in view of the emerging new reality of the 1990's, with the downfall of socialism and the loudly-proclaimed "end of ideologies", as well as the aspired convergence of socio-economic inequalities on a European and national level. The desire to uphold certain basic values, out of a sense of duty or for the realization of specific social changes through lofty aims and ideals, which was characteristic of past decades to some degree, seems to be giving way to a feeling of moral slackness and fatigue, eudemonism and an egocentric desire for an easy life<sup>18</sup>, whose prevalent concept is that one can think or do whatever one wants, as long as this does not disturb other people. On the one hand, the result of this way of thinking is that society displays a tolerance towards every kind of "differentness" (which, to a certain degree is a positive thing), while on the other, people become more and more concerned with their rights<sup>19</sup>, chiefly pursuing what pleases them and

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<sup>18</sup> The consolidation of this attitude has, of course, been facilitated during the last years by the decrease of working time and the corresponding increase of relaxation and recreation time, on a daily or week basis as well as during retirement. See *Gwen Nankivell*, *Economics, Society and Values*, Aldershot (UK)/ Brookfield (USA) etc.: Avebury, 1995, p. 7. The de-personalization and standardization of work, the disconnection of the object of work from its creator, have also contributed to this phenomenon, a fact which led a decrease in emphasis of the importance of values such as the "yearning" one feels towards work, the creative spirit and sense of responsibility -see *Biyan R. Wilson*, *Morality in the evolution of the modern social system*, in: *The British Journal of Sociology*, 36:1985,315-332:320 ff. and already, since 1966: *Arnold J. Toynbee*, *Change and Habit, The Challenge of Our Time*, London/ New York/ Toronto: Oxford Univ. Press, 1966, mainly p. 213 ff., and p. 217, where he makes the following interesting remarks: "it is not surprising that the bored factory-worker's recreation in his leisure hours sometimes takes the form of anti-social violence and destructiveness. This irrational behavior can be explained rationally, even if the victim of mechanization is himself unaware of the reason why he is running amok. He is taking his revenge on society for an injury that society has done to him; and this injury is a serious one. In mechanizing his work, society has made the salt of his life lose its savor for him (...) When society is thoroughly well regulated, life becomes dull and uninspiring".

<sup>19</sup> It is of course a great conquest of contemporary civilization that the concept of Justice has been enriched

tires them the least<sup>20</sup>. Therefore, what prevails in their activities is *a utilitarian perception of quick and easy success*. The key criteria of social worthiness are seen to be, respectively, the speedy acquisition and accumulation of consumer goods in accordance with the constant barrage of messages communicated by the media, for example, owning one or more cars of increasingly superior horsepower<sup>21</sup>.

12. Conversely, other ideological or political goals do not appear to be resolutely promoted either by the media, the political parties and the social organizations, or by basic socializing units (mainly those centered around family, school and work). Indeed, the two survey-questionnaires that were conducted in member-states of the then E.E.C.<sup>22</sup> (15,500

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following the years of the Enlightenment, and even more so since the second World war, by the vastly important stipulations of Human Rights -see *Jacques Borricand*, *La criminologie face à la crise des valeurs. Victimes et criminels*, in: *Revue internationale de criminologie et de police technique*, 1996, 217-227:218 and note 7. However, it is reasonable to question whether or not there has been, in recent years, a tendency to abuse the exercise of rights and freedoms, i.e. an individualistic identification of the concept of freedom with the concept of personal right, stripping the latter of the relative obligations of humanism and solidarity it stipulates.

<sup>20</sup> A characteristic feature of this way of thinking is the fact that in the face of whatever difficulty, the easy way out is to seek 'assistance' from the Welfare State (even if this includes using extortion), which in turn becomes an alibi for the citizen's lack of execution or intensification of his abilities and initiatives. For the vertical rise of expenses of social support in the countries of Western Europe in the period 1950-1980 and the tendency towards a less Welfare-oriented State that was later observed, see for instance *Jan W. Van Deth/ Elinor Scarbrough*, *The impact of Values*, Oxford/ New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1995, seep. 67 ff., 73.

<sup>21</sup> For the role of the media in shaping roles and "values", see for example *Social control of Crime* (in Greek), by *Effi Lampropoulou*, Athens: Papazisis, 1994, p. 89 ff., and *Chr. Zarafonitou*, *Empirical Criminology* (in Greek), op. cit. [note 11], 1995, p. 270 ff.

<sup>22</sup> For the results of this research, see mainly : *Mark Abrams/ David Gerard/ Noel Timms*, *Values and Social Change in Britain*, Basingstoke/London: Macmillan in association with the European Value Systems Study Group, 1985, *Stephen Harding/ David Phillips*, *Contrasting Values in Western Europe. Unity, Diversity & Change*, Basingstoke/ London: Macmillan in association, with the European Value Systems Study Group, 1986, *The European Values Group*, Report published by the Gordon Cook Foundation, *Sheena Ashford/ Noel Timms*, *What Europe Thinks, A study of Western European Values*, Aldershot/ Brookfield USA etc.: Dartmouth, 1992, *Hel. Riffault*, *Les valeurs des Français*, Paris: P.U.F., 1994.



people participated in the second survey, though Greece did not), showed that *the Western Europeans of today present the following picture*: They have faith in themselves; they love their families (although they display a certain reluctance to extend this affection to third parties); they show a lively interest in securing economic/financial ease; enjoy a sense of responsibility at work; recognize the primacy of private initiative (but advocate equal participation of employees in the managing of companies); express sensitivity towards the disadvantaged; display general distrust for the State and its institutions, the media and politicians; and they love their countries, while showing an increasing tendency towards religion. Finally they admit to upholding strict moral ideas and wish to abide by the law. Naturally, this is a somewhat embellished picture, whose details *differ according to each country, and the age, education, political and religious leanings of those questioned*. Thus, the young people aged 18-24 years old who were questioned differed in that they voiced criticism of established institutions such as those concerned with organized religion and political parties, as opposed to their more tolerant and liberal attitudes towards questions of morality such as extra-marital relations, prostitution, abortion and divorce. Furthermore, in response to a survey conducted by MTV in October and November of 1996, involving a sample of 1,600 persons aged between 16 and 24, as to how far they would go in order to escape from a financial impasse, 26% of European youngsters questioned confessed they would make love to a stranger; 18% would betray their country and 6% a friend; and a few - 2% - claimed they would commit murder. In response to the question of what crime they would commit if there was no chance of getting caught, one in four (38%) would rob a bank (!); one in eight (12%) would kill; but only one in thirty-three (3%) would commit rape<sup>23</sup>. It

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<sup>23</sup> The summarized results of this investigation, which was organized by the television channel MTV in

is a fact however, as the surveys above indicate, that Europeans (older ones in particular) have become so absorbed by the well-tuned “functional rationality” of everyday activities pertaining to house and work that *they have lost, to a considerable degree, any other interest in pursuits of a wider range*, that constitute, after all, the very core of a society ’s culture.

13. However, maybe it is precisely this lack of other pursuits, as well as the ideological confusion and anomic “pluralism” of these years, that is responsible for making normally sensitive and concerned youngsters question their existence and develop a hedonistic way of thinking: emphasizing intemperate gain and even displaying the type of psychological fatigue that can lead either to active delinquency or to “withdrawal” (drug-taking or even suicide). Without a doubt, a part of this delinquency is due to the fact that many Western European countries have severe economic problems, caused by *continuing underemployment and unemployment*. The feeling of insecurity fostered by this situation and the unyielding competitiveness for the truly few available positions in the economic and social pyramid, or even the achievement of a rudimentary existence, drives a lot of young

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cooperation with the European Youth Forum and the Department XXII for Education, Exercise and Youth, were published on 6.2.1997 in an eight page news bulletin. The results have also been presented amongst others in the Greek newspapers “Vima” of 16.2.1997, p. 10 (*Lena Papadimitriou*) and “Kathimerini” of the same day, p. 21 (*George Tsiros*). It would, however, be risky and over-simplistic to postulate from such findings more general conclusions regarding the relation of the “crisis of values” and delinquency, as e.g., that the possible increase of criminality in recent decades may be due to the potential decline of traditional values. This point of view is yet supported, for example, by *Christie Davies*, *Moralization and Demoralization: A Moral Explanation for Change in Crime, Disorder and Social Problems*, at: *Digby Anderson* (ed.), *The Loss of Virtue. Moral Confusion and Social Disorder in Britain and America*, London: a National Review Book, published by the Social Affairs Unit, 1992, Chapter One and *Gertrude Himmelfarb*, *The De-moralization of Society. From Victorian Virtues to Modern Values*, London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1995, mainly p. 225 ff.

people to adopt illegal or not commonly accepted means in order to survive. *Lack of values other than those of a self-serving nature*; namely the absence of stable socioeconomic norms that would arm young people with the ideological weapons to fight their way out of often explosive financial “culs de sac” also seems to play an important role in this development. As a matter of fact, it is saddening that the crucially important question of juvenile delinquency and its relation to the existing value structure is still addressed by pre-war theories and research. In view of the consistently unsettling turmoil of contemporary life, it is becoming increasingly evident that a fresh integrated approach of the old theories is urgently needed.