

Social Control

ECED7002

Session 3a

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Social Control

- In the origins of sociology
 - ‘social control’ served as a central concept both for relating sociology to social philosophy and for analysing total societies
- In its classical sense
 - it referred to the capacity of a social group to regulate itself
- While the traditional usage of social control has persisted
 - the term has been redefined to mean either socialization or social repression

Social Control

- Typology of Social Control
 - Informal Control
 - Medical Control
 - Legal Control

Three Categories of Social Control

- Direct Control
- Internal Control
- Indirect Control

Direct Control

- Nye (1958) refers to direct control as being:
 - Actual or possible restraints that can be marshalled against deviance
 - Including:
 - Legal punishments
 - Informal sanctions – shaming or ridicule

Internal Control

- Nye (1958) considers that this refers to internalisation
 - Namely a system of socialisation by which individuals are inculcated with a set of norms, values, beliefs and rules
 - These in effect keep individuals from deviating

Indirect Control

- The warm and secure bonds of attachment that persons feel toward conventional others
 - Children's attachment to parents,
 - Hence the family is the major source of indirect control in society

So Social Control Can also Be . .

- Direct Control
 - In the form of sanctions
- Internal Control
 - In the form of culture and socialisation
- Indirect Control
 - In the form of relationships (Nye, 1958)

The Micro-Oriented Theory of Social Control

- Katovich (1996) argues that . . .
 - ‘although the connotation of control is that it is ‘evil’
 - especially in the hands of Marxists or conflict theorists
 - who argue that the more powerful groups in society take advantage of less powerful groups through race, class, gender, or other forms of oppression’
 - he points out there are cooperative as well as coercive bases of control.

Informal Control within the Micro-Realm of Face to Face Interactions

- Four Basic Forms
 - Instrumental control
 - Ceremonial control
 - Interpersonal control
 - Categorical control

Instrumental Control

- Persons often come into contact with other persons over long periods of time to get various collective endeavours accomplished
 - the mutual give and take that actors exert on one another within relatively stable persistent relationships e.g.
 - Marriages
 - Partnerships
 - Organisational Associations

Ceremonial Control

- Special kind of cooperation or mutuality between actors which tends to be more fleeting and episodic than instrumental control e.g.
 - persons who are not closely acquainted will nevertheless provide to one another a smile, eye contact, and even a 'hi' when crossing each other's paths in public
 - Undertaken merely for the sake of establishing mutual identification and availability should the need arise.
- Katovich's ceremonial control is very close to Goffman's notion of interaction ritual

Interpersonal Control

- Two or more persons who share a focus on some immediate social objective
 - Not merely bystanders who happen to be at the same place at the same time observing some event
 - They invest their selves in the mutual project at hand
- Control occurs when identities are identified, committed to and mutually available to all participants in the project as needed
 - If mutual establishment of identities is not available in a particular strip of shared activity
 - the interpersonal control necessary to bringing it co completion or fruition would be absent
 - Interpersonal control means that everyone is
 - ‘on the same page’
 - understands their roles in the accomplishment of the activity or event

Cooperative Bases of Control

- Criticisms of Katovich's theory
 - Does not go far beyond 'informal control'

Two Grand Theories of Control

- Beniger
 - Beginnings of life on earth (1 billion years ago) – to some degree owed his theory to Darwinism
- Gibbs
 - Theoretical system has three basic forms of control:
 - Inanimate
 - Biotic
 - Human

Beniger: Four levels of control

- Level One:
 - Emergence of organic matter and appearance of protoplasm
 - Organisms moving about in space and time in a physical environment
 - They are able to control themselves and available resources
 - Fittest for purposes of survival of their species

Beniger: Four levels of control

- Level Two:
 - 100 million years ago
 - Patterned behaviour through imitation
 - Sentient beings above level of insects engage in some form of imitation
 - Eventually rote imitation was supplemented by learning by teaching
 - Accompanying increase in brain size
 - Divergence of hominids and apes
 - Development of human language
 - In turn increased learning, teaching and memory
 - Creation of culture – Homo Sapiens
 - Greater control of the environment and fellow beings

Beniger: Four levels of control

- Level Three:
 - Neolithic or agricultural revolution – 5000 years ago
 - Accelerating with the rise of philosophy and science in Greece around 300 BC
 - Increased need to organise activities associated with production of food
 - Larger populations
 - Greater stratification
 - Some persons are now in positions to reap the benefits of the economic surplus created by this mode of production
 - Rise of formal organisation and the bureaucracy which underpinned the Commercial Revolution – 450 years ago

Beniger: Four levels of control

- Level Four:
 - Transition from agriculture to industrialisation as the major mode of production – 175 years ago
 - Industrial Revolution lead to acceleration of technological innovations
 - Railroads
 - Telegraph
 - Steam power
 - Electricity
- All lead to greater control of the natural an built environment
 - Computers in the 1950s and rapid acceleration of related information technologies since then
 - Internet
 - Medical and genetic programming technologies
- Information itself becomes the basis of the new controlling revolution (Beniger, 1986).

Gibbs:

Social Control

- Inanimate Control
 - Human attempt to control modify or affect an inanimate object or its characteristics e.g.
 - Rock to ward off a predator
 - Technology

Gibbs: Social Control

- Biotic Control
 - Human attempt to alter, affect, or change the characteristics of plant or animal organisms e.g.
 - Food quests
 - Creation and maintenance of monoculture forests
 - Use of animals for various purposes
 - Transportation
 - Beasts of burden
 - Medical research
 - Warfare
 - Genetic engineering

Gibbs:

Social Control

- Human Control
 - Diverse ways humans attempt to control human behaviour
 - Two sub-categories
 - Internal control
 - External control

Gibbs:

Social Control

- Internal Human Control
 - Self-control e.g.
 - Going on a diet to lose weight
 - Changing jobs to reduce depression or increase salary
 - Trying to stop smoking

Gibbs:

Social Control

- External Human Control
 - Human attempts to control the behaviour of other human beings – excluding self-control

Gibbs: Social Control Three Subcategories

- Proximate Control
 - Direct or unmediated control of other human beings e.g. physical contact – pat on the back, kiss or assault – but not direct control as in inviting someone to dinner

Gibbs: Social Control Three Subcategories

- Sequential Control
 - Not all social life is conducted face to face with co-present others
 - Persons try to control others when there is spatial distance between the parties
 - Chain of command in the military
 - Communications technologies e.g. telephones or internet

Gibbs: Social Control Three subcategories

- Social Control
 - Norms and conceptualises control as the counteractions of deviance
 - Defining deviance and social control with reference to norms is overly narrow
 - Primarily because such an approach cannot account for large-scale attempts at social control such as mass media advertising or state terrorism

Gibbs: Social Control Three subcategories

- Social Control
 - ‘overt behaviour by a human, the first part, in the belief that
 - (1) the overt behaviour increases or decreases the probability of a change in the behaviour of another human or humans, the second party in either case;
 - (2) the overt behaviour involves a third party but not in the way of sequential control;
 - and (3) the increase or decrease is desirable’ (Gibbs, 1989a/b/1994).

Typology of Social Control

- Social Control is often associated with the physical coercive power of the policy
- Social Control is more than policing
 - Individuals exert pressures for you to conform to their wishes
 - Some are subtle and others are flagrant

Typology of Social Control

- The three typologies of social control relate to their three respective 'systems of control'
 - Informal
 - Range of normative prescriptions and proscriptions covering the areas of interpersonal relations and group living
 - Medical
 - Behaviour more generally irrespective of the nature of the ties between persons in interaction
 - Legal
 - The law and legal system

Example

- Eating in a fast food restaurant and someone a few tables away is staring at you, perhaps grinning wildly but saying nothing.
 - Do you:
 - Ignore him
 - Move to another table
 - Hurry up your meal
 - Get out of there as quickly as possible?
- If you do one of the above you are using informal control

Example

- If the police are called
 - Legal control takes place

Example

- What about Medical Social Control
 - Often after legal control has been brought to bear against a suspect
 - Medical personnel as primary agents of control
 - 1) disturbances involving those who are known to one another are more likely to call forth medical forms of control than disturbances involving strangers
 - More intimate the gathering the more likely this will be viewed as a medical issues – their drink etc
 - 2) the social class of the participant involved in the disturbance often affects the nature of control response
 - High status offenders and victims will tend to seek medicinal or therapeutic remedies for their problems
 - Lower status offenders are more likely to be dealt with by representatives of legal control

Emergence of Norms

- Social Control relies heavily on the concept of NORMS
 - Norms
 - a rule for behaviour, a guide to conduct
 - statements that regulate behaviour
 - Social control as regulation
 - Norms need not be explicitly stated or codified
 - Norms not always written down
 - Rather part of a group's tacit understandings of the proper way to act given certain conditions or situations
 - Norms are passed on more or less informally through socialisation

Sumner & Folkways

- Usages
 - Manners
 - Customs
 - Mores
- Morals
 - Cannibalism
 - Abortion
 - Infanticide
 - Incest
 - Slavery
 - Prostitution
 - Sports

Sumner & Folkways

- He suggests that 'early humans lived a 'brutish' existence'
- Survival needs
 - Again linked to Darwinism
 - Pleasure and pain
 - Humans live in groups
 - Societies
 - Technologies and production increased
 - Members of the group learn from one another
 - A society's storehouse of experiences
- Thus Folkways are the
 - Sum of the total of these informal ways of doing things, customs which provide for the needs of members of the group.

Sumner & Folkways

- Interestingly he suggests that with these Folkways other aspects developed:
 - Respect for greatest knowledge/experienced/authority
 - Respect of elders
 - Family ties

Sumner & Folkways

- Later this was developed into the notion of
 - Ethnocentrism
 - Where one group considered themselves higher than another
 - This is linked to identity and the associated
 - Truths
 - Mores
- Taboos
 - Anything seen injurious to the group
 - Wrong types of food
 - War
 - Sex with the wrong persons
 - Making gods/ ghosts angry

Codified Mores become Laws

- Eventually societies advance towards settling disputes through formal agents of control
 - Specialising in order maintenance and crime control
 - Mores become codified and institutionalised
 - Eventually these become laws

Mores to Laws

- Laws are norms that are considered to be so vital to the well-being of the group
 - their violation is to be addressed by whatever collective resources are available
 - in a systematic
 - and standardised way.
- Development of legal documents/laws (Sumner, 1906).

Sanctions

- Norms aim to guide behaviour via a system of sanctions
 - compliance with norms are rewarded
 - Positive sanctions
 - Those who violate norms are punished
 - Negative sanctions
- Such sanctions create intense pressures for members to conform to group norms

Forward Looking: Social Control

- Utilitarian perspective
 - Assumption that humans beings rationally calculate the costs and benefits of any line of action and adjust their behaviour accordingly
- A forward looking version of social control

Backward Looking: Social Control

- Actors often have no – or merely partial – knowledge of the long- or even short-term consequences of their actions.
 - Actors rely more on past experiences to judge to what extent negative or positive sanctions may apply to current situations.
- A backward looking version of social control

Centralised Sanctions

- Legal system
 - Formal agents of control
 - Policy
 - Courts
 - Corrections
- Social order is seen as a problem of
 - Collective action
 - How does society motivate enough people to contribute to the production of this shared or public good – social order?

Diffuse Sanctions

- Rewards or punishments meted out by individuals or organisations on a
 - Local
 - Informal basis against violators
 - Individual
 - Or collective
- Local
 - More or less informal realm of face-to-face behaviour
 - Small groups
 - Neighbourhoods
 - Communities

Types of Sanctions

- Natural sanctions
- Social sanctions
- Legal sanctions
- Supernatural sanctions
- (Hirschi & Gottfredson, 2005: 215-217).

Natural Sanctions

- Negative harmful or painful consequences of operating within a natural environment
 - Heat
 - Fire
 - Animals
 - Diseases
 - Similar factors that affect human health and well-being or other human beings.

Social Sanctions

- Product of human society
 - Pains associated with a friend's withdrawal of friendship
 - Being expelled or isolated from a group
 - Expression of disappointment or anger from a parent
- Natural sanctions are automatic social sanctions require the presence and participation of other human beings

Legal Sanctions

- Penalties provided by the state for violations of the
 - Criminal
 - Administrative or
 - Civil law
- Today sanctions include:
 - Fines
 - Imprisonment
 - Intermediate sanctions
- Earlier times sanctions also included:
 - Floggings
 - Transportation
 - Bodily mutilation
 - Forms of torture
 - And ultimately the death penalty

Supernatural Sanctions

- Rewards or punishments individuals receive upon their death
 - The belief that one will go to 'hell' for breaking a religious commandment
 - Geared toward shaping the behaviour of individuals in this world in the here and now.

Ranking of Sanctions

- Ranked according to time between behaviour and receipt of sanctions
 - Natural sanctions
 - Most direct
 - Social sanctions
 - Legal sanctions
 - Finally supernatural sanctions

Labelling Perspective

Stickiness of the label

- Primary deviance
 - Criminal act brought the attention of law enforcement
 - Peer groups
 - Associations
- Secondary deviance
 - Or does the behaviour results because of the affixing of stigmatising label?

Labelling Theory: Ditton

- Rather than focusing on the crime
 - The focus should be on the control attempts embodied in the societal relations to perceived deviance
 - Controlology
 - The study of control
 - Individual acts are irrelevant
 - As they need a societal reaction to the act!
 - To be a crime it needs to be reported and labelled as a crime
- This shifts the focus FROM the individual 'responsibility'
 - To
- Societal 'response ability' (Black, 1983)

Crime as a Form of Social Control

- Black (1983) suggests that Crime is a form of social control!
 - Many acts defined as criminal are acts of self-help
 - E.g. vigilant groups
 - Any process by which people define or respond to deviant behaviour
 - Thus social control can be seen as a 'reaction' to perceived or real deviance
 - The reaction to acts of deviance can take myriad forms, ranging from accepted, appropriate, or legal responses to deviant and criminal responses on the other.
- Black's (1983) form of social control is often applied to terrorism

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