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Social Control: History of the Concept

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This chapter provides an overview of the concept of social control in the history of sociology. Social control emerged in the late nineteenth century at roughly the same time as the establishment of American sociology, with Edward A. Ross being the main innovator of the concept. A parallel movement in Europe (represented in the thought of Emile Durkheim and Max Weber) focused on the larger problem of social order rather than social control per se. By the 1950s, Talcott Parsons sought to bring into alignment the broader concept of social order with the narrower one of social control by way of the development of a general theory of social systems that specified four functions operating across all levels of human reality. The analytical requirement of four functions implied that social control appeared concretely as four basic types: informal, legal, medical, and religious. By the 1980s, the consensus within sociology saw a further simplification of the Parsons schema into three basic types of social control: informal, legal, and medical (with religious control now being subsumed under informal). The trend over time has been that the most ancient and fundamental system of control – informal control – has waned and become somewhat imperiled in the face of the growth of both legal and medical control.

Ross and Early American Sociology

During the 1960s, the criminologist Travis Hirschi was a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley. Early in his doctoral training, Hirschi took a deviance course from Erving Goffman, in which the latter provided an overview of the history and current status of social control. It was Goffman's opinion that the reason social control was on the decline (circa the early 1960s) was that it had become synonymous with sociology. As Hirschi explained, "There was nothing you could not study under the rubric of social control" (quoted in Laub, 2011:300).

According to Hirschi, Goffman traced this view of social control as a broad and unmanageable mélange of sociological topics to Edward A. Ross, who had published a series of articles on social control in the *American Journal of Sociology* beginning in 1896. Ross later

collected this series and included them in the first book ever published on the topic of social control, *Social Control: A Survey of the Foundations of Order* (Ross, 1901a). The complexity and diffuseness of Ross's pioneering conceptualization is readily evident in a paper he published titled "The Radiant Points of Social Control" (Ross, 1900).

Specifically, Ross (1900) argued that social control radiates from multiple points, which flow ultimately from power. Yet, power becomes more focused and nuanced as it is coupled with prestige, and the power–prestige system gives rise to 10 radiant points of social control:

- *Numbers:* the crowd;
- *Age:* the elders;
- *Prowess:* the military;
- *Sanctity:* the priests;
- *Inspiration:* the prophet;
- *Place:* officialdom (or the state, claiming control of a sovereign territory);
- *Money:* the capitalists;
- *Ideas:* the elite;
- *Learning:* the mandarins; and
- *Individual strength* (even with lack of prestige in any of the preceding areas): the individual.

This was around the same time that American sociology was founded as an academic discipline, initiated largely as a result of the publication in 1883 of Lester F. Ward's two-volume *Dynamic Sociology* (Ward, 1883). (Indeed, Ross dedicated *Social Control* to Ward, and later married his niece and named his third son Lester Ward Ross.) Ward and the other founders of American sociology – William Graham Sumner, Albion Small, Franklin Giddings, and Charles H. Cooley being the most prominent – were equally concerned with social control, although they utilized different terminology and concepts, such as telesis, psychic factors of civilization, regulation, social organization, consciousness of kind, folkways and mores, social bonds, assimilation, adaptation and aggregation, cooperation, human association, primary and secondary groups, and – influenced most directly by Gabriel Tarde (1903) – imitation.

Why did social control emerge as an overriding concern in early American sociology? A standard explanation is that American society was born into conflict, which created a tapestry of recurring challenges to the social order (Meier, 1982). A short list of key historical events and trends would include the American Revolution, the settling of the western frontier, and the Civil War and the period of Reconstruction leading to the Gilded Age and a later Progressive Era. And laced throughout the major historical events were steady population growth, concerns over immigration, labor strife, and the transition from a largely rural to an increasingly urban way of life.

As the sociology of knowledge would predict, Ross and other early American sociologists developed social control in response to the fear that rapid social change was systematically and inexorably releasing individuals from the traditional controls of family and community. This concern was also informed by Herbert Spencer's (1860) pioneering conceptualization of society as an organism, which depicted individuals not merely as random or isolated units within the larger whole, but as aggregates fulfilling particular functions for the operation of the social system. This stood as an early solution to the problem of explaining how collective or corporate action was possible among an increasingly disparate and diverse

American citizenry. Ross acknowledged that levels and types of social control in any society wax and wane over time, but saw the stability and flux of social control as two sides of the same coin. According to Ross (1901b:550):

> The function of control is to preserve that indispensable condition of common life, social order. When this order becomes harder to maintain, there is a demand for more and better control. When this order becomes easier to maintain, the ever-present demand for individual freedom and for toleration makes itself felt. The supply of social control is evoked, as it were, by the demand for it, and is adjusted to that demand.

But who, exactly, is making this demand for social control? For Ross, this would depend on the particular radiant point of control pertinent to the situation, as well as the nature of the parties to the action. Ross (1901a:62) argued there are three possible attitudes toward social control, namely, those of the actor, the victim of the action, and bystanders to the event (Martindale, 1966:283). This reflects the standard utilitarian view of human action launched by Hobbes and later formalized and refined by Bentham and Mill. It views social control as a dependent variable; specifically, as a reaction by victims (or agents or guardians acting on their behalf) to pains imposed by a person or group. Ross further argues that for control to be social, the reaction must have the whole weight of society behind it. From this perspective, actions of lone or isolated individuals are illegitimate or, at the very least, suspect. The most ancient, primitive radiant point of control is the individual, but a situation in which individuals are imposing their will on others returns us to the state of nature, where "might makes right." It is nature's method whereby organisms utilize whatever resources are available in the struggle for survival. Here, there is no "ought," no morality, no right or wrong, but merely expedience (success or failure). The march of civilization leads inexorably to the development of systems of rules and regulations whereby, at least in the earliest stages of this development, the group reigns supreme over the individual. The effort to explain this movement from premodernity to modernity is especially evident in the work of two founders of European sociology, Emile Durkheim (in France) and Max Weber (in Germany).

Durkheim and Weber

Ross's vision of social control was grounded in a Midwest parochialism that reflected the idea of "American exceptionalism," referenced primarily by the lack of indigenous feudal institutions in the United States. This absence of an aristocracy created a more diffuse "township" model of control, which was sustained by the system of federalism as outlined in the US Constitution (Hamilton & Sutton, 1989). This was a form of decentralized power that rejected the idea of domination by a sovereign, whether by way of kingship, aristocracy, or other authoritative systems of ruling. Both Durkheim's and Weber's thoughts on social control were informed by European formalism with regard to the nature of the state, authority, and domination, and hence parted ways with the early American contributors to the subject (Melossi, 2004).

Durkheim (1984) did, however, argue that between the mass society of modernity and the individual stood certain intermediary formations that provided new forms of organic solidarity. In the new industrial society, Durkheim sees the division of labor as the modern source of social solidarity. He argues against the notion that people become merely cogs in

the machinery of the industrial juggernaut, falling prey to dulling routine and bureaucratic overregulation. Rather than a debasement of human nature, Durkheim suggests that with the increasing differentiation of tasks in the division of labor, men and women are not separated from each other and their own humanity, but are put in a position of having to rely on one another more than ever before. That is, with the onslaught of work specialization, workers become more dependent on their co-workers, and, to a great extent, are more generally tied into the community because of this specialization. In this sense, workers are not simply an appendage of a machine.

Durkheim (1984) realizes as well that rules of division are not enough to create the kind of solidarity founded on sameness and cultural homogeneity seen under the older mechanical solidarity. For example, class wars have been waged because of an overly regulated or forced division of labor. The caste system opens itself up to the fact that many will experience tension between their positions founded on inheritance and the social functions they believe they can fill. So, "for the division of labour to engender solidarity, it is thus not sufficient for everyone to have his task; it must also be agreeable to him" (Durkheim, 1984:311).

Therefore, the distribution of natural talents is essential, because if labor is assigned otherwise – as in the forced division of labor – then what is produced is friction, not solidarity. The division of labor must be established spontaneously, by virtue of each individual's initiative. That is, those who are most capable of moving into a particular occupation will no doubt do so. Since, obviously, there is a natural inequality of talent and capacities, there must be reflected a parallel social inequality. Where mechanical solidarity was characterized by homogeneity and external equality, organic solidarity is similarly characterized by external inequality.

Because it is essential that there be harmony between the division of labor and the spirit of spontaneity, to deal with the frictions that could result from the social inequalities inherent in the modern system, there must be simultaneously an effort put forth to initiate and continue the work of justice. This would be accomplished primarily through the formation of organizations that deal specifically with worker-related issues. Thus, a complete system of agencies must emerge along with the division of labor to ensure the continued functioning of social life. This is conceptualized by Durkheim as the birth of the corporation.

Durkheim's thought concerning how social control is shifting from the informal realms of family, friendship, and community toward intermediate groups of the civil society – with the corporation standing as an important new form of control within modern or organic solidarity – easily moves toward an even greater emphasis on systems of power and organization in the guise of the state. Max Weber's theory of the shifting of the nature of legitimate authority from earlier to modern times is consistent with Durkheim's theory of the shift from an earlier mechanical solidarity to a modern organic one.

Weber specifies three types of legitimate authority, namely, traditional, charismatic, and legal-bureaucratic. The most ancient form is traditional authority, which rests on an established belief in the sanctity of long-standing traditions and the legitimacy of those exercising authority under them. Members of societies in which traditional authority prevails give their obedience to the masters (tribal leaders and fathers in patriarchal society), not to any enacted legislation (Weber, 1968).

Charismatic authority rests on devotion to the exceptional qualities or exemplary character of an individual person. Charismatic persons are said to be endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or exceptional powers or qualities of magical or divine origin.

As Weber (1968:241) explains, "In primitive circumstances this peculiar kind of quality is thought of as resting on magical powers, whether of prophets, persons with a reputation for therapeutic or legal wisdom, leaders in the hunt, or heroes in war."

Finally, legal-bureaucratic authority rests on the belief in the legality of rules and the right of those in positions of authority to issue commands. This is a modern, rational system of control that eliminates the whim or caprice of the ruler in favor of the institutionalization of rational authority. This rational authority is carried out by specialized control agents vested with the coercive power of organizations or states, thereby providing greater predictability of human behavior through the bureaucratization of official rule-making and control processes (Wood, 1974). To reiterate from the preceding discussion, Weber's work illustrates a European strand of theory concerned with the growth of formalism, and especially the growing reliance on law in modern society. Rather than fealty based on the particular characteristics of authorities (as was the case for the elders wielding traditional authority under mechanical solidarity), in modern society persons obey commands of law officials and bureaucrats on the basis of the legitimacy of the positions they hold, which is grounded in an established and preexisting set of rules for office-holding. Weber (1978:39) describes the state as an extended political authoritarian association, namely, "an institutional enterprise of a political character, when and insofar as its executive staff successfully claims a monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force in order to impose its regulations." This is considered a more rational form of authority to the extent that achievement (a publicly available record of one's training for a position) prevails over ascription (one's personal characteristics).

Talcott Parsons: Functionalism and Control

Early in his career, Talcott Parsons did more than any other sociologist to introduce the thought of Durkheim and Weber to English-speaking audiences. By the 1950s, Parsons was the preeminent American sociologist, having published two highly influential books in *The Social System* (Parson, 1951) and *Toward a General Theory of Action* (Parsons, 1952), the latter of which included a number of coauthors. Although the four-function AGIL schema would not be fully developed until the 1960s (see, e.g., Parsons, 1961), in these early works there are clear indications that he was seeking to create an analytical strategy for the simultaneous establishment of the structural and functional aspects of all things of relevance to sociological observers.

Although Parsons did not set out to develop a specific theory of social control, it is clearly the case that, located within the expansive edifice of the general systems theory that he built from the ground up (starting with the unit act), the problem of social order includes four types of social control, coinciding with four functions (adaptation, goal-attainment, integration, and latent pattern maintenance) that operate in and across all levels of reality. Unlike the elitist approach to social order, which focuses on the hierarchical distribution of force, and unlike the Marxist economic approach, which emphasizes property relations even over the organs of violence (the state) or normative elements (ideology), Parsons developed a normative approach to the problem of social order, which synthesized elements derived primarily from Weber and Durkheim (Etzioni, 1961).

Like many of his predecessors, Parsons (1951) defines social control as any attempt to counter deviance, and goes on to argue that along one analytical dimension, the conceptualization of deviance and its control can take either a situational or a normative focus.

Along a second analytical dimension, deviance can involve a disturbance of the total person (an individual orientation), or it can involve disturbances in particular expectations (a group orientation). When considering deviance from these two axes – situational–normative and individual–group – four distinct kinds of social control emerge.

Where there is a disturbance of the total person from a situational focus, Parsons interprets this as a problem of "capacities" for performing specific tasks or roles in a situation. Persons who are healthy can generally perform tasks or roles in particular situations, and this is the conformity situation. Persons who cannot perform in these situations, who lack the capacity to get things done as expected, are considered ill or sick. Hence, deviance within the individual-situational configuration is illness, and it is here that medical control prevails.

Where there is a disturbance of the total person from a normative focus, Parsons interprets this as a problem of commitment to values. The conforming situation is a "state of grace" or "good character." Conversely, the deviance situation is sin or immorality. The salient form of social control here is religious control.

When the disturbance shifts from the individual level to the group-expectations level, two additional forms of social control emerge. Again, we need to consider this level first from a situational and then from a normative focus. Within the group-situational focus, disturbance of group expectation in particular concrete settings leads to poor social bonding or rejection of significant others (such as estrangement from primary groups). Hence, the general category of deviance produced here is disloyalty to or detachment from the group. As a result, the salient form of social control is informal control.

Finally, when considering the group level from a normative focus, deviance is the problem of a lack of commitment to norms. Here, Parsons is referring to lack of commitment to legal norms, and of course the type of deviance generated here is crime or illegality. This means that the form of social control most salient to the group-normative dimension is legal control.

From this, we can easily derive which of the four functions are associated with which types of control. Medical control fulfills the adaptation function, as this involves the capacities of the human organism to adjust and adapt to his or her environment. Insufficient mental or physical capacities limit the individual's ability to perform expected roles, and hence illness is the form of deviance with regard to the function of adaptation.

Parsons argued that law fulfills an integrative function for society, but this cannot be defended. Law uses the medium of power, seated in the polity, to extract compliance from individuals or groups through coercion or its threat. Law does not assure integration first and foremost; instead, that is the work of group living and everyday life – that is, of informal control. Law attempts to steer persons to pursue goals that are defined as legal and legitimate, using strong inducements such as the threat of arrest or incarceration if criminal laws are violated. Hence, legal control fulfills the function of goal-attainment, *not* integration.

The integration function of social control is fulfilled by informal control. The bonding of individuals to one another within the context of groups and interpersonal relationships creates a tapestry of solidarity and stability that makes it difficult for properly bonded individuals to violate group expectations (Chriss, 2007; Hirschi, 1969). This is Durkheim's notion of the precontractual basis of contract, and it is the foundation for all other forms of order and control beyond those of the primary group (Parsons, 1935). Finally, the latent pattern-maintenance function of social control is fulfilled by religious control. Religion encompasses the realm of ultimate values, providing guidance for the thoughts and actions of the true believers in this world, who, if they remain devout in following the teachings of their religion,

are promised salvation or grace in the afterlife. For true believers, the realm of ultimate values transcends all other earthly concerns and pursuits, trumping even the informal norms of everyday life that constitute informal control. In this way, Parsons is able to distinguish religious control from informal control, in the process establishing it as a fourth category of control within his schema (Chriss, 2013).

From Four to Three Forms of Social Control

The Parsons formulation makes the case that four distinct forms of social control must exist to coincide with the four functional exigencies operating across all levels of reality. Consistent with the scientific goal of parsimony, later conceptualizations of social control reduced the four categories favored by Parsons to three: informal, legal, and medical control (see, e.g., Chriss, 2010, 2013). In essence, religious control – Parsons' fourth category – is subsumed under informal control. This tripartite view of social control has been influenced most directly by Egon Bittner (1970), who argued that across human history, three basic forms of legitimate coercive force have appeared.

The most ancient form is informal control or self-help. In modern parlance, this could appear under the legal category of self-defense. Self-help is the condition of enforcing norms and reacting to deviance within the context of the everyday lifeworld, where actors are not acting in any official capacity as representatives of some political body; that is, they are acting only under the auspices of their status as fellow human beings. Informal control is the condition of the earliest human groupings, first appearing as small, nomadic bands (the savage horde being the most primitive) and then evolving into more organized structural assemblages such as clans and tribes. Within such groups, membership was by blood or religious affiliation (e.g., under totemism), and those within the group formed strong attachments and held antipathy toward those on the outside. In its infancy, informal control was associated with strong in-group solidarity and equally strong out-group hostility, a condition aptly described by Sumner (1906) as "ethnocentrism."

Over time, layered over the system of informal control evident since the very beginning, other, more formalized systems of control have emerged. The two most basic are medical control and legal control. Legal control is well understood and unproblematic. It emerges with the written word and the rise of the state. This is law embodied in statutes and backed by the coercive power of the state. For the most part, law is derived from informal control; that is, from the customs and habits of a people (e.g., Bohannan's (1965) idea of law as the "reinstitutionalization of custom"). In the simplest form of the argument, persons come together out of the contexts of their everyday lifeworlds and designate a particular set of norms that are considered so vital to the well-being of the community that they are textualized – that is, codified into statutes – and backed by a constabulary force that sits at the ready to do the bidding of the state whenever a violation occurs. The establishment of a constabulary or police force occurs later than the establishment of laws and the courts, because in the more primitive state, there is no specialization of enforcement tasks (Chriss, 2013). That is to say, enforcement is diffuse rather than centralized, and it is sufficient that, say, all able-bodied men of the community are expected to respond to the watchman's call that something is amiss.

Finally, the third basic category is medical control. Notice that within the criminal justice system, there are three basic subsystems, consisting of police, courts, and corrections. The corrections system is the back end, ostensibly designed to punish those found guilty of

criminal violations or to hold defendants awaiting trial. This is the function of restraint or custody. The custodial function constitutes a continuum running from treatment at one end to punishment at the other. Custodial confinement aimed at punishment is legal control, while custodial arrangements aimed at the treatment of individuals deemed ill is medical control. As Parsons noted with regard to the institutionalization of the sick role, although sickness is a form of deviance, for the most part persons are not held accountable for their illness, and therefore treatment makes more sense than punishment. As formal systems of control, both legal and medical control always involve the intervention of a third party acting in some official capacity (Arvanites, 1992).

On the custody continuum, pure forms of medical control involve persons self-identifying as ill and seeking treatment professionals to alleviate their symptoms. In medical control, then, persons voluntarily place themselves into the care of a medical professional for treatment of some mental or physical condition. For example, one aspect of the sick role is that patients are obligated to "seek professional help" if they have symptoms of an illness, and in exchange for this show of good faith they are temporarily relieved of social-role obligations – at work, at school, within the family, and elsewhere – so that they may recuperate. However, there are many hybrid conditions beyond the pure voluntary-seeking of medical help, including forced medical care, which may occur with or without the intervention of legal actors. An example of the use of legal force within a custodial arrangement in order to obtain treatment outcomes is the commitment hearing. In particular, involuntary civil commitment is one of the more interesting examples of the hybridity that can occur along the custody continuum (Ng & Kelly, 2012).

Norms and Sanctions

All known human societies have systems in place to regulate the actions of their members. Beyond the most primitive savage-horde stage, human beings banded together for mutual support against hostile environments and threats from the unknown, including other human beings. Sociology is the scientific study of human association, and within the myriad associations forged between groups of human beings, there arise rules for conduct, that is, norms. First the informal norms of custom and habit, then with societal development, the setting aside of those norms considered so vital to the well-being of the community that they are embodied in statutes and enforced by a special body of control agents, that is, a constabulary force. The norms and eventual laws of any particular society do not simply magically appear. Instead, they arise over (typically) a long period of time, and the form they take has much to do with the history of development of the society within which they are located. Overwhelming evidence suggests that societal development goes in the direction from primitive informal rules for conduct (the norms of custom and habit) to more formalized edicts coinciding with the rise of written language (for, otherwise, codification into a body of laws, or textualization, is not possible).

Closely connected with the idea of norms – rules of conduct, whether tacit (informal control) or codified, textualized, or otherwise formalized (medical and legal control) – are sanctions. Sanctions represent societal responses to deviance or norm-violation. Positive sanctions – a smile, a pat on the back, a raise – are given as rewards for conformity. Negative sanctions – a frown or glare, the silent treatment, a fine – are given as punishments for deviance. This idea of sanctions flows most directly from the utilitarianism of Jeremy Bentham (1998), who assumed that human beings are rational creatures that are endowed with a

hedonic calculus whereby attempts are made to maximize pleasure and minimize pain. From this, Bentham developed a general theory of sanctions, consisting of four main types: natural, social, legal, and supernatural (as summarized in Hirschi & Gottfredson, 2005).

The earliest, most primordial sanctions are the natural sanctions. Natural sanctions represent all the negative things that can befall human beings in their interaction with a physical environment. These include scrapes, cuts, burns, fall, bites, and so forth. The first thing primitive human groups had to contend with and on some level conquer were the threats to life and limb emanating from the realities of a harsh physical environment. This condition represents the importance of evolutionary learning and upgrading, as members of the group develop collective responses to protect themselves and fellow members from injury and untimely death. Sumner (1906) notes that these most primitive ideas of how to navigate the conditions of harsh physical environments give rise to folkways, namely, shared ideas and beliefs concerning proper conduct within shared (clan, tribe, or kinship) settings. Human groups that were unsuccessful in coping with natural sanctions – especially with regard to the project of protecting the weakest and most vulnerable members of the group – disappeared within a generation or so as their bloodlines failed to be extended.

For those human groups that successfully managed natural sanctions and thereby put themselves in a position of further evolutionary upgrading and adaptation, the next level of sanctions to be developed and responded to was social sanctions. With the development of the human brain and greater cognitive power, human beings slowly pulled themselves out of the physical sphere and the struggle for survival, and their lives became as much determined by an ideational sphere which overlay notions of propriety and the "ought." This gave rise to a sphere of social control broadly referred to as "morality" – that is, of informal control – whereby prevailing notions of proper conduct emerged within particular human communities. Social sanctions are a product of human society, such as being expelled or isolated from a group because of some deviant act which violates the group's sensibilities. Rather than legal punishments, what is in play here is ostracization, gossip, avoidance, the silent treatment, and other displays of negative affect. Those who violate the sensibilities of the group may have an opportunity to return to good standing after doing a sufficient amount of remedial work, usually by way of voluntary submission to degradation ceremonies (Garfinkel, 1956).

Legal sanctions arose with the emergence of written language, as the oral traditions of the group – including its customs and folkways pertaining to permissible and impermissible actions – were committed to paper and embodied in texts and statutes. These texts clearly designate those acts that are forbidden, which members of the group may act to question, detain, and arrest violators, and what kinds of punishment may be meted out upon findings of guilt. This act of textualization into law "thingifies" the sentiment of the group, giving it an aura of neutrality and objectivity. As Durkheim (1938) suggested, the laws of a jurisdiction stand above the members of a community subject to those laws, a social fact that exerts real and palpable effects on them. Laws confront citizens as a social fact in at least two broad ways. First, setting aside certain norms as being considered vital to the well-being of the community gives the collective sentiments lying behind them an objective reality insofar as they are now documented in legal codebooks, which are real, tangible, and take up space in the world. Second, whereas informal control is diffuse to the extent that any competent member of society may apply informal sanctions against deviants, with legal control specific agents of the state are designated with the authority to intervene at much more serious and consequential levels. Police and other functionaries of the state, in their capacity as constabulary agents enforcing the laws of a jurisdiction, are vested with coercive power – one that may result in the injury or death of those arrested or detained.

Finally, supernatural sanctions are rewards or punishments that individuals receive upon their death. Tenets of the religious faith may direct true believers toward actions in this world that will allow them to attain a state of grace or salvation in the afterlife. Since the content of religious beliefs and their outcomes cannot be verified by the methods of the empirical sciences, whether or to what extent supernatural sanctions are actually applied in the ways described by the belief system must always stand as an article of faith.

Among the four sanctions – natural, social, legal, and supernatural – the time between original acts and the sanctioning of those acts varies systematically. The shortest time between act and sanction is represented by natural sanctions; for example, falling down and cutting your knee.

Like the custody continuum discussed earlier, there is also a norm continuum. The norm continuum runs from the tacit, uncodified norms of everyday life, which are passed along and inculcated through socialization and group living (located on the informal end of the continuum), to the highly formalized and textualized norms embodied in statutes and legal codebooks. The earliest, most primitive norms are the folkways of a group that develops understandings of how to deal with both natural and social aspects of the environment. Eventually, such understandings of how the world works are sedimented into higher-order "truths," known as "mores" (Sumner, 1906). Whereas violations of folkways may bring mild rebukes, violations of mores typically are met with much more severe sanctions. Examples of some of the earliest mores are taboos. These are strong directives concerning what *not* to do, such as religious taboos that warn against upsetting the gods; sexual taboos regarding whom not to have sex with; dietary taboos regarding which kinds of food to eat or avoid; and behavioral taboos directing members to engage in or avoid certain activities or other "unspeakables" (whether with regard to hunts, sacrifices, conflict, or other forms of interpersonal conduct; see Mills & Smith, 2001).

Medical Control

Mores can exist and be enforced within an oral tradition. Over time, with the emergence of written language, some of these mores become laws. In effect, all laws are mores, but not all mores are laws. Because, historically, medicine had always been practiced with regard to the limited case of tending to the illness or disease of particular individuals, for eons the medical case model resisted appropriation by government or other collective enterprises; it was simply seen as not appropriate or amenable to such application. However, as life expectancies began to rise with increasing modernization and the upgrading of medical knowledge and technologies, a higher premium was placed on health and well-being in general.

Originally, the tag "health" was applied only to the body (e.g., physical health), but later, with the rise of psychiatry as a legitimate medical specialty, there emerged the notion of mental health. Alongside physical health and mental health, by the mid-1800s the administrative wings of Western governments (primarily in Great Britain and the United States initially) began moving toward a collective understanding of health, particularly with regard to the threat of infectious disease pandemics. The move from the medical case model, attending first to the body (general medicine) and later to the mind (psychiatry and allied helping professions), was further augmented by a collective understanding of health in the guise of public health. Being under the auspices of government administration, public health began importing notions of legal accountability (by governments, by hospitals, and by private practitioners in terms of licensing) into its operation, while informal notions of propriety

(i.e., informal control) began permeating discourses regarding health and illness in general (Halliwell, 2013). With the emergence of public health, the fusing of informal notions of proper conduct and good living on the one hand with professional responsibilities of medical care (which were increasingly legalistic and bureaucratic) on the other led to a full-blown system of medical control operating alongside informal and legal control (Zola, 1972).

Beyond physical, mental, and public health, there is now a burgeoning application of the health tag to more and more areas of life. These include community, emotional, behavioral, sexual, family, adolescent, relationship, home, marital, social, heart, pet, LGBT, school, elder, minority, immigrant, prisoner, financial, and environmental health. Some of these health tags are used in a metaphorical sense to refer to an ideal state of the orderly or stable operation of some area of life, as seen, for example, in the cases of environmental and financial health. Even so, the great majority of health tags refer to literal bodily, mental, or relational health in narrowly designated areas. These health tags inexorably mix taken-for-granted notions of social well-being (informed by informal control) with professional medical diagnostic criteria for ascertaining wellness and responding to illness or disease.

Conclusion

The ascendancy of the tripartite typology of social control discussed in this chapter seeks to organize the myriad ways social control appears in the empirical social world by focusing on socialization and relationships (informal control) on one end of the norm continuum, and law and legal regulation (legal control) on the other. In between the poles of pure informality and formality, however, is a gray area into which are dumped odd cases that do not clearly meet the criteria of either. For example, a grown man skipping along in public has broken no laws, but those who are present to his actions will likely steer clear of him and come to the conclusion that he is "crazy" (or possibly just very happy). Such odd disturbances of the social fabric are the sorts of things that could become the province of medical definitions and oversight. Indeed, where informal control's broad province is relationships, and legal control's is law (including criminal, but also civil and administrative), medical control's province is behavior.

It is also clear that various processes of everyday life can ignite movements or shifts in interpretive frameworks regarding which province of control is most pertinent to a particular empirical event or set of facts. David Matza (1964) illustrated one of these processes by way of his concept of "drift." He rightly notes that the lifeworld (or everyday life) represents "freedom" to the extent that this domain of reality is organized informally by way of socialization, relationships, and tacit notions of propriety within particular group settings. Just so long as you are a well-demeaned individual who meets the broad expectations of the group, you will be left alone and will be free to pursue life projects as you see fit (Goffman, 1959). But the openness and freedom of the lifeworld allows for certain persons under certain conditions to drift toward patterns of behavior that may eventually be deemed to require more formalized oversight, of either medical or legal control (or some combination of the two).

Matza (1964:28) further defines freedom as "self-control." Lying behind self-control is the system of socialization, which inculcates appropriate need-dispositions in the personality and thereby produces well-adjusted selves (of symbolic interactionism) or egos (in the Freudian sense). Ideally, the lifeworld is populated by norm-conforming others who monitor the behavior of those with whom they interact, and who may react to those giving indications of drifting toward lines of activity that violate the sensibilities of the

group. If handled within the lifeworld itself (e.g., a mother or father scolding a child for coming home later than promised and affixing some punishment as a remedy for the infraction), the drift toward further or more severe deviance will be stifled. Indeed, the goal of punishment is conformity, although under certain conditions punishments may amplify deviance and produce defiance (Sherman, 1993). It is hoped that the mechanisms of informal control are good enough to identify, react to, and ameliorate any such drifts taking place within the cozy confines of the lifeworld. Further, it is assumed that cases of more serious delinquency that have called forth legal authorities represent a failure of the informal system to adequately control its members.

There have been no major changes in the conceptualization of social control and its three major forms (informal, legal, and medical) since the 1980s. However, there is a growing sentiment among scholars, cultural critics, media talking heads, politicians, and the lay public that informal control is under siege and that other, more formalized controls are being brought to bear to shore up frayed and tattered lifeworlds. This began a century ago with the appearance of the "family decline" thesis, whereby in its transition from a production to a consumption unit the family was seen to be systematically losing many of its original functions. This thesis was first elaborated by William Graham Sumner in his presidential address before the American Sociological Society in 1908 (published a year later). Sumner (1909:591) stated, for example, that "Part of the old function of the family seems to have passed to the primary school, but the school has not fully and intelligently taken up the functions thrown upon it."

Jürgen Habermas (1987), drawing largely from Parsons and Weber, continued this thesis with the idea of the "colonization of the lifeworld," whereby steering media from the system (power, money, and legal-bureaucratic rationality and procedures) were inexorably penetrating the lifeworld, thereby distorting communicative action among its citizens and disempowering their ability informally to decide things for themselves. This also appears in the subtle forms of nudging engaged in by Western neoliberal governments to prod individuals into socially beneficial activities such as eating more healthily, voting more often, and being more neighborly and friendly (Chriss, 2016). This is a subterranean or softer form of paternalism that seeks to reduce citizen backlash against what is perceived to be an overly interventionist and ham-fisted Nanny State.

Finally, breakthroughs in medical technologies and drug treatment (the broader process of medicalization within medical social control) have continued to expand possibilities regarding behavior modification and control that comport with the systems logics of lifeworld colonization, presumably for the betterment of the citizenry. For example, it is has been discovered that oxytocin can be used to promote prosocial behaviors and reduce aggression (Pfundmair et al., 2016). Originally used in clinical trials to treat persons on the autism spectrum, the drug's robust benefits – including increasing eye contact, providing more accurate perception of nonverbal cues, and increasing trust and cooperation – might be targeted at mass publics, thereby serving the (presumed) altruistic aim of expanding the common good.

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