

REHABILITATION AND REPRESSION

Reassessing their Ideological Embeddedness

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For over a century, scholars and practitioners have assumed rehabilitation stands as the progressive opposite of repression. Elaborating on previous warnings and anomalous findings, a representative survey of the Dutch population (N = 1,892) points out that this received view is flawed. When measured separately, no significant correlation exists between support for rehabilitation and support for repression, rehabilitation is equally popular among the constituencies of conservative and progressive political parties, and no negative relationship exists between rehabilitation and authoritarianism. Decriminalization rather than rehabilitation proves to constitute the progressive converse of repression. By way of conclusion, we discuss the remarkable persistence of the received view reassessed in this paper, even in the face of convincing earlier contradictory evidence.

'I was offered a compromise, which I wouldn't accept.' 'What kind of compromise?' 'Re-education. Reformation of the character. The code-word was *counseling*.' 'And are you so perfect that you can't do with a little counseling?' 'It reminds me too much of Mao's China. Recantation, self-criticism, public apology. I'm old-fashioned, I would prefer simply to be put against the wall and shot. Have done with it.' (Coetzee 1999: 66, emphasis in original)

Introduction

For at least a century, social scientists have assumed rehabilitation (or resocialization, reintegration or treatment) is the progressive converse of repression (or retribution or punishment) (e.g. Durkheim 1906; 1934; Mead 1918; Garland 2005). Basing themselves on findings from a survey probing public support for both ways of dealing with crime, Duffee and Ritti (1980: 349) have argued already a quarter of a century ago that this deep-rooted conception is seriously flawed, however, 'While correctional practitioners and academicians alike have often conceptualized retribution (or punishment) and treatment (or rehabilitation) as opposites along *one* dimension, statistical analysis of the public data indicates that such is not the case. [...] As remarkable as it might seem, retribution and rehabilitation seem to be values that must be handled, accommodated, or satisfied independently of each other' (emphasis in original). Their comments

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do not seem very relevant for *practices of judicial sanctioning*, to be sure, because in concrete cases of sentencing, punitive and rehabilitative measures can be inextricably intertwined (Roberts and Stalans 2004: 316). Their warnings do seem relevant for the study of the underlying *ideological principles*, however, and it is hence striking that the intellectual habit of conceiving of repression and rehabilitation as ideological opposites is alive as ever today (as noticed as well, for example, by Applegate *et al.* 1997; Moon *et al.* 2000; Sundt *et al.* 1998). Therefore, in this paper, we study whether this habit is as problematical as Duffee and Ritti held it to be or whether their warnings have been rightly neglected. We thus study whether public support for rehabilitation really is the converse of that for repression and, if not, how to explain this remarkable circumstance. We do so by means of an analysis of survey data collected for this very purpose among a sample of the Dutch population.

Hypotheses

The deep-rooted conception of rehabilitation as the progressive opposite of repression gives rise to a variety of debatable measurement strategies in the relevant research literature. American public opinion polls, for instance, often rely on a limited number of questions (typically as few as one or two) about repressive measures. If a substantial part of the population supports those measures—and indeed, typically a majority does—this is taken to indicate that only limited support for rehabilitation exists, thus effectively implying rejection of rehabilitation from support for repression. But of course, as Cullen *et al.* (2000: 6–8) rightly comment in their review of the relevant research literature, ‘progressive opinions cannot be discovered if they are not measured by an opinion survey’ (see also Matthews 2005: 192). Another debatable measurement strategy is asking respondents whether they prefer either punishment or rehabilitation, assuming the former to indicate ‘punitivity’ and the latter its absence (De Konink and Scheepers 1998). In a more elaborate version, support for repressive measures (e.g. capital punishment, raising of sentences, penalizing minors as if they were adults, etc.) is taken to indicate high levels of punitivity, support for rehabilitative measures (e.g. re-education, treatment, providing a house or a job, etc.) is taken to indicate low levels of punitivity, and equal support for both types of measures is taken to indicate a middle position (e.g. Berghuis and Essers 1986; Van Dijk 1985; Steinmetz *et al.* 1984). All of those measurement strategies share the assumption that rehabilitation and repression are polar opposites.

A study by Langworthy and Whitehead (1986: 580) unintentionally raises doubts about whether those established research practices can stand up against critical scrutiny. Having asked their respondents to choose between punishing criminals and rehabilitating them into useful, honest citizens, no less than 11 per cent ticked both options (and thus needed to be excluded from the analysis due to missing values). Respondents apparently experienced the opposition constructed by the researchers as artificial and otherworldly. What is even more telling is that the researchers had explicitly instructed their respondents to select no more than one option. Without this instruction, even more than 11 per cent might have ticked both options. Conceptualizing support for punishment and rehabilitation as opposites seems not without problems, then. Indeed, a recent review of research into Americans’ ideas about crime concludes that ‘the central tendency in public opinion is to be punitive *and* progressive—to endorse

the use of a balanced response to lawbreakers, which includes an effort to do justice, protect society, and reform offenders' (Cullen *et al.* 2000: 9, 60, emphasis in original; see also Flanagan 1996: 92; Matthews 2005: 191).

Correlations between support for repression and for rehabilitation, measured as separate scales, raise questions that are more direct. Those correlations vary from weakly negative (Applegate *et al.* 1997; Carroll *et al.* 1987; Duffee and Ritti 1980; Ortet-Fabregat and Pérez 1992) to weakly positive (De Keijser 2000; Mascini and Houtman 2002). Due to differences between studies with respect to place, time and sample composition, it is not easy to pinpoint the causes of the variation that exists, but the conceptualization and measurement of support for rehabilitation seems to make a difference. Weakly negative correlations with support for punishment are found if rehabilitation is conceived of 'structurally' (i.e. as improving offenders' life chances) (Applegate *et al.* 1997; Carroll *et al.* 1987; Duffee and Ritti 1980; Ortet-Fabregat and Pérez 1992). Weakly positive ones are found if it is conceived of either 'interpersonally' (i.e. as strengthening perpetrators' social ties with community) or 'psychologically' (i.e. as treatment of offenders' destructive emotions, ideas and behaviour) (De Keijser 2000; Mascini and Houtman 2002). If we follow Lynch's (2000: 45) argument that rehabilitation is a three-dimensional concept that incorporates all of those three dimensions—i.e. a structural, an interpersonal and a psychological one—support for rehabilitation is thus expected to yield a non-significant correlation with support for repression (Hypothesis 1).

If rehabilitation does not constitute the progressive converse of repression, what does? From Foucault's perspective, the only relevant difference between them is rehabilitation's greater effectiveness: obedience no longer needs to be imposed 'from without', but rather emerges from a deeply felt desire to conform, effectively washing out perpetrators' will to deviate (Ritzer 1997; Rose 1988). Foucault thus emphasizes what repression and rehabilitation have in common: the acceptance of the necessity to socially control individuals (see also Matthews 2005: 180). This suggests that it is not so much rehabilitation that constitutes the converse of repression, but rather the abandonment of attempts at social control. Indeed, decriminalization—i.e. restriction of criminal law and its enforcement—constitutes the logical consequence of what Garland (2005: 479–80) refers to as a 'liberalism of fear'. The latter 'insists upon robust civil liberties as a necessary bulwark against the possibility of state violence and the over-reach of state officials'. A 'conservatism of fear', on the other hand, is born 'out of a fear of disorder, of unruly people, of the threat of criminal violence and victimization. The politics to which this gives rise takes the state to be a *protector* rather than a threat, and calls upon state officials always to do *more* rather than less to control individuals and repress troublemakers' (emphasis in original). If, indeed, decriminalization rather than rehabilitation constitutes the converse of repression, we should find a strong negative relationship between support for decriminalization and support for repression (Hypothesis 2).

Some of those who reject the received view of rehabilitation and repression as opposite alternatives nevertheless assume that the former constitutes the progressive converse of the latter (e.g. Cullen *et al.* 2000: 9). This assumption is quite remarkable. After all, if repression and rehabilitation do not constitute opposite alternatives, they are also unlikely to receive support at the conservative and progressive ends of the political spectrum, respectively. To be sure, it is virtually uncontested that repression is especially favoured at the conservative end of the political spectrum (Meloan 1983; Stinchcombe

et al. 1980; Zeisel and Gallup 1989; Mascini and Houtman 2002). Rehabilitation is lacking such a clear ideological profile, however. It does not consistently generate most support at the progressive end of the political spectrum. If it is conceived of either ‘interpersonally’ or ‘psychologically’ (in Lynch’s terms), it proves as popular among conservatives as among progressives (Horwitz 1984; Zedner 1994: 232; Cullen *et al.* 2000: 40; Mascini and Houtman 2002). Indeed, the assault on rehabilitation in the 1970s came from a range of ideological positions—liberal, conservative and radical left.¹ Our argument in the foregoing rather suggests that decriminalization is politically contested, with the progressive and conservative ends of the political spectrum characterized by support and rejection, respectively. We expect, in short, that decriminalization and repression receive most support at the progressive and conservative ends of the political spectrum, respectively, while rehabilitation lacks a clear ideological haven (Hypothesis 3).

If the foregoing hypotheses are confirmed, the difficult question of why rehabilitation is lacking a distinct ideological profile emerges. How, then, to explain this remarkable circumstance, that so strikingly contradicts the received view? What may be decisive is that repression and rehabilitation are neither completely different, as the received view has always assumed, nor basically identical, as Foucault’s position holds. Obviously, both positions are not so much wrong, but rather one-sided. What repression and rehabilitation have in common is that unlike decriminalization, they both take the necessity of social control for granted—the shared point of departure that Foucault emphasizes. They are not identical, however, because repression rests on the assumption that human beings are evil by nature, whereas rehabilitation’s ambition to socialize people into new identities and lifestyles relies on the assumption that human nature is essentially pliable, open and undetermined (Bauman 2000; Lynch 2000; Rose 1988). Repression assumes that the causes of crime reside within criminals, who are seen as essentially evil people who need to be punished for their misdeeds. Rehabilitation instead assumes that criminals can be reformed, because human nature is essentially open and pliable: bad social circumstances can make any person a criminal, just like favourable conditions can transform a criminal into a decent citizen. Those contrasting beliefs about human nature underlie the deep-rooted conviction that repression is the converse of rehabilitation.

Research into internal and external attribution of crime suggests that, indeed, repression and rehabilitation are polar opposites in this respect. As it happens, (internal) attribution of crime to personal traits proves to result in support for repression and a rejection of rehabilitation (Cullen *et al.* 1985; Carroll *et al.* 1987; Rood-Pijpers 1988; Timberlake *et al.* 2003), belief in human malleability seems to produce support for rehabilitation and rejection of repression (Rose 1988; Bauman 2000; Lynch 2000; Vollebergh 1991; Meloen *et al.* 1996; Mascini and Houtman 2002) and rehabilitation appears more popular in case of young offenders, because those are believed to be more malleable than adult ones (Moon *et al.* 2000: 45). Internal crime attribution is thus expected to affect support for repression positively and support for rehabilitation negatively (Hypothesis 4) and external crime attribution to affect support for repression negatively and support for rehabilitation positively (Hypothesis 5).

Those dynamics of attribution finally suggest why rehabilitation, unlike repression, is not politically divisive. Repression, just like conservative political thought, assumes a conception of human nature as evil and hence a desirability of social control (e.g.

¹ We thank one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing this out.

Middendorp 1991). Given this unambiguous conservative posture of repression, it is completely understandable that conservatives support it, while progressives dislike it. Rehabilitation is not unambiguously progressive, however, because although it rejects the conservative conception of human nature as evil, it simultaneously shares repression's conservative assumption that social control is necessary. We expect that it is precisely this combination of a 'progressive' conception of human nature and a 'conservative' emphasis on the necessity of social control that makes it no more popular among progressives than among conservatives. Our final hypothesis, in short, relates to how 'conservative' (i.e. strongly internal and weakly external) and 'progressive' patterns of attribution (i.e. strongly external and weakly internal) affect the influence of a preference for social control on support for repression and rehabilitation. We expect that a 'conservative' pattern of attribution is responsible for (part of) the positive influence of a preference for social control on support for repression, whereas a 'progressive' pattern of attribution washes out its positive effect on support for rehabilitation (Hypothesis 6) (see figure 1 for summary of the hypotheses).

Data and Measurement

Data

We have tested our questionnaire in a small pilot study with 59 respondents (mostly sociology students, acquaintances and relatives). Although this pilot has led us to drop, change or rephrase particular items, radical changes to the questionnaire proved unnecessary. It has therefore been used to collect data among a nationally representative sample of respondents aged 18 years and older, maintained by CentERdata (University of Tilburg, The Netherlands). Panel members fill out questionnaires of social scientists on a regular basis by means of an internet connection made available by CentERdata. The

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1. Support for rehabilitation and support for repression are not correlated negatively and significantly.
 2. Support for decriminalization and support for repression are correlated strongly and negatively.
 3. Decriminalization and repression receive most support at the progressive and conservative ends of the political spectrum, respectively, while rehabilitation lacks a clear ideological haven.
 4. Internal crime attribution affects support for repression positively and support for rehabilitation negatively.
 5. External crime attribution affects support for repression negatively and support for rehabilitation positively.
 6. Those patterns of attribution are responsible for (part of) the positive influence of a preference for social control on support for repression, but wash out its positive influence on support for rehabilitation.
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FIG. 1 Six hypotheses relating to the ideological embeddedness of support for rehabilitation and support for repression

data collection for the current project has taken place in the spring of 2005, yielding a 71 per cent response rate and a sample size of 1,892 respondents.

Women, young and the poorly educated people are somewhat underrepresented. We have decided not to correct for this by mechanically applying a weighting procedure, because the deviations from the population are only marginal, because the application of weights may worsen rather than solve the problem of bias (with no way to find out which of both occurs) and because none of our hypotheses relates to gender, education or age.

Measurement

Support for repression is measured by means of six Likert items ('agree strongly' through 'disagree strongly' and a separate 'don't know' category) that together constitute a reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.84$; see Table 1 for details).

Support for rehabilitation is measured with 12 items, four for each of Lynch's three dimensions discussed above: (1) improvement of offenders' life chances; (2) strengthening perpetrators' social relationships with community; and (3) treatment of offenders' destructive emotions, ideas and behaviour. As Table 2 demonstrates, those 12 items produce a reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$).

Support for decriminalization is also measured by means of Likert-type items. In this case, six items are used that indicate either the extent to which one approves of the abolishment of prohibitions or the extent to which one disapproves of strengthening the powers of criminal investigation. Although this scale's reliability is only modest (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.56$), all factor loadings exceed 0.45 (Table 3).

We use political party preference and a scale for authoritarianism (Adorno *et al.* 1950) to measure the distinction between conservatism and progressiveness. *Political party preference* is measured with a question into the political party that one would vote for 'if parliamentary elections would be held tomorrow'. Following Budge and Klingemann (2001), the Christian-Democratic (CDA) (13.2 per cent), Orthodox-Christian (SGP, ChristenUnie) (6.4 per cent), Conservatives (VVD) (10.7 per cent) and Rightist-Populist (LPF, Groep Wilders) (5.3 per cent) parties are treated as conservative and the Liberal-Democratic (D66) (3.6 per cent), Social-Democratic (PvdA) (19.0 per cent), Socialist (SP) (9.7 per cent) and Green (GroenLinks) (8.7 per cent) parties as progressive.²

TABLE 1 *Factor and reliability analysis of items indicating support for repression (N = 1,652)*

Items	Per cent Agree (strongly)	Factor loading
If judges would render higher penalties, we would have fewer criminals	51.6	0.85
Long prison sentences are a good solution for crime	51.0	0.81
Severe penalties deter potential felons	58.9	0.80
A tough approach is needed in order to prevent crime	84.1	0.73
Minors committing serious crimes should be punished as if they were adults	61.6	0.66
The death penalty should be reinstalled	21.3	0.64
Cronbach's α		0.84

² The remaining response categories are treated as missing values: Other (namely: 'Blank', 'Party for Elderly', 'Party for Animals', 'Peter R. de Vries' or 'Van Buitenen') (0.8 per cent), 'I would not vote' (3.5 per cent), 'I am not allowed to vote' (0.7 per cent) and 'I do not know (yet)' (18.6 per cent).

TABLE 2 *Factor and reliability analysis of items indicating support for rehabilitation (N = 1,520)*

Items	Per cent Agree (strongly)	Factor loading
<i>Structural rehabilitation (improving life chances)</i>		
Offering good educational opportunities prevents people from wrongdoing	59.5	0.57
It is good that perpetrators of sex crimes are being treated psychologically	85.9	0.56
More and better detoxification centres should be available for addicted criminals	7.4	0.56
Social service agencies should tutor youth that has encountered the judiciary much more intensively	89.9	0.50
<i>Interpersonal rehabilitation (fostering ties with community)</i>		
Parents should be held accountable consistently to prevent juvenile delinquents from becoming repeat offenders	87.3	0.50
Confronting perpetrators with the sufferings of their victims prevents them from relapsing	62.1	0.47
The judiciary should make efforts to prevent ex-convicts feeling excluded from the community	48.9	0.46
Support of family and friends is indispensable in preventing crime	79.2	0.45
<i>Psychological rehabilitation (treatment, counselling)</i>		
Re-education is an effective instrument for solving crime	71.0	0.63
Developing consciousness of norms is a very important form of crime prevention	89.2	0.58
The judiciary should convince criminals that they are drifting astray	86.5	0.55
Community service orders increase convicts' feelings of responsibility	54.4	0.47
Cronbach's α		0.75

TABLE 3 *Factor and reliability analysis of items indicating support for decriminalization (N = 1,510)*

Items	Per cent Agree (strongly)	Factor loading
Preventive searching ought to be prohibited	8.7	0.73
Implementing an identification duty will result in unnecessary and unjust convictions	13.6	0.62
America violates elementary human rights by detaining suspects of terrorism for years without a formal indictment	59.9	0.53
The judiciary should be granted more opportunities to connect data files from different sources*	85.6	0.52
Revealing suspects of sex crimes on the internet causes cruel misunderstandings	50.5	0.51
We should legalize drug trade in our country, because this will at once substantially reduce crime	31.1	0.47
Cronbach's α		0.56

* Item reversed.

Authoritarianism is measured with seven items, selected from a short version of the classical F-scale (Adorno *et al.* 1950), that together constitute a reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.73$).³

³ Those seven items are: (1) 'Because of the many opinions on good and bad, it is not clear what to do' (21.1; 0.71); (2) 'If people would talk less and work harder, everything would improve' (32.0; 0.65); (3) 'There are two kinds of people: strong and weak' (20.8; 0.64); (4) 'Most people are disappointing once one gets to know them better' (10.9; 0.64); (5) 'Our social problems would largely be solved when we could expel criminals, anti-socials, and morons from society in one way or the other' (13.5; 0.59); (6) 'Because of fast changes, it is difficult to know what is good and bad' (25.4; 0.56); (7) 'What we need are less laws and institutions and more brave, never-ceasing, and devoted leaders in whom the people can have confidence' (54.8; 0.54).

Internal crime attribution is measured by means of seven Likert items that together constitute a reliable scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$). Three of those items relate to faith in human malleability, three to the belief that offenders are predestined to crime and one to the conviction that offenders and non-offenders are two different sorts of people.⁴ *External crime attribution* is also measured with seven Likert items, three of which relate to attribution to unfavourable economic conditions and four to unfavourable social conditions (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.76$).⁵

Victimization and *fear of victimization* are included as controls. An index based on the number of times a respondent has been a victim of vandalism, theft or violence during the previous year ('never', 'yes, once', 'yes, twice', 'yes, more than twice' or 'do not know') measures the former.⁶ An index based on a respondent's estimation of the likelihood that he or she will become a victim of vandalism, theft or violence in the year that lies ahead ('very small', 'small', 'not small, not great', 'great', 'very great' or 'do not know') measures the latter.

Age, gender, degree of urbanization and education are included as additional controls because 'available research suggests that females, the young, and the educated are generally the least punitive in their attitudes toward criminal sanctioning [...]' (Cullen *et al.* 1985: 312; see, however, Schwartz *et al.* 1993: 11; McCorkle 1993: 243). *Age* is measured in years, ranging from 18 through to 91 and 51.6 per cent of the respondents are *male* and 48.4 *female*. The highest completed *level of education* has been coded into six ordinal categories: (1) primary education (5.1 per cent); (2) lower secondary education (26.7 per cent); (3) higher secondary education (13.8 per cent); (4) intermediary tertiary education (20.4 per cent); (5) college (23.3 per cent); and (6) university (10.7 per cent). Finally, *degree of urbanization* has been measured with a single question about the extent to which one lives in an urban environment: (1) not at all (16.9 per cent); (2) little (21.4 per cent); (3) somewhat (21.6 per cent); (4) much (24.3 per cent); and (5) very much (15.9 per cent).

Results

We test our first two hypotheses, which both address relationships between support for rehabilitation, repression and decriminalization, by means of correlations (Table 4). If rehabilitation would be the converse of repression, as assumed in the received view, we would expect to find a negative correlation between the two. This is clearly not the case, however. Consistent with our first hypothesis, no significant relationship exists between the two. Therefore, in striking contrast to the received view, favouring a

⁴ With the percentage 'agree (strongly)' and the loading on the first factor in brackets, the seven items that measure internal crime attribution are: (1) 'Most inmates are born criminals' (9.5; 0.72); (2) 'Once a thief, always a thief' (11.7; 0.70); (3) 'Criminality is hereditary' (7.0; 0.69); (4) 'Inheritance determines human behaviour largely' (32.3; 0.67); (5) 'Criminals are a special kind of people' (41.1; 0.62); (6) 'If you are born poor, you will remain poor all your life' (10.1; 0.55); (7) 'Personal characteristics do not change' (45.1; 0.53).

⁵ With the percentage 'agree (strongly)' and the loading on the first factor in brackets, the seven items that measure external crime attribution are: (1) 'Criminality is often caused by family problems' (43.7; 0.75); (2) 'Criminals often come from broken homes' (41.2; 0.71); (3) 'Most criminals lack schooling and education' (48.1; 0.68); (4) 'Unemployment is an important cause of criminality' (58.7; 0.64); (5) 'Abused children often drift astray' (30.5; 0.59); (6) 'Parents who neglect their children contribute much to criminality' (79.5; 0.59); (7) 'Poverty actuates people to criminal behaviour' (50.2; 0.52).

⁶ The frequency distribution of the number of times a respondent has become victimized is as follows (percentages): (1) never (75.4); (2) one time (15.3); (3) twice (5.4); (4) more than twice (3.9).

TABLE 4 *Correlations between support for repression, rehabilitation and decriminalization (N = 1,833, 1,829, 1,834)*

	Repression	Rehabilitation	Decriminalization
Repression	1.00		
Rehabilitation	-0.06	1.00	
Decriminalization	-0.52*	0.05	1.00

* $p < 0.001$

repressive approach to criminals does not make people more (or less, for that matter) likely to approve of rehabilitation.

Our second hypothesis predicts that decriminalization rather than rehabilitation opposes repression ideologically. Whereas support for repression does not correlate at all with support for rehabilitation, the former does correlate strongly and negatively with support for decriminalization (Table 4). Consistent with our second hypothesis, then, decriminalization rather than rehabilitation is the converse of repression. Moreover, no relationship exists between rehabilitation and decriminalization, underscoring that although those two are clearly fundamentally different, they are definitely not diametrically opposed.

This brings us to the question whether the received view is also wrong in assuming that rehabilitation is particularly popular among the constituencies of progressive political parties, as our third hypothesis predicts. Table 5 presents the relevant findings. Although, hardly surprisingly, repression is especially supported by the constituencies of conservative political parties, rehabilitation is not particularly popular among those of progressive ones. It is in fact equally popular at both ends of the political spectrum. Instead, decriminalization once again constitutes the converse of repression: it mirrors

TABLE 5 *Support for repression, rehabilitation and decriminalization by political party preference, controlled for six covariates (analysis of covariance; entries are means)*

Party preference	Repression	Rehabilitation	Decriminalization
Christian Democrats	3.45	4.03	2.48
Conservatives	3.72	3.94	2.41
Orthodox Christians	3.65	4.05	2.35
Rightist Populists	4.05	3.89	2.40
Liberal Democrats	3.20	4.01	2.75
Social Democrats	3.19	3.95	2.85
Socialists	3.21	4.01	2.88
Greens	2.84	4.02	3.13
Total mean	3.37	3.98	2.68
N	1,334	1,339	1,334
R ² (main effect only) ¹	15.5*	1.2	17.5*
R ² (including covariates) ²	24.2	7.0	19.6

1. R² denotes the percentage of the differences in the dependent variable that can be attributed to party preference;
 2. R² denotes the percentage of the differences in the dependent variable that can be attributed to party preference and six other independent variables, used as covariates (i.e. age, degree of urbanization, gender, educational level, victimization and fear of victimization); * $p < 0.001$.

the latter in that it is especially popular among the constituencies of progressive political parties. Although those findings are once again striking given the received view, they are nevertheless perfectly consistent with the research findings discussed above and convincingly confirm our third hypothesis.

How to explain the remarkable circumstance that rehabilitation is equally popular at both ends of the political spectrum? As argued above, this may be due to the circumstance that despite its progressive conception of human nature, it also takes the necessity of social control for granted—a conservative rather than a progressive ideological tenet. To study whether this is the case, we have conducted four multiple regression analyses, all of them including the statistical controls mentioned above. Entries in Table 6 are standardized regression coefficients (betas), which indicate with how many units a dependent variable increases (positive beta) or decreases (negative beta) if the independent variable increases with one unit, net of the effects of all other independent variables that have been included in the statistical model. For both repression and rehabilitation, the first model assesses the effect of authoritarianism (replacing political party preference here) and the second one also includes crime attribution.

Hardly surprising after the foregoing, of course, high levels of authoritarianism increase support for repression and fail to affect support for rehabilitation. This once again confirms their ideological profiles as already demonstrated above. Consistent with this, authoritarianism strongly detracts from support for decriminalization (not shown in Table 6), once again confirming that it, rather than rehabilitation, constitutes repression’s progressive alternative.

As Hypothesis 4 predicts, internal crime attribution produces support for repression and aversion to rehabilitation. Hypothesis 5 receives only mixed support, however. Although, as expected, external crime attribution strongly increases support for rehabilitation, it does not detract from support for repression. The absence of this negative relationship between external attribution and support for repression is puzzling, especially because Carroll *et al.* (1987: 113, 116) also failed to find it—a circumstance that

TABLE 6 *Support for repression and rehabilitation explained (multiple regression; entries are betas)*¹

Independents	Repression		Rehabilitation	
Authoritarianism	0.41*	0.29*	0.00	-0.01
Internal attribution		0.29*		-0.14*
External attribution		-0.02		0.29*
Victimization	-0.06	-0.05	0.01	0.01
Fear of victimization	0.10*	0.08	-0.02	-0.03
Age	-0.18*	-0.18*	0.29*	0.25*
Urbanization	-0.12*	-0.11*	0.04	0.03
Gender	-0.08	-0.08*	0.12*	0.11*
Education	-0.09*	-0.09*	0.01	-0.04
<i>N</i>	1,667	1,603	1,675	1,612
<i>R</i> ²	23.9	27.1	5.6	13.5

1. Betas—standardized regression coefficients—indicate with how many units a dependent variable increases (positive beta) or decreases (negative beta) if the independent variable increases with one unit, net of the effects of all other independent variables in the model; * $p < 0.001$.

makes it unlikely that we are dealing with a mere coincidence.⁷ Because both effects of internal crime attribution are consistent with our hypothesis, those findings nevertheless enable us to conclude that those who support repression embrace a conception of human nature as essentially evil, whereas those who favour rehabilitation reject such a conception.

To test Hypothesis 6, we finally assess whether and how the observed effects of authoritarianism change when we introduce internal and external attribution into our analysis. Consistent with our hypothesis, internal attribution accounts for part of the positive effect of authoritarianism on support for repression, but our hypothesis is not confirmed for support for rehabilitation. We find no evidence at all that attribution suppresses a positive influence of authoritarianism on support for rehabilitation: inclusion of internal and external attribution leaves authoritarianism's non-significant effect intact and fails to change it into a positive and significant one. Contrary to our expectations, then, the remarkable absence of a progressive ideological profile of rehabilitation is not caused by a conservative emphasis on the necessity of social control that underlies rehabilitation.

Table 6 also reveals a finding that, although tangential to our purposes in this paper, nevertheless merits attention. As it happens, contrary to what is often assumed, victimization does not induce support for repression. Although this may seem surprising, in fact it is not. As it happens, any number of studies indicates that personal experience with crime has negligible effects on crime-related opinions (Taylor *et al.* 1979; Stinchcombe *et al.* 1980; Tyler and Weber 1982; Cullen *et al.* 1985; Van Dijk 1985; Berghuis and Essers 1986; Langworthy and Whitehead 1986; Carroll *et al.* 1987; McCorkle 1993; Sundt *et al.* 1998; Dekker and De Waal 1999; Kury *et al.* 2002: 98, 101; Mayhew and Van Kesteren 2002: 79–84). We will come back to this finding in our conclusion.

Conclusion

Many criminologists and policy makers conceive of public support for repression and rehabilitation as two diametrically opposed options. It is thus assumed that severe punishment necessarily goes against the will of those who are in favour of rehabilitation and that the latter meets with resistance among the constituencies of conservative political parties. Those ideas have persisted ever since Duffee and Ritti, no less than a quarter of a century ago, pointed out how deeply problematic they are. Our analysis underscores that Duffee and Ritti were right. Support for repression and rehabilitation does not exclude one another at all and rehabilitation is equally popular among the constituencies of conservative political parties as among those of progressive ones. Duffee and Ritti's warning, issued a quarter of a century ago, was fully justified, then, and the habit of conceiving of support for repression and for rehabilitation as diametrically opposed options should have been abandoned long ago.

Decriminalization rather than rehabilitation constitutes the progressive converse of repression. Because decriminalization is especially popular in progressive circles, the latter are the most likely critics of plans to punish criminals more harshly. Conservatives

⁷ It is important to point out that we find no support for Garland's (2005; see also Hutton 2005: 246) suggestion that internal and external attribution mutually exclude one another. Contrary to this suggestion, both types of crime attribution prove *not* to affect support for repression inversely and the correlation between both types of attribution proves *positive* rather than negative ($r = 0.32$; $p < 0.001$, not shown in Table 6).

are most likely to oppose a policy of decriminalization. A policy aimed at rehabilitation, however, is unlikely to lead to polarization between conservatives and progressives, because neither particularly likes or dislikes this type of policy. Unfortunately, it remains unclear why it is that rehabilitation is lacking a distinct ideological homeland. Perhaps this is due to our operationalization of the necessity of social control. Indeed, although authoritarianism and moral traditionalism are strongly correlated and both carried by poorly educated and elderly people (e.g. Middendorp 1991; Houtman 2003), recent research points out that it may nevertheless be necessary to distinguish the two carefully (De Koster and Van Der Waal, forthcoming). Although they both emphasize a need for social control and both conceive of human nature negatively (and are as such both disliked by political progressives), moral traditionalism may nevertheless be more conducive to support for rehabilitation than authoritarianism, thus effectively washing out any progressive sympathies for rehabilitation that emerge from optimism about human nature. We consider it a key issue for future empirical research to find out whether rehabilitation is more popular among moral traditionalists than among authoritarians.

Hutton (2005: 246) has recently suggested that methodological choices made by the researcher affect the relationship between support for repression and rehabilitation. His analysis demonstrates that Scots are punitive with respect to general issues of crime and criminal justice, but are simultaneously in favour of rehabilitative measures when asked to give sentences for specific crimes and when asked to take the costs of sanctions into account. From this, Hutton (2005: 250) deduces that 'it is quite possible for punitiveness at a general or abstract level to co-exist with more rehabilitative or restorative views at the level of particular cases'. With this, he implies that support for punishment and rehabilitation do *not* coincide at the general or abstract level. However, Hutton did not examine this himself, since, at this level, he only mentions answers to survey questions about punitiveness and not their correlation with support for rehabilitation. We, on the other hand, established that even if only general questions are used, support for repression and support for rehabilitation are not the opposites they are typically held to be. Hence, the uncontested finding that the use of broad and general questions rather than detailed and specific ones indeed tends to increase respondents' punitivity (Roberts and Stalans 1997; Cullen *et al.* 2000: 61) does not increasingly render support of rehabilitation unlikely. So, our findings cannot simply be done away with as measurement constructs.

How to explain the persistence of the widespread misconception addressed in this paper among social scientists surveying the public, even though quite a few pertinent findings indicated that it was wrong? While, of course, comparative studies convincingly demonstrate that what counts as crime varies between social contexts (Douglas and Waksler 1982), Coutin (2005) observes that this awareness of the social construction of crime is the exception rather than the rule among criminologists. This may well be a result of criminologists' typical embedding in or dependence on the system of criminal justice—a circumstance that easily produces lack of intellectual distance, reification of conceptions of crime as codified in penal law (Schinkel 2002) and an overlooking of decriminalization as a policy option besides repression and rehabilitation.

This same blind spot for the social construction of crime may also account for a remarkable 'instrumental' bias among many of those who study crime-related public opinion. As it happens, our study has replicated the familiar finding that victimization

does not cause support for repression (see also Tyler and Weber 1982). Yet, it seems as if many a criminologist cannot believe or accept this and hence insists on attempting to ground ideas about crime and punishment in 'objective' circumstances and personal interests by assuming instrumental reasons for supporting repression. This tendency is all the more remarkable since many studies, including our own, have convincingly demonstrated how important moral worldviews are for understanding ideas about crime and punishment (see also Tyler and Weber 1982). The blind spot that seems to stem from criminologists' embedding in or dependence on the criminal justice system makes it fully understandable that the received criminological view reassessed in the current paper fails to affect established research practices.

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