

## The Potential Deviance OF Social Control

### Reading

\*Coser: "The Notion of Control in Sociological Theory." Pp. 13-22 in Jack P. Gibbs, ed., *Social Control – Views from the Social Sciences*

\*Coser, Lewis A. 1963. "Some Functions of Deviant Behavior and Normative Flexibility," *AJS* 69:172-181.

### Notes for Discussion

Who is Lewis Coser? Born in 1913. American sociologist and leftist intellectual. Co-editor of *Dissent* for a long time with Irving Howe. For history of American left, you might be interested in Maurice Isserman's *If I had a hammer...*

What basic model of human behavior do early writers like Ross and Sumner seem to have had? The unruly brute who needed to be controlled to fit into society.

Plato's charioteer. Good horse, bad horse. Appetite vs. Reason

The conception of the tripartite soul holds that the soul consists of reason, appetite, and spirit (or will). Each part serves a purpose and has validity, but reason is the soul's noblest part; in order for man to achieve harmony, appetite and spirit must be subjected to the firm control of reason.<sup>1</sup>

Good angel, bad angel.

Hobbes

Hobbes's reputation as a thinker rests mainly on his contributions to the philosophy of man, in which he propounded an influential egoistic psychology. In moral theory he is generally regarded as a pioneer of the Utilitarian school. He justified obedience to moral rules on a purely secular basis, as the means to "peaceable, social, and comfortable living."

In his political theory Hobbes first analyzed the conditions necessary for peace and security and then, in his version of the social contract, provided a recipe for constructing an ideal state in which these conditions could be satisfied.

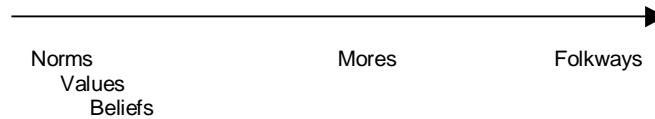
Hobbes's solution was to give everyone a guarantee of the good behaviour of his fellows by creating a power sufficient to keep them in awe. This power will be created if each individual promises every other individual that he will carry out whatever commands some selected person (or an assembly) shall consider necessary for the peace and defense of all.<sup>2</sup>

Sumner – distinguishes different kinds of social rules based on the severity of societal reaction to infractions:

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<sup>1</sup> "Plato and Platonism: Plato and his thought: GENERAL FEATURES OF THE DIALOGUES: Doctrine of Forms." Britannica Online. <<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=macro/5005/10/7.html>> [Accessed 05 February 1998].

<sup>2</sup> "Hobbes, Thomas" Britannica Online. <<http://www.eb.com:180/cgi-bin/g?DocF=micro/273/17.html>> [Accessed 05 February 1998].



One advance was to recognize lots of different kinds of control mechanisms beyond just law.

- Policemen and the judiciary
- Beliefs in the supernatural
- Ceremonies
- Public opinion
- Morals
- Art
- Education

A problem, though, was that they never conceptualized the process by which the social rules were internalized by conformers. In other words, how do we get beyond the obviously incorrect view that it all depends on surveillance and punishment. Remember this question. It is key to the entire course.

Mead, Cooley, Durkheim, Freud, Piaget all argued that the human self was not in fact an isolated, unruly entity, but that it developed through social interaction.

Mead	Self is an object to itself. Sees itself as others see it. 'Take the role of the other. Self image or "me" -- becoming aware of the appraisals of significant others. Internalization of the generalized other.
Cooley	"Man and society are twin born."
Durkheim	Norms not imposed, but internalized. "Internal" moral obligation to obey rule. Voluntary acceptance of social duties. Categories (including good and bad) mirror social structures.
Freud	Superego. Maturity is the replacement of the external policeman with the internal policeman.
Piaget	Early moral judgements arise from conformity to wishes of authoritarian parental figures, but later, more mature moral judgements arise from cooperative social relations with peers. Types of morality related to types of social structures and interactions.

History of the Sociology of Deviance – Long line of “etiological theories” (i.e., what makes ‘em do it?)

- Phrenology, somatotyping, race theories, evil, possession, the devil, etc.
- Social disorganization
- Cultural Strain – poor socialization
- Differential Association – hang out with the wrong types, develop bad values
- Merton’s anomie theory: (il)legitimate goals, (il)legitimate means (access to)
- Secondary deviance

- Deviant opportunity structures

Parsons

Functionalism: every social fact has a function for society.

Wrong "Oversocialized Concept of Man" – criticizes Parsons for overemphasizing degree to which individual should be expected to conform "for the good of social stability."

Interesting how much the problem Coser cites in Parsons, "...has not been overly successful in reconciling the twin notions of voluntary action and societal control." Resonates with the bind the Puritans were in in trying to reconcile predestination and free will.

Merton: "choice between socially structured alternatives"

Institutionalized alternatives, goals and motives.

His analysis of delinquency, for example, is built around the idea that "society" tells you what is worth wanting and striving for, but that the means of achieving what people want are distributed unevenly in society. Some people have access to legitimate means, others only to illegitimate means.

Limits of internalization – power – people live in different worlds – social structures matter

**Typologies as an intellectual organizing strategy.**

Most basic is the single dimension. More interesting is crossing two dimensions.

Etzioni's Typology				
Type	Description	Examples	Means of Control	Internalization
Coercive	Threat of force, high degree of alienation	Concentration camps, prisons, mental hospitals	Force, threat of violence, restraint	Little or none. Almost exclusively behavioral conformity
Utilitarian	Power controls through rewarding conformity	Blue or white collar workers	Remuneration. The controlled will exit if remuneration is unsatisfactory.	Some internalization and attitudinal conformity, but mostly behavioral.

Normative	Normative power through commitment of lower participants	Religious organizations, political organizations, parties, etc.	Internalization of directives seen as legitimate	High degree of attitudinal conformity.
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Exit, voice and loyalty

Point: internalization only goes to a point. There are real consequences to not conforming.

### **The Dark Side of Social Control**

Panglossian vision of the present and the future. What does this refer to?

Holocaust, Gulag, world wars.

Malevolent social control

Manipulative persuasion – propaganda, advertising.

Control and domination through coercion, induced consent, manipulation of symbols.

Monopolies on knowledge

Secrecy as a form of social control

Accumulation of data as social control

Record keeping as social control

Weber's iron cage : one reading is that once you set certain systems into motion, they grind out every semblance of freedom after a while, regardless of original intent.

Triumph of bureaucracy over "subjectivism"

Howe on obliteration of personal self – we return to the tension between identity and control but in a different way. How to achieve individual identity on the one hand, and group identity on the other.

Freedom as what we flee toward or wh