Sociological compendium on the relationship between 'social control' and social work

Sergio Severino (First author)

Full professor in Sociology – Faculty of Human and social Sciences – University of Enna, "Kore" - Italy

Giada Cascino (Second author)

PhD in "Social inclusion in the multicultural contexts" – Lecturer on contract - Faculty of Human and social Sciences –
University of Enna, "Kore" – Italy
Italy: telephone +39 360220457

Correspondence to: sergio.severino@unikore.it

Abstract

The aim of this compendium is to provide a toolbox that is not predefined, but one that is flexible and adaptable to the needs of planning different actions (understanding and formulating hypotheses on the causes of the phenomenon, a review of reference theories for the definition of a research design, programming and designing a plan of action in social policies, the development of further and subsequent reflections and revisions of theories in the field of 'social control', structured knowledge in the field).
On the basis of an order chosen for expository convenience, the different ways in which some sociologists (or at least scholars of social systems), among the precursors, the classics and the contemporaries, have contributed to the understanding of the structure of 'social control' are analysed (but with different depths depending on the relevance of the contribution), so that different and varied strategies (policies, programmes and projects) of achieving conformity, uniformity and obedience to rules, laws and customs can be hypothesised in order to ensure an equitable, stable, sustainable, safe, just and inclusive coexistence, with the help of (local) design activities in social work.

Keywords: social control, social work, design, social policy, formal social control, informal social control.

I. Introduction

Charles-Louis de Secondat (1689 - 1755), Baron de La Brède and Baron de Montesquieu (better known only as Montesquieu) was a French philosopher, jurist, historian and political thinker. He is considered the founder of the political theory of the separation of powers, but also the first scholar to establish a structural relationship between political regimes and the forms of culture and organisation of society. Montesquieu understood social structure as the set of customs, beliefs, and sentiments that must animate men living in a given time and type of government in order for it to function harmoniously.

In Montesquieu's works, in particular in 'De l'esprit des lois' of 1748, it is possible to identify connections between his analysis of the social structure and his thoughts on social control:

- separation of powers: he is known for introducing the concept of separation of powers, which concerns the division of legislative, executive and judicial powers. This division serves to balance and limit the authority of the government, preventing one body from holding too much power. This principle helps prevent abuse of power and can be seen as a social control mechanism to prevent tyrannical rule.

- Laws and norms: explores how laws and norms are influenced by the social structure and values of a society. He suggests that laws should reflect the character and needs of the population. This concept can be interpreted as a form of social control, in which laws set the rules that guide the behaviour of citizens.

- Geographical and social conditions: he believes that geographical conditions, climate and other social factors influence the structure and behaviour of societies. For example, he suggests that climate influences the customs and laws of a region. These reflections can be seen as considerations of indirect social control, in which environmental conditions shape the ways in which people live and relate.

- Containment of monarchical power: criticises monarchical absolutism and promotes the idea of controlling the power of the monarch through the system of separation of powers. This can be interpreted as a social control mechanism to prevent the abuse of power by a single dominant figure.

In summary, although Montesquieu did not directly discuss the modern concept of social control, his reflections on social structure, separation of powers and the interplay between laws, norms and values have implications that can be linked to the idea of regulation and control of social behaviour within a society.

More recently, David Garland introduced the concept of the 'culture of control' in his 2001 book entitled 'The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society'. In this book, Garland explores how industrialised and post-industrialised societies deal with crime and social control in a context of social and cultural change.

Garland's 'culture of control' refers to the changing ways in which society deals with the control and management of crime. He argues that in the shift from a 'solution culture' to a 'control culture', Western societies have increasingly moved towards the use of criminal repression and surveillance as the main tools for managing crime and social disorder. This shift has come at the expense of more traditional approaches based on re-education and rehabilitation.

Garland examines how various factors, such as the rise of violent crime, risk perception and political changes, have helped to shape this culture of control. This concept highlights how control policies and punitive responses have become increasingly dominant in the management of deviant and criminal behaviour in contemporary society.

In this sense, the aim of this compendium is to provide a toolbox that is not predefined, but one that is flexible and adaptable to the needs of planning different actions (understanding and formulating hypotheses of the causes of the phenomenon, reviewing reference theories for the definition of a research design, programming and design of an action plan in social policies, the development of further and subsequent reflection and revision of theories in the field of 'social control', structured knowledge in the field).

The concept of social control is central within sociology and refers to the strategies and mechanisms through which society regulates individual behaviour in order to prevent disorder, deviance and crime, with two different semantic approaches

- "all the phenomena and processes that contribute to regulating human behaviour and organising it, establishing relations between several subjects, in view of collective aims - above all the realisation of social order" (Gallino, 1993, p. 172);
- "all the ways and means by which individuals and groups influence each other" (Ibid., p. 173), referring to the influence: between subjects, of a group on its members, of power groups on the collectivity and, in particular, of institutions - the law above all - on all the members of a society.

Although the subject matter has been addressed by several authors, one of the most influential in this field is Travis Hirschi, whose theory of social control offers a unique perspective on understanding how society influences compliant and, hence, deviant behaviour.

Nevertheless, the sociology of social control has been influenced by a number of sociologists who have contributed valuable theories and perspectives on this topic.

Sociologists have made significant contributions to the understanding of social control through their analysis of social dynamics, institutions and norms that regulate individual and collective behaviour. Their work has helped develop theories, conceptual models and critical perspectives that help explain how society manages deviance and crime.

II. Contributions

1. **Herbert Spencer** (1820 - 1903) was a 19th century British philosopher, sociologist and evolutionist, known for his theories on social evolution and the interactions between individuals and society. He was the first to use the notion of 'social control' in his studies aimed at establishing how compliance with the rules adopted by a given group could be ensured in societies lacking instruments to repress possible violations (hypothesis of absence of formal social control).

He considered, in fact, that the use of coercive instruments would fall under formal social control only as an extreme ratio, when the specific informal mechanisms had proved to be inadequate and ineffective for the purpose of conforming the behaviour of the subjects to the established rules.

His writings that refer to the concept of 'social control' are:
- The Principles of Sociology: this work was published in several volumes between 1876 and 1896 and is one of his best known works. Spencer explores many issues related to society, including social control, human cooperation and the evolution of social institutions.
- The Study of Sociology': published in 1873, which is a kind of introduction to sociology and, in particular, on the concepts of social order, progress and social control.
- Social Statics: a work published in 1851, it is considered one of Spencer's first significant writings, in which he examines the laws of social evolution and the dynamics of social control that emerge within societies.
- The Man Versus the State: essay, published in 1884, in which he addresses the issue of state power and its impact on individual freedom, also exploring the concept of social control exercised by government.

2. **Edward Alsworth Ross** (1866-1951) was an American sociologist who went on to analyse and define the concept of 'social control' through an initial definition: the main, among various social mechanisms, designed to bring about the conformity of the individual to a behaviour that results from an inner concordance (attitude) with the values of the collectivity.

His most famous works on social control include:
- Social Control: A Survey of the Foundations of Order (1901): one of Ross's most influential works and explores the concept of social control and the different forms in which it manifests itself in society.

- Sin and Society: An Analysis of Latter-Day Iniquity (1907): in this book he examines the role of sin in society and how society reacts to sin through social control.
- Social Psychology: An Outline and Source Book (1908): covers a range of topics in social psychology, including social control and social influences on individual behaviour.
- Changing America: Studies in Contemporary Society (1912): this volume collects a series of essays by Ross dealing with various aspects of social change in the United States, including changes in social control.
- The Social Trend (1922): In this book, Ross explores changing social trends and how they influence social control and life in society.

3. **Georges Gurvitch** (1894-1965) was a French sociologist and jurist known for his work in the sociology of law and general sociology: he was credited with cataloguing the species of 'social control', providing useful insights for later studies: religion, morality, law, art, knowledge and education, which can be further subdivided into numerous varieties or subspecies. The greater the social articulation, the greater the species and subspecies of social control. If we wanted to update this list, based on post-modern transformations, we could add expert systems, the internet (including social networks) and mass media.
His writings on social control are:

- Gurvitch, G. (1933). La vocation actuelle de la sociologie juridique, is a comprehensive exposition of his pluralist view of social life, which is not only expressed in his sociology, but has also found application in morality and was initially constituted in very important works dedicated to the philosophy of law.
- Gurvitch, G. (1968). Dialectique et sociologie. Presses universitaires de France, argues that the dominant concern, the 'vocation' of contemporary sociology, is and must be to rediscover the plurality, the diversity of social frameworks and their specific complexity.
- Gurvitch, G. (1997). Social control. refers in particular to the principle of a sociological pluralism that requires specific organisational techniques and a legal and moral symbology
- Gurvitch, G. (2004). The author bases his declaration of social rights on a pluralistic conception, where pluralism is understood as a genuine guarantee of democracy. A model is thus constructed that takes into account the different positions of the individual understood as producer, consumer, user, citizen and man, in order to provide for a complex structure of counterweights capable of channelling the exercise of power into appropriate measures
- Gurvitch, G. (1947). Sociology of Law: A Comparative Analysis. Philosophical Library, provides a concentrated expression of the theoretical problems that plague the field. The core of Gurvitch's sociology of law is basically a continuation of the efforts, evident in Max Weber's work, to resolve or integrate the dualism that is so markedly affecting law. It is the apparent dualism between law as a positive institution that is based on a social power structure, while at the same time being a system of values or norms that have a certain internal force and validity.
- Gurvitch, G. (1968). Dialectique et sociologie, in his search for a sociological method capable of leading to a constant renewal of experience, emphasises that the dominant concern, the 'vocation' of contemporary sociology, is and must be to rediscover the plurality, the diversity of social frameworks and their specific complexity. Gurvitch assigns to the object of sociology the task of emphasising the discontinuities between types and their differentiation, he insists just as strongly on the urgency of rediscovering the movement, change, mobility of relations between groups, classes and manifestations of sociality.
- Gurvitch, G. (1973). The Spectrum of Social Time, discusses the problem of time and levels of depth and social time. He also explores the micro-social framework and its time: the manifestations of sociality, particular groupings and their social time, social classes and their social time scales, global societies and their time scales, the time scales of modern societies and the time scales of contemporary societies.

4. **Émile Durkheim** (1858 - 1917), who is often regarded as one of the founding fathers of sociology, emphasised the importance of social cohesion and shared norms for social control, introducing the concept of 'mechanical solidarity' and 'organic solidarity', highlighting how the division of labour influences the structure of society and the structure and intensity of reciprocity.
In particular, he argued that 'social control' can be understood as a 'social fact', that they are collective phenomena that exist irrespective of the use individuals make of them, as they are imposed on them by virtue of the coercive power they are endowed with.
Some of his most important books dealing with the concept of 'social control' and 'social facts' include:

- The Social Division of Labour (1893): this book deals with the division of labour in society and the effect it has on social cohesion. Durkheim discusses how the specialisation of labour contributes to social control through the creation of interdependence and solidarity.
- Suicide (1897): Although not directly focused on social control, this book addresses the connection between social factors and the phenomenon of suicide. Durkheim explores how various social factors influence the rate of suicide in society, thus contributing to the understanding of social control and social integration.
- The Rules of Sociological Method (1895): In this book, Durkheim presents his approach to sociology and sociological research. He discusses the importance of studying social rules and norms as a fundamental part of social control within a society.
- Moral Education (1902): This work explores the role of education in inculcating moral values and norms in society. Durkheim discusses how education plays a crucial role in transmitting social control through the socialisation of young people.
- The Elementary Forms of Religious Life' (1912): Although focusing primarily on the religious phenomenon, this book explores how religious beliefs and ritual practices are central to the maintenance of social control and community integration.

While these are not all books specifically focused on social control, Durkheim's writings reflect the comprehensive approach to sociology that contributes to an understanding of the mechanisms of social control within human societies.

5. **Michel Foucault** (1926 - 1984) was an influential French philosopher, historian of ideas and social theorist. One of his central concepts concerns the concept of 'social control', which is dealt with extensively in several of his works. Foucault analysed how power and control manifest themselves through social institutions, surveillance practices and disciplinary mechanisms in the following major texts:

- Overseeing and Punishing: Birth of the Prison (1975). in this book, Foucault examines the evolution of disciplinary practices and social control through history, focusing on the transition from corporal punishment to panoptic surveillance and the birth of the modern prison system.
- Microphysics of Power (1976): This text collects a series of lectures given by Foucault at the Collège de France. It explores the dynamics of power at the micro level, analysing how power spreads through social institutions, knowledge and everyday practices.
- The Will to Know (1976): This book is the first volume of The History of Sexuality, in which Foucault examines how sexual discourse and practice have been subject to social control and regulation throughout Western history.
- Birth of Biopolitics (2004): This text collects the lectures Foucault gave at the Collège de France in 1978-1979. It examines the relationship between political power and the economy, exploring how power governs the population through strategies of biopolitics.
- Security, Territory, Population (2004): This book collects the lectures from the course Foucault taught at the Collège de France in 1977-1978. It explores how the concept of 'government' has evolved throughout history, focusing on the link between security, territory and population.

These books represent only part of Foucault's work on the question of social control. His works are often dense and complex, so it might be useful to start with the texts that are considered introductory and then gradually delve into his more complex thought.

6. **Erving Goffman** (1922 - 1982) was a renowned sociologist known for his studies on everyday life, social interactions and self-presentation. He focused on the concept of 'self-presentation' and everyday interaction in social institutions; with his labelling theory, he highlighted how the social labels assigned to individuals influence their behaviour and self-perception.

However, his work does not primarily focus on the concept of 'social control'; rather, it explores how people manage their identities and the impressions they give to others in social interactions:

- The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life (1959): this is one of Goffman's best known works. It explores how people present themselves to others through social interactions and analyses the concepts of 'front stage' (how we present ourselves publicly) and 'back stage' (our authenticity behind the scenes).
- Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates (1961): In this book, Goffman examines the social aspects of psychiatric hospitals and similar institutions, exploring how social control is exercised over individuals in weaker positions of power.
- Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (1963): this book deals with social stigmatisation and how people manage and cope with damaged or stigmatised identities. It analyses the strategies people use to manage their social status.
- Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organisation of Experience (1974): Although this book does not focus specifically on social control, it explores how people give meaning to situations through the use of 'frames' (interpretive frames) that guide how they see and interpret the world around them.
- Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behaviour (1967): In this book, Goffman explores the nature of ritual interactions and how they influence the construction of identity and social control in social relationships.

7. **Howard Becker** (1928 - 2023) developed labelling theory, suggesting that the application of deviant labels can lead to self-identification and continued deviant behaviour. Furthermore, he explored how social labelling can contribute to deviance rather than prevent it.

Howard Becker is a renowned American sociologist known for his work in the field of social control and deviance. Some of his best-known books on these topics include:

- Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance (1963): this is one of Becker's most influential books and focuses on the concept of the outsider and how society labels and treats deviant people. The book explores how social labels influence people's behaviour and how deviance is a social construction.
- Becoming a Marihuana User (1953): this is one of Becker's earliest works and focuses on the process by which people become marijuana users. Becker's approach is based on empirical analysis and the idea that becoming a drug user is a social and cultural process.
- Outsiders: Études de sociologie de la déviance (2018): This is a new edition of the book 'Outsiders' with a preface written by Becker in which he reflects on the relevance of his work in the current context.
- Labelling Theory: Toward an Understanding of Deviance (1967): he made a significant contribution to labelling theory, which examines how social labels influence deviant behaviour. This book expands further on this concept and provides a detailed perspective on labelling theory.
- Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It (1998): Although this book does not deal directly with social control, it is a valuable resource for students and researchers as it shares practical advice on how to approach research in sociology and how to develop a critical perspective.

8. **Stanley Cohen** (1942 - 2013) was a British sociologist known for his work in the field of social control, deviance and criminology and is best known for the concept of 'moral panic', which occurs when the media and society react in an exaggerated

and sensationalistic manner to certain deviant events or behaviour. He has examined how moral panics can lead to repressive public policies.

He has written several important books on these topics. Here are some of his most relevant books on social control:

- Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers (1972): this book is considered a classic in the study of social panics and labelling. Cohen examines how the media and society overreact to minor events, turning groups of young people into social 'monsters'.
- Visions of Social Control: Crime, Punishment and Classification (1985): In this book, Cohen analyses various aspects of social control, including the classification of deviants, prison institutions and theories of punishment.
- States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering (2001): although not strictly focused on social control, this book addresses the concept of collective and individual denial of atrocities and suffering within society.
- The Punitive City: Privatised Policing and Protection in Neoliberal Mexico (2018): in this book, Cohen explores the concept of private security and the privatisation of law enforcement in urban contexts, focusing on cases in Mexico.
- Against Criminology (1988): in this work, Cohen critiques some of the traditional perspectives of criminology and offers a critical perspective on the field.
- Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History (2011): this book is a synthesis of Cohen's ideas on social representations of deviance and social control throughout history.

These are just some of Stanley Cohen's best-known books. His research has had a significant impact on the field of sociology and criminology, contributing to a deeper understanding of social control and the mechanisms through which society manages deviance.

9. **Travis Hirschi** (1935 - 2017) developed the theory of social control, focusing on social connections and the elements that keep people anchored to social norms and thus confirmatory behaviour.

Travis Hirschi - for example - developed his theory of social control in 1969 in his book 'Causes of Social Control'. This theory is based on the premise that deviant and criminal behaviour is the consequence of a lack of social ties and behavioural controls. Hirschi identifies four key elements of social control:

- Attachment: This refers to the affection and emotional bond that an individual has with authority figures or significant people in his or her life. For example, the strong bond between an adolescent and his parents can reduce the likelihood of his involvement in deviant behaviour.
- Involvement: Refers to the use of time and energy in constructive activities, such as work or education, that limit the opportunity for deviant behaviour. The more an individual is involved in socially accepted activities, the less likely he/she will be to participate in criminal behaviour.
- Commitment: These are the personal investments, such as education and career, that make an individual less likely to jeopardise their social status by engaging in criminal activities.
- Beliefs: Hirschi argues that personal beliefs in adherence to social norms and values have an impact on criminal behaviour. Individuals with strong moral values are less likely to commit crimes.

Travis Hirschi is one of the best-known sociologists in the field of social control. His theories have been widely studied and discussed in the context of criminology and sociology. Here are some of his most influential books on the subject of social control:

- Causes of Delinquency (1969): this is probably Hirschi's most famous work. In this book, he expounds his theory of social control, in which he argues that the bond between individuals and society influences the likelihood of involvement in deviant or criminal behaviour.
- Delinquency Research: An Appraisal of Analytic Methods (1973): This book delves into the research methods used in the study of deviance and juvenile delinquency, helping to provide tools and approaches for analysing data in this field.
- A General Theory of Crime"(1990): in this work, Hirschi joins Michael Gottfredson in further developing their theory of social control, proposing a "general theory of crime" that emphasises the importance of individual self-control in determining deviant behaviour.
- Family (1966): This book analyses the role of the family in social control, examining how family structure and relationships within it can influence the deviant behaviour of young people.
- Control: A Theory of Delinquency (2001) - This book collects and reorganises many of Hirschi's writings on social control theory, providing a comprehensive and in-depth analysis of his perspective.

10. **Robert K. Merton** (1910 - 2003) was an American sociologist known for his contributions in the field of sociological theory and the sociology of science. However, he is known for the concept of 'anomie' in his functionalist theory, which refers to an imbalance between social goals and the institutional means to achieve them.

He introduced the theory of 'strain', highlighting how the lack of opportunities to achieve cultural goals by accepted means can lead to deviance.

Merton was convinced that it is the social structure itself that drives the behaviour of individuals in the deviant direction. In fact, it is social structures that exert a "well-defined pressure on certain members of society, so much so as to induce them to non-conformist rather than conformist conduct" (Merton, Theory and Social Structure, tr. it. Il Mulino, Bologna, 1971, p. 298). The consequence is that people behave deviantly simply in response to the normal situation they find themselves in.

Robert K. Merton argued that society proposes cultural goals that constitute the fundamental element of the cultural structure. Society places a high value on particular goals or interests and defines these as worthy of pursuit by all. Wealth or prestige, for example, represent things worth fighting for. The cultural system proposes them, according to Merton, to all members of the community as imperatives. He analysed structural inequalities as a source of social tension.

According to this theory, society not only defines cultural goals but also emphasises and imposes institutionalised norms, i.e. the socially accepted means by which cultural goals can be achieved. Cultural goals and institutionalised means constitute the two elements of the cultural structure.

Within the framework of Merton's theory, it should be emphasised that the means proposed are not the best means to achieve the proposed goals. On the contrary, among those considered as forbidden behaviours there would be some that are much more suitable to achieve the goals more effectively.

Social strain theory was developed by famed American sociologist Robert K. Merton. The theory states that social structures may pressure citizens to commit crimes. Strain may be structural, which refers to the processes at the societal level that filter down and affect how the individual perceives his or her needs. Strain may also be individual, which refers to the frictions and pains experienced by an individual as he or she looks for ways to satisfy individual needs. These types of strain can insinuate social structures within society that then pressure citizens to become criminals.

According to Merton, there are five types of deviance based upon these criteria:

- Conformity involves the acceptance of the cultural goals and means of attaining those goals.
- Innovation involves the acceptance of the goals of a culture but the rejection of the traditional and/or legitimate means of attaining those goals. For example, a member of the Mafia values wealth but employs alternative means of attaining his wealth; in this example, the Mafia member's means would be deviant.
- Ritualism involves the rejection of cultural goals but the routinised acceptance of the means for achieving the goals.
- Retreatism involves the rejection of both the cultural goals and the traditional means of achieving those goals.
- Rebellion is a special case wherein the individual rejects both the cultural goals and traditional means of achieving them but actively attempts to replace both elements of the society with different goals and means.
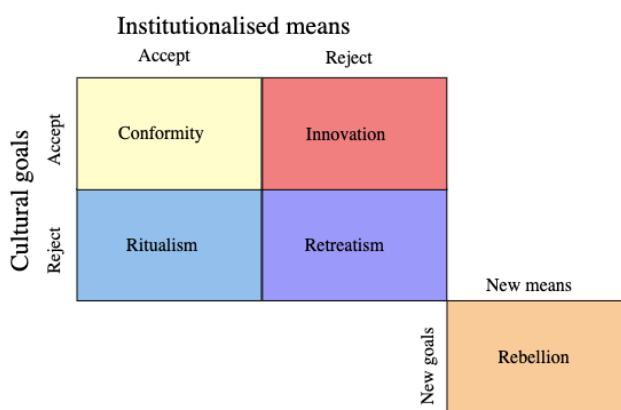

Figura 1 - Social Strain Theory: Five types of deviance

Some of his important books and writings that include - directly or indirectly - the topic of social control are:

- Social Theory and Social Structure (1957): this is one of Merton's best known works, in which he explores various sociological theories and proposes the concept of 'anomie' as an explanation of the tensions between cultural goals and institutional means.
- On the Shoulders of Giants: A Shandean Postscript (1985): this is a collection of essays in which Merton discusses science and scientific research, including concepts such as 'multiple discovery' and the influence of predecessors on scientific research.
- The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations (1973): this book explores how science functions as a social institution and how social aspects influence scientific progress.
- Continuities in Social Research: Studies in the Scope and Method of The American Soldier (1950): this book presents a series of studies analysing various social, psychological and cultural aspects of American soldiers during World War II.
- Mass Persuasion: The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive (1946): this work examines the psychological and social factors involved in war bond drives during World War II.
- Social Problems and Sociological Theory (1968): In this book, Merton discusses how sociological theories can be applied to the analysis of social problems.

11. **Talcott Parsons** (1902 - 1979) contributed to the understanding of social control through his system of social action, examining how institutions, norms and values help to regulate deviant behaviour: social control presupposes, in fact, the existence of a social order guaranteed by a function of controlling actions, which take place within the social system, i.e. a social structure.

Talcott Parsons' analysis of social control theory further enriches our understanding of social dynamics and the role of control in maintaining order and stability. By integrating the perspectives of Hirschi, Merton and Parsons, scholars can refine their analyses and crime prevention policies, contributing to more cohesive and harmonious societies.

In fact, in addition to the theories of Travis Hirschi and Robert K. Merton - in particular - the sociological perspective of social control can be further enriched by the analysis of Talcott Parsons, one of the most influential sociologists of the 20th century: he developed a theory of the social action system that highlights how society is composed of various interconnected elements, each of which contributes to social stability and social control. Parsons' system - aimed at maintaining society itself - is based on four key

functions (the AGIL Model), infact Parsons argued any successful social system has four functional prerequisites - adaptation; goal attainment; integration and pattern maintenance.

- Adaptation - in order to survive any society needs the basics of food and shelter. Having these gives any society control over its environment. A society needs a functioning economy to provide this.
- Goal attainment - all societies need to provide some sort of collective goals for it members to aspire to. Governments set goals such as New Labour setting a target of 50% of school leavers would attend university. To do deliver such goals governments provide the resources, laws and other institutional mechanisms so such goals can be met.
- Integration - all societies need a legal system in order to mediate any conflict and therefore protect the social system from breaking down.
- Latent - Pattern maintenance - this prerequisite is provided by institutions like education and the family. These institutions exist to reaffirm the essential values needed for society to function. For Parsons the key institution in passing on such basic values is religion.
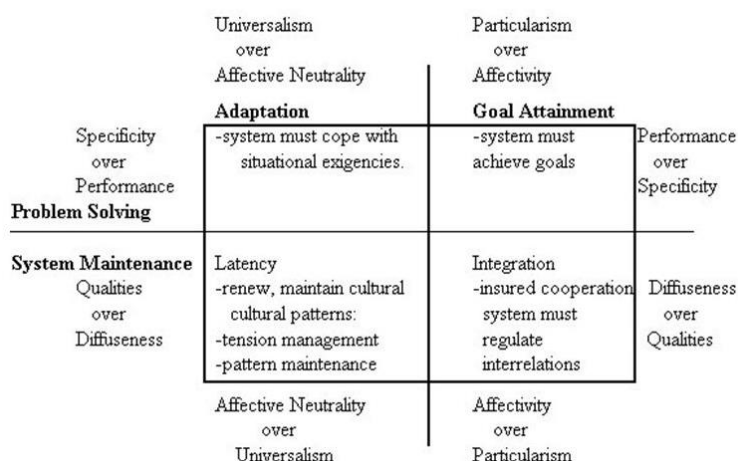

Figura 2 - The AGIL model of social organization

In the context of Parsons' theory, social control is crucial for maintaining balance and stability within society. Social norms, values and institutions help to maintain control by providing guidelines for accepted behaviour. In addition, the formal control system, such as the judicial and legal system, is responsible for regulating deviance and enforcing sanctions.

Parsons' approach aligns in many ways with Hirschi's theories of social control and Merton's 'strain'. All three theorists - in fact - recognise the importance of norms, values and social bonds in preventing deviance and crime. Moreover, the combined analysis of these three approaches can provide a more comprehensive view of the social dynamics that influence individual behaviour.

Within Talcott Parsons' social action system theory, social control is implemented through various instruments and mechanisms that help maintain stability and order in society. Parsons identified four main instruments of social control within his theoretical framework:

- Socialisation is a process through which individuals learn the norms, values and expectations of the society in which they live. Individuals absorb these cultural elements through interaction with family, education, media and other social institutions. Socialisation plays a crucial role in shaping behaviour that conforms to social norms.
- Norms and Values: Norms are social rules that define what is considered acceptable or unacceptable within a society. Values are shared beliefs about justice, fairness and other cultural principles. These norms and values guide the behaviour of individuals and serve as tools to regulate deviant behaviour.
- Social institutions, such as the judiciary, law enforcement and the educational system, play a key role in social control. These institutions establish rules, apply sanctions and promote compliance with laws and norms. The authority of these institutions helps to maintain order and social cohesion.
- Social Sanctions: these are the consequences, positive or negative, that result from respecting or violating social norms. Sanctions may be formal (such as legal punishment) or informal (such as social blame or approval). Fear of sanctions can influence individuals' choices, incentivising compliance.

Parsons' instruments of social control fit perfectly into his theory of the social action system. They reflect how society is structured to promote compliance with shared norms and values, thus maintaining social cohesion and preventing deviance.

Parsons' analysis of the instruments of social control has important practical implications. Social institutions must be designed and managed to ensure that norms are respected and sanctions are applied fairly. Socialisation continues to play a crucial role in inculcating norms and values in new generations.

Parsons' social control tools contribute to our understanding of how society maintains order and stability through the promotion of norm-compliant behaviour. By integrating these tools with the perspectives of other social control theorists, we can gain a more comprehensive view of the social dynamics that shape individual behaviour and social cohesion.

In the context of Talcott Parsons' social action system theory, three additional concepts are relevant for understanding social control: isolation, estrangement and rehabilitation. These concepts reflect the strategies through which society manages the deviant individual in order to maintain stability:

- Isolation is a mechanism through which society attempts to separate deviant or dangerous individuals from the rest of the community. This can take place through prison, mental health institutions or other forms of confinement. Isolation aims to protect society from the threat posed by deviant behaviour.
- Expulsion is another approach that society can take towards deviant individuals. Instead of physically isolating them, society may seek to remove them through social exclusion or ostracism. Expulsion serves to highlight social disapproval of deviant behaviour, encouraging the individual to conform to norms.
- Rehabilitation is an approach more focused on reform and correction of deviant behaviour. Instead of simply isolating or removing the individual, society may seek to rehabilitate through treatment, training and support programmes. The goal is to help the individual reintegrate into society as a norm-compliant member.

These three concepts fit into Parsons' theoretical framework, providing strategic alternatives through which society can manage deviance. Isolation, estrangement and rehabilitation reflect the complexity of social responses to deviance, taking into account factors such as the danger posed by the deviant individual and the possibilities for correcting the behaviour.

The analysis of solitary confinement, removal and rehabilitation has practical implications for the justice system and crime prevention programmes. The choice between these approaches depends on the severity of the deviant behaviour and the perspective on the individual's possibility of change.

The integration of the concepts of isolation, removal and rehabilitation within Parsons' theory further enriches the understanding of social control and the strategies that society adopts to manage deviance. These concepts reflect the range of possible social responses in the face of deviant behaviour and contribute to a more comprehensive perspective on the complexity of social dynamics.

Talcott Parsons was an American sociologist known for his work on the theory of social action and social systems theory. Although his work did not directly focus on social control as his main theme, some of his writings address issues related to social control and the structure of society. The following are some of his most relevant books and writings on this subject:

- The Structure of Social Action (1937): this book is considered one of Parsons' seminal works. It explores the theory of social action and offers a framework for understanding how people interact within society and how social norms influence individual behaviour. While the book does not deal directly with social control, it contributes to an understanding of the social dynamics that can influence control.
- The Social System (1951): In this book, Parsons further develops his theory of social systems. He examines how social institutions, norms and values influence the organisation of society. Although not specifically focused on social control, the concept of social integration and the structure of social systems are themes that can be linked to the management of social control.
- Toward a General Theory of Action (1951, with Edward Shils): This book is an attempt to provide a general theory of human action, considering various aspects that influence individual and social behaviour. While social control is not the main focus of this work, the context of social action and social influences may have implications for how society attempts to control deviant behaviour.
- Essays in Sociological Theory (1954): this collection of essays includes Parsons' writings on various sociological topics. Although he does not focus exclusively on social control, you may find interesting insights in his analyses of social dynamics and institutions that contribute to the maintenance of social order.

12. **Zygmunt Bauman** (1925 - 2017), a Polish-British sociologist known for his work on liquid modernity and postmodernity theory, has also made significant contributions to the understanding of social control and deviance. He has analysed how social and cultural transformations influence the way society controls individual behaviour. His key ideas in this area are:

- Surveillance Society: he examined how contemporary society is characterised by increasingly sophisticated forms of surveillance and control. In his writings, he highlighted how modern technologies and the proliferation of data have created new challenges and opportunities for social control.
- Deviance as Social Construction: he emphasised how deviance is a social construction, influenced by societal norms, values and expectations. He analysed how some forms of deviance are constructed and made meaningful by society and the media.
- Moral Hysteria and Social Panic: examined the concepts of 'moral hysteria' and 'social panic', in which society overreacts to deviant events or behaviour. He discussed how the media can amplify moral panic, leading to repressive public policies.
- Migration Flows and Social Control: explored the topic of migration and issues of social control in migration contexts. It analysed how migration policies, together with the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion, can influence social control over marginalised groups.
- Individualism and Social Control: examined how individualism and precarity in the modern age can influence social control. He suggested that the lack of social cohesion and community ties may make the exercise of social control through traditional interpersonal connections more difficult.

Zygmunt Bauman's works offer a critical and in-depth analysis of the dynamics of social control in contemporary society. Through his work, he has contributed to a broader understanding of how social and cultural transformations influence the strategies and challenges of social control and deviance management:

- Modernity and the Holocaust (1989): in this book, Bauman explores the link between modernity, rationality and the Holocaust, analysing how social control was exercised in the context of the Nazi horror.
- The Insecurity Society (2000): Bauman discusses the idea of insecurity in contemporary society and how it contributes to social control. He explores how globalisation, inequalities and social dynamics influence the individual and collective sense of security.

- Liquid Fear (2006): In this book, Bauman explores the concept of 'liquid fear' and how it has been used to exert social control in modern society. He examines how fear is manipulated and exploited by the media and institutions to maintain control over people.
- Fragile Lives: Ethics of Uncertainty (2011): In this text, Bauman reflects on ethics and morality in contemporary society characterised by uncertainty and precariousness. These themes are linked to social control in that people can be influenced and controlled through their ethical and moral concerns.
- Individualised Society and the 'Liquidation' of Social Exchange (2003): This book explores the transformation of social relations and human interaction in the modern era. Bauman analyses how individualised society influences social control through the reduction of traditional social interaction.

13. **Niklas Luhmann** (1927 - 1998), a German sociologist known for his social systems theory, also made significant contributions to the understanding of social control and complex social dynamics. His theory, based on the idea that society is made up of interconnected systems, has relevant implications for the way social control is conceived and analysed. Here is how Luhmann's ideas relate to social control:

- Social System and Control: he introduced the concept of the social system, in which the various aspects of society are viewed as interconnected parts of a complex system. This perspective can be applied to social control, since control is an integral part of the social system that regulates individual behaviour.
- Autopoiesis: developed the concept of 'autopoiesis', which refers to the ability of systems to self-produce and self-reproduce through internal and external interactions. In the context of social control, this idea suggests that the social control system is able to adapt and respond to societal challenges and transformations.
- Complexity and Differentiation: emphasises the complexity and differentiation of social systems. In the context of social control, this means that control is not a linear process, but is influenced by multiple intertwining factors and dynamics.
- Communication and Selection: emphasised the importance of communication as a key mechanism for the construction of social systems. Social control involves communicative processes through which norms, expectations and sanctions are transmitted and selected.
- Social and Non-Social: also examined the dynamics between the social system and the 'non-social', such as the physical environment. In the context of social control, this could mean examining how external factors influence the formation of norms and sanctions.

In summary, Luhmann's systems theory offers an interesting perspective for examining social control as an integral part of the complex structure of social systems. His emphasis on communication, adaptability and complexity can help explain how social control develops, adapts and transforms in response to changing social dynamics.

Luhmann developed his social systems theory, which emphasises the importance of communication mechanisms and interactions within various social spheres in the following publications:

- Soziale Systeme: Grundriß einer allgemeinen Theorie (1984): in this book, Luhmann presents a general view of his social systems theory, which also includes considerations of social control within systems dynamics.
- Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft' (1997): this text represents one of Luhmann's most influential works and deals with the analysis of the complex society. Although not strictly focused on social control, it offers an in-depth view of social structures and power relations that may be relevant to the topic.
- Die Politik der Gesellschaft (2000): In this book, Luhmann explores the concept of politics within his systems theory. Although the approach may not focus exclusively on social control, it can provide interesting perspectives on political dynamics and the role of control in society.
- Rechtssoziologie' (2002): this text focuses on the sociology of law, but may be relevant if you are interested in the relationship between the legal system and social control.

14. **Georg Simmel**'s (1858 - 1918) Perspective on Social Control; German sociologist and philosopher, contributed to the understanding of social dynamics and human interaction through his unique perspective. Although Simmel did not develop a specific theory on social control, his ideas on society, the individual and social dynamics can provide interesting insights into how social control develops and manifests itself through social interactions and power relations and can be applied to the concept of social control in various ways:

- Social Control as Social Construction: Simmel examined how society develops through individual interactions. This concept can be applied to social control, as norms, sanctions and control mechanisms are constructed through social interactions and collective dynamics.
- Role of the Individual in Society: Simmel emphasised the role of the individual in society, exploring how personal interactions can influence behaviour and conformity to norms. This can be related to social control, as adherence to social norms can result from the individual's perception of social relations.
- Forms of Social Integration: Simmel discussed different forms of social integration, such as conflict and estrangement. These dynamics can influence how people respond to social control. For example, foreignness may make people less inclined to conform to social norms.
- Role of Institutions: Simmel analysed the role of institutions in society, highlighting how social structures influence interactions. This can include institutions that are involved in social control, such as the judiciary and law enforcement.
- Power Relations: Simmel explored power dynamics in social relations. This can be applied to social control, as control often involves the exercise of power by social entities or institutions to influence individual behaviour.

However, it should be noted that Simmel did not address the concept of social control in the way that some other sociological theorists, such as Émile Durkheim or Michel Foucault, do. Rather, his works address broader issues concerning social interaction, culture and city life:

- Philosophy of Fashion (1905): in this essay, Simmel explores how fashion influences social behaviour and conformity, providing an interesting analysis of cultural and social dynamics.
- The Metropolis and Mental Life (1903): In this text, Simmel analyses the effects of urban life on individual psychology and society as a whole. He explores how the overabundance of stimuli and the separation between individuals can influence the sense of social control.
- Sociology: Inquiry into the Form of Society (1908): This book collects a series of essays by Simmel that address different aspects of society, social interactions and social structure, which may offer pertinent insights.
- Large Cities and the Life of the Spirit (1903): explores the effect of large cities on the human mind and social relations. This may be relevant to understanding how the density and complexity of interactions influence social control.

15. **Amartya Sen** (1933), an Indian economist and philosopher, is known for his work on social choice theory and human development. Although he is not a sociologist, his ideas have relevant implications for understanding social control and social justice.

His perspective on the importance of human capabilities and freedoms can be linked to the analysis of the dynamics of social control:

- Development and Freedom: Sen's key concept is the idea that development should not only be measured in terms of economic growth, but also in terms of the expansion of human freedoms and capabilities. This approach can be applied to social control, suggesting that control should be exercised in such a way that individual freedoms are not excessively restricted.
- Exclusion and Poverty: Sen analysed how social exclusion and poverty can limit people's opportunities and choices. In the context of social control, this may mean that control policies should not aggravate social exclusion or reduce people's opportunities.
- Participation and Social Inclusion: Sen emphasised the importance of people's active participation in society and in making decisions that affect them. In the context of social control, this suggests that control policies should involve the people concerned and take their voices into account.
- Person-centred approach: Sen's approach is person-centred, focusing on individual needs and aspirations. This approach can influence the design of control policies, seeking to respect the individuality and context of the people involved.
- Social Justice and Welfare: Sen contributed to the understanding of social justice by emphasising the importance of reducing inequalities and ensuring that all people have the opportunity to realise their potential. In the context of social control, this can draw attention to control practices that may be discriminatory or unfair.

In summary, Amartya Sen's ideas on freedom, human development and social justice can be applied to the context of social control, promoting an approach that takes into account individual freedoms, people's needs and social justice.

His writings that address issues related to social control in a broader context are:

- Development as Freedom (1999): in this book, Amartya Sen explores the connection between human development and individual freedom. Sen argues that development should be measured by people's ability to pursue their own choices and live a fulfilling life. The concept of 'positive freedom' that Sen presents has significant implications for social control.
- The Idea of Justice' (2009): this book examines different theories of justice and discusses how we should address issues of social equity. Although it does not explicitly focus on social control, it addresses issues of justice, social inclusion and resource distribution that are linked to the dynamics of control in society.
- Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny' (2006): In this work, Sen explores issues of identity, belonging and violence. He criticises the idea that people are defined primarily by their religious, ethnic or national identities, and discusses how these identities can be manipulated to exert social control.
- Freedom, Rationality, and Social Choice: The Arrow Lectures and Other Essays' (1986): this collection of essays also includes Sen's 'Arrow Lectures', where he discusses the challenges of rational social choice and the concept of social welfare. Although social control is not the main focus, the topics touched upon may have implications for understanding how collective decisions influence society.
- The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity (2005): explores Indian history, culture and identity through a series of essays that highlight the complexity of contemporary India.
- The Standard of Living' (1987) - In this book, Sen examines the concept of the standard of living and how it can be measured more broadly and meaningfully than simple economic indicators such as income.

16. **Anthony Giddens** (1938) and the Structuration Theory, a British sociologist, is known for his structuration theory, which offers a unique perspective on the interaction between the individual and society. His theory can be applied to social control and the understanding of how social structures influence individual behaviour and vice versa. This is how Giddens' structuration theory relates to social control:

- Double Dimension of Agency: he introduced the concept of the 'double dimension of agency', which refers to the individual's ability to act and at the same time be influenced by social structures. In the context of social control, this perspective emphasises how the individual can seek to conform to social norms but also resist control through his or her own actions.
- Structures and Resources: emphasised how social structures, such as norms, institutions and resources, influence people's choices and behaviour. In social control, this implies that social structures influence the opportunities and constraints for individuals to meet or defy social norms.

- Reflexivity: introduced the concept of 'reflexivity', which refers to the ability of people to reflect and modify their actions based on available information. In the context of social control, this implies that people can adapt their behaviour in response to the control strategies adopted by society.
- Strategic Agency: discussed 'strategic agency', which refers to an individual's ability to act intentionally to achieve certain goals. In the context of social control, this implies that people may adopt strategies to adapt to norms or to evade control.
- Structure As Result of Actions: Giddens' structuration theory suggests that social structures are the result of the collective actions of individuals over time. This can influence how social control develops and changes in response to people's actions.

In summary, Giddens' structuration theory offers a conceptual framework that helps to examine social control as a result of the interaction between the individual and social structures. His ideas on reflexivity, strategic agency and the dual dimension of agency contribute to a deeper understanding of how people conform to or resist social control.

Anthony Giddens is a British sociologist known for his work in the field of social theory and modern sociology. However, he has not specifically written books on 'social control' as his main topic. His most famous work is 'Structuration Theory', in which he develops an integrated approach to understanding social action and social structure. However, some of his writings may be relevant to the analysis of social control mechanisms in contemporary society.

Some of his most important books dealing with issues related to social control, human agency and social structure are:

- The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration (1984): in this book, Giddens presents his theory of structuration, which explores how social structures influence human action and how, at the same time, human action helps to maintain and modify social structures. This can be related to social control as it examines how people engage and interact within social contexts.
- Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age (1991): In this book, Giddens analyses how personal identity is affected by modernity and how people relate to social change. This may have implications for understanding social control, as it explores how people negotiate their role in contemporary society.
- The Consequences of Modernity (1990): In this text, Giddens examines the social, cultural and political implications of modernity. He explores how social changes influence power relations and control in society.
- Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives (2000): In this book, Giddens addresses the issue of globalisation and its effects on modern life. Since globalisation can influence social control mechanisms through the diffusion of ideas, values and power systems, this book can offer a relevant perspective.

Thus, sociologists have offered a range of theoretical perspectives, critical analyses and empirical research that enrich our understanding of social control. Their contributions have led to a more comprehensive view of the social dynamics that influence deviance and have helped inform public policy and practice in the field of justice and social intervention, which can be grouped under the following conceptualisation:

- Theories of Social Control: Sociologists such as Travis Hirschi have developed theories that explore social connections and interpersonal relationships as elements that influence deviant behaviour. These theories emphasise the importance of family, friendship and community ties in maintaining adherence to social norms.
- Labelling Theories: Sociologists such as Howard Becker introduced the labelling theory, which examines how social labels assigned to individuals can influence their behaviour and self-perception. This approach emphasises how labelling can lead to continued deviance rather than prevent it.
- Critical Analyses of the Justice System: Some sociologists have critically examined the justice system and its practices, highlighting the injustice, discrimination and inequalities that can influence social control. These analyses have contributed to a greater awareness of social justice issues.
- Criminal and Prison Policy Studies: Sociologists have examined criminal policies, laws and prison institutions, exploring how they influence deviant behaviour and social control. These studies have led to a greater understanding of the challenges of the criminal justice system.
- Exploration of Structural Factors: Sociologists have analysed how structural factors such as poverty, unemployment and inequality can influence deviance and crime. This perspective has contributed to a better understanding of the underlying causes of deviance.
- Studies on Online Deviance and Technology: With the advent of digital technologies, some sociologists have focused on online deviance and the challenges of social control in a virtual context. They have explored how deviant behaviour manifests itself in digital environments and how it is managed.

III. Difference between Formal and Informal Social Control

Social control is a process by which society regulates the behaviour of individuals to prevent deviance and crime. There are two main types of social control: formal and informal. Here is the difference between the two:

Formal Social Control

- Definition: Formal social control is based on institutional structures and legal regulations established by society. These include laws, rules, regulations and sanctions enforced by government authorities or designated institutions.
- Examples: Law enforcement, the judiciary, prisons and correctional institutions represent formal social control. Formal sanctions include fines, imprisonment and punitive measures established by law.
- Application: formal social control is applied in situations where deviant behaviour is contrary to the law and established norms. The main objective is to punish offenders and deter further deviant behaviour.

Informal Social Control

- Definition Informal social control is based on social norms, cultural values and interpersonal relationships. It manifests itself through everyday interactions, social feedback and community judgements.
- Examples: Friends, family, colleagues and other community members exercise informal social control. Social blame, disappointment, approval or rejection are examples of informal sanctions.
- Application: Informal social control occurs in contexts where deviant behaviour can influence personal relationships and reputation. The main objective is to influence behaviour through social interactions, without necessarily involving legal authorities.

In summary, formal social control is based on laws and institutions established by society, whereas informal social control is based on social norms and interpersonal relationships. Both play an important role in regulating deviant behaviour and maintaining social order.

IV. Limits of Social Control

Although social control is fundamental to maintaining order and stability in society, it also presents limitations and challenges. Here are some of the main limitations of social control:

- Excessive Control and Repression: Excessive social control, especially when exercised in an authoritarian or oppressive manner, can restrict individual freedoms and suppress individual expression. This can lead to a sense of injustice and disenfranchisement.
- Ineffectiveness of Sanctions: Sanctions, both formal and informal, may not always be effective in preventing deviance. In some cases, people may be willing to bear the consequences of their deviant actions due to personal circumstances, economic challenges or other factors.
- Stigmatisation and the Deviance-Ettaching Cycle: Labelling an individual as deviant can lead to a cycle in which the individual begins to identify with the label and adopt deviant behaviour. Stigmatisation can also limit opportunities for rehabilitation and social reintegration.
- Cultural Variations: Norms and values vary from culture to culture and from community to community. This means that what is considered deviant in one society may not be so in another. Social control must take these cultural variations into account to be effective.
- Limitations of Institutions: Institutions of social control, such as the judiciary or the corrections system, may be limited by overpopulation, lack of financial resources and other structural challenges. This can affect the ability to apply social control effectively and fairly.
- Technological Challenges: Modern technologies, such as the internet and social networks, have created new opportunities for deviance and crime. Controlling such behaviour online can be difficult and require new strategies and approaches.
- Tension between Individual Freedom and Social Order: Balancing the right to individual autonomy with the need to maintain social order is a complex challenge. Excessive control can limit freedom, while insufficient control can lead to chaos.

Ultimately, social control must address these limitations and challenges to create a balance between maintaining social order and respecting individual freedoms and rights. A thorough understanding of social dynamics and cultural variations is essential to develop effective and balanced social control strategies.

V. Possible practical applications in social work and social policy design

The work of these sociologists has enriched the landscape of the sociology of social control, offering different perspectives and in-depth analyses of the mechanisms through which society regulates individual behaviour.

Hirschi's theory of social control has had a significant influence in the field of criminology and sociology. It suggests that in order to reduce crime and deviance, it is necessary to strengthen social ties, family attachment, promote employment and education, and reinforce moral values in society. through its approach based on social ties, attachment, involvement, commitment and personal beliefs, the theory provides a theoretical basis for addressing deviance and promoting a safer and more cohesive society.

This theory has played an important role in the design of public policies and crime prevention programmes, focusing on increasing opportunities for individuals to engage in socially accepted activities. It also stimulated further research into the dynamics of social control and the interactions between individuals and social institutions.

Parsons' approach to social control has relevant implications for the design of public policy, particularly with regard to the creation of shared norms, effective institutions and a fair justice system. The aim is to foster an environment in which social control is exercised fairly and in line with society's shared goals and values.

VI. The different perspectives of the link between Social Control and Social Work

Within the framework of the reflection on the relationship between social work and social control, the activity of Jane Addams (social worker, sociologist, pioneer of social work, exponent of the Chicago School, belonging to the Department of Sociology and Cultural Anthropology) is the most representative.

Jane Addams' Hull House was intended to facilitate the stay and integration of non-native immigrants into a different reality, which was new and complex for them: "it was the vital centre of these interests, both theoretical and practical, where one could find apostles of pragmatist philosophy such as George Herbert Mead and John Dewey, give lectures, learn from immigrants, discuss national and local politics, and generally try to penetrate the 'social process as it unfolded'" (Melossi 2002, p. 125-125). 125-126).

The sociologists of the Chicago School were very interested in the works of Simmel, who had studied the social control over the individual resulting from belonging to a plurality of groups, strongly connoted by multiple and varied relationships with the context in which it takes place: social control as "a network of relations of interaction in a world sharply demarcated by linguistic, cultural, religious, ethnic, class, and political lines" (Ibid., p. 126-127).

The original purpose of social work is to contribute to the definition of a fair and stable society, through a series of concrete activities and the application of social policies, such as helping minorities, the less well-off, excluded, marginalised and disadvantaged, deprived of their rights to active participation in the social and economic system, which can - in addition - help to overcome their condition of need: "their aim is to enable the user to adapt to the social order as best they can, and they are thus engaged in a process of social control" (Day, 1981, p. 121).

Therefore, the structure of social control should not be thought of and posited as separate from the helping professions and, therefore, conceived as an integral part of social work and a structural element of the social worker's institutional and professional mandate (Neve, 2000).

Social control and social work are two interconnected concepts operating in different but often converging domains. While social control refers to the strategies and mechanisms that society uses to regulate individual behaviour and prevent deviance, social work is a profession that strives to improve social and individual well-being, often working with individuals in difficult situations.

- Prevention and Intervention: Social work can contribute to the prevention of deviance and crime through programmes and interventions that aim to reduce the risk factors that lead to deviance. For example, working with at-risk young people can offer positive opportunities to avoid involvement in deviant behaviour.
- Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration: In the context of the justice system, social work can play a crucial role in the rehabilitation of deviant individuals. Social workers can provide psychological support, vocational training and reintegration programmes to help individuals reintegrate into society as productive and norm-compliant members.
- Promotion of Equity and Rights: Social work is often engaged in the promotion of social equity and human rights. Access to the right opportunities and services can reduce inequalities that may contribute to deviance. In this sense, social work can influence the context in which social control develops.
- Person-centred approach: Social work adopts a person-centred approach, considering individual needs, circumstances and contextual factors. This approach can help identify customised solutions to prevent deviance or manage deviant behaviour.
- Research and Public Policy: Social work often engages in research and analysis of social dynamics, including factors that contribute to deviance. These data can inform public policies aimed at preventing crime and improving people's quality of life.

In short, social work can interact with social control in various ways, contributing to prevention, rehabilitation and the promotion of social equity. The common goal is to improve people's well-being and social cohesion.

VII. The Role of the Social Worker in Society and Social Control

Social workers play a crucial role in society, working to improve individual and collective well-being, promoting equity and addressing social challenges. Their role relates directly to aspects of social control, as they work to prevent deviance, rehabilitate deviant individuals and promote a more just and cohesive social environment. This is how social workers relate to social control:

- Deviance Prevention: social workers can work with at-risk individuals and groups, providing support and resources to prevent involvement in deviant behaviour. This may include educational programmes, family support and counselling services to address challenges such as poverty, substance abuse or unemployment.
- Rehabilitation and Social Reintegration: social workers play a key role in the rehabilitation of deviant individuals, working with people involved in illegal activities or deviant behaviour. They provide psychological support, counselling and training programmes to help individuals re-enter society in a productive and norm-compliant manner.
- Promotion of Equity and Rights: social workers focus on promoting social equity and human rights. They work to ensure that everyone has access to the same opportunities and services, thereby reducing the factors that can lead to deviance, such as inequality and social exclusion.
- Advocacy and Social Change: social workers can be activists for social change, working to influence public policies and laws that may impact on deviance and people's quality of life. They participate in the creation of programmes and policies that aim to reduce deviance and improve social conditions.
- Family Support: social workers offer support to families in difficult situations, trying to prevent situations of abuse, domestic violence or family instability that could contribute to the deviance of family members.

In summary, the role of the social worker is broad and complex, encompassing several areas that relate to social control. Social workers work to prevent deviance, manage deviant behaviour and promote a fair and inclusive social environment. Their presence is essential for individual well-being and for building safer and more cohesive communities.

VIII. The Importance of Design in Social Work

Design is a fundamental aspect of social work that contributes significantly to the planning, implementation and success of social interventions and programmes. Careful and judicious design is essential to ensure that social work initiatives are well structured, effective and able to achieve their objectives.

This is the importance of design in social work:

- Focus on Objectives: design clearly defines the objectives to be achieved through an intervention or programme. This helps to establish a clear direction and ensure that activities are aligned with these objectives.
- Systematic Planning: design involves systematic planning, which includes identifying the necessary resources, allocating activities and defining timeframes. This helps to avoid confusion and disorganisation in implementation.
- Context Sensitivity: Effective design carefully considers the social, cultural and economic context in which the intervention will be implemented. This ensures that the approach is adapted to the specific needs and challenges of the community involved.
- Stakeholder participation: involving stakeholders such as direct beneficiaries, communities and social workers in the design can lead to more effective and sustainable solutions. This ensures that the intervention is sensitive to the voices and needs of those who will be affected.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: Design also includes planning for the monitoring and evaluation of the intervention. These processes help to measure the results and impact of the intervention, allowing for possible adjustments to improve effectiveness.
- Resource Optimisation: Targeted design helps to optimise the use of available resources, including funding, personnel and time. This is crucial to achieve maximum impact with limited resources.
- Prevention of Negative Effects: Careful design can help to identify and prevent unintended negative effects or unintended impacts of the intervention. This is particularly important in the social field, where actions can have profound consequences on the people involved.

In summary, design in social work is crucial to ensure the effectiveness of interventions and programmes, ensuring that they are well structured, context-sensitive and able to achieve their objectives. A well-designed design is the foundation on which the success of initiatives aimed at improving individual and collective well-being rests.

IX. Design in the Social Field and Social Control

Design in the social field and social control are two aspects that can interact and influence each other. The careful and targeted design of social interventions can contribute to social control by preventing deviance and promoting well-being, while social control can also influence the way these interventions are designed and implemented. Here is how these two aspects connect:

- Deviance prevention: the design of social programmes and interventions can directly target deviance prevention. For example, the design of education, vocational training or family support programmes can provide people with resources and opportunities that reduce the risk of involvement in deviant behaviour.
- Social Rehabilitation and Reintegration: the design of social rehabilitation and reintegration programmes aims to facilitate the reintegration of deviant individuals into society as productive and norm-compliant members. These programmes may include counselling services, vocational training and job search support.
- Stakeholder Involvement: The design of social interventions often involves stakeholders, such as local communities and beneficiary individuals. This can be a way to promote a sense of ownership and social control, allowing people to influence the way programmes involving them are developed.
- Responding to Community Needs: the design of social interventions should be based on the specific needs and context of the community involved. This context-sensitive approach can help reduce factors that can lead to deviance and improve quality of life.
- Impact evaluation: Design also includes planning for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention. These processes can help measure the effect of the programme on social control by measuring whether the intervention has achieved its prevention or rehabilitation objectives.

In summary, social design and social control are linked by their joint focus on individual well-being and social cohesion. Careful, needs-centred design combined with targeted social control interventions can help create safer communities, including responsible and less deviant individuals, and foster equity and social justice.

Conclusions

Complexity is to be contrasted with flexibility and adaptability, rather than caesura, rigidity of thinking and procedures, the monothematic approach.

The sense of this work (already stated in the introduction) has been to analyse in a broad, modular and diachronic manner the issue of social control (its implications, its usefulness and the prudent management of its mechanisms), in order to provide the various experts in the helping professions - called upon to face increasingly 'liquid', contingent, complex and complicated, as well as unpredictable challenges - with a broad tool for conceptualising and possible reading of phenomena linked to disorder, social instability.

In this regard, different and varied strategies (policies, programmes and projects) for achieving conformity, uniformity and obedience to rules, laws and customs can be hypothesised to ensure a fair, stable, sustainable, safe, just and inclusive coexistence, with the help of (local) design activities in social work.

Social work is called upon to play a decisive role (as it has always played in matters related to hardship and needs) in the process of 'social control', through a change of strategies, which are not limited to the satisfaction of needs, but which is an agent of change and of primary and secondary prevention, given the possibility of drawing on economic resources that must be used through a careful strategy of efficient, effective and economical design.

References

Bauman, Z. (1989). *Modernity and the Holocaust*. Cornell University Press.

Bauman, Z. (2000). *Liquid Modernity*. Polity.

Bauman, Z. (2001). *Individualized Society and the End of Social*. Sage.

Bauman, Z. (2006). *Liquid Fear*. Polity.

Bauman, Z. (2007). *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty*. Polity.

Becker, H. S. (1953). Becoming a Marihuana User. American Journal of Sociology, 59(3), 235-242.

Becker, H. S. (1963). Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance. Free Press.

Becker, H. S. (1967). Labelling Theory: Toward an Understanding of Deviance. In J. L. Tapp & R. J. Kandel (Eds.), Labeling Deviant Behavior: Its Sociological Implications (pp. 1-9). Wiley.

Becker, H. S. (1998). Tricks of the Trade: How to Think About Your Research While You're Doing It. University of Chicago Press.

Becker, H. S. (2018). Outsiders: Études de sociologie de la déviance. (Edizione con prefazione aggiornata). Presses de Sciences Po.

Cohen, S. (1972). Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers. Routledge.

Cohen, S. (1985). Visions of Social Control: Crime, Punishment and Classification. Polity Press.

Cohen, S. (1988). Against Criminology. Routledge

Cohen, S. (2001). States of Denial: Knowing About Atrocities and Suffering. Polity Press.

Cohen, S. (2011). Images of Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological History. Waveland

Cohen, S. (2018). The Punitive City: Privatized Policing and Protection in Neoliberal Mexico. Zed Books

Day, P. (1981). Social Work. Tavistock Pubblications.

Durkheim, É. (1893). *La divisione del lavoro sociale*. Il Saggiatore.

Durkheim, É. (1895). *Le regole del metodo sociologico*. Editori Riuniti.

Durkheim, É. (1897). *Il suicidio. Studio di sociologia*. Rizzoli.

Durkheim, É. (1902). *L'educazione morale*. UTET

Durkheim, É. (1912). *Le forme elementari della vita religiosa*. MIMESIS

Foucault, M. (1975). *Sorvegliare e punire: Nascita della prigione*. Einaudi.

Foucault, M. (1976). *Microfisica del potere: Interventi politici*. Einaudi.

Foucault, M. (1976). *La volontà di sapere: Storia della sessualità 1*. Feltrinelli.

Foucault, M. (2004). *Nascita della biopolitica: Corso al Collège de France (1978-1979)*. Feltrinelli.

Foucault, M. (2004). *Sicurezza, territorio, popolazione: Corso al Collège de France (1977-1978)*. Feltrinelli.

Gallino, A. (1993). Dizionario di Sociologia. UTET.

Garland, D. (2001). The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society. University of Chicago Press.

Giddens, A. (1984). The Constitution of Society: Outline of the Theory of Structuration. Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1990). The Consequences of Modernity. Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (1991). Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age. Polity Press.

Giddens, A. (2000). Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives. Profile Books.

Goffman, E. (1959). The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Anchor.

Goffman, E. (1961). Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates. Anchor.

Goffman, E. (1963). Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity. Prentice-Hall.

Goffman, E. (1967). Interaction Ritual: Essays on Face-to-Face Behavior. Anchor.

Goffman, E. (1974). Frame Analysis: An Essay on the Organization of Experience. Harper & Row.

Gurvitch, G. (1933). La vocation actuelle de la sociologie juridique. Presses universitaires de France.

Gurvitch, G. (1947). Sociology of Law: A Comparative Analysis. Philosophical Library.

Gurvitch, G. (1968). Dialectique et sociologie. Presses universitaires de France.

Gurvitch, G. (1973). Dialectique et sociologie (1973 - pubblicato postumo).

Gurvitch, G. (1973). The Spectrum of Social Time. Zone Books.

Gurvitch, G. (1997). Il controllo sociale. Armando Editore -

Gurvitch, G. (2004). La dichiarazione dei diritti sociali. Rubbettino,

Hirschi, T. (1969). *Causes of Delinquency*. University of California Press.

Hirschi, T. (1973). *Delinquency Research: An Appraisal of Analytic Methods*. Routledge.

Hirschi, T. (2001). Control: A Theory of Delinquency. Routledge

Hirschi, T., & Gottfredson, M. (1990). A General Theory of Crime. Stanford University. Press

Luhmann, N. (1984). Soziale Systeme: Grundrißeiner allgemeinen Theorie. Suhrkamp Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (1997). Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft. Suhrkamp Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (2000). Die Politik der Gesellschaft. Suhrkamp Verlag.

Luhmann, N. (2002). Rechtssoziologie. Suhrkamp Verlag.

Melossi, D. (2002). Stato, controllo sociale, devianza. Mondadori

Merton, R. K. (1946). *Mass Persuasion: The Social Psychology of a War Bond Drive*. Harper & Brothers.

Merton, R. K. (1950). *Continuities in Social Research: Studies in the Scope and Method of The American Soldier*. The Free Press.

Merton, R. K. (1957). *Social Theory and Social Structure*. The Free Press.

Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social Problems and Sociological Theory*. The Free Press.

Merton, R. K. (1973). *The Sociology of Science: Theoretical and Empirical Investigations*. The University of Chicago Press.

Merton, R. K. (1985). *On the Shoulders of Giants: A Shandean Postscript*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Montesquieu, C. (1748). De l'esprit des lois.

Neve, E. (2000). Il Servizio Sociale: Fondamenti e Cultura di Una Professione. Carocci

Parsons, T. (1937). *The Structure of Social Action*. McGraw-Hill.

Parsons, T. (1951). *The Social System*. The Free Press.

Parsons, T. (1954). *Essays in Sociological Theory*. The Free Press.

Parsons, T., & Shils, E. (1951). *Toward a General Theory of Action*. Harvard University Press.

Ross, E. A. (1901). Social Control: A Survey of the Foundations of Order. Macmillan.

Ross, E. A. (1907). Sin and Society: An Analysis of Latter-Day Iniquity. Houghton, Mifflin.

Ross, E. A. (1908). Social Psychology: An Outline and Source Book. Macmillan.

Ross, E. A. (1912). Changing America: Studies in Contemporary Society. Macmillan.

Ross, E. A. (1922). The Social Trend. Macmillan.

Sen, A. (1986). Freedom, Rationality, and Social Choice: The Arrow Lectures and Other Essays. Oxford University Press.

Sen, A. (1987). The Standard of Living. Cambridge University Press.

Sen, A. (1999). Development as Freedom. Oxford University Press.

Sen, A. (2005). The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity. Farrar, Straus and Giroux.

Sen, A. (2006). Identity and Violence: The Illusion of Destiny. W. W. Norton & Company.

Sen, A. (2009). The Idea of Justice. Harvard University Press.

Simmel, G. (1903). Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben. Duncker & Humblot.

Simmel, G. (1903). Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben. Duncker & Humblot.

Simmel, G. (1905). Philosophie der Mode. Pan-Verlag.

Simmel, G. (1908). Soziologie: Untersuchungen über die Formen der Vergesellschaftung. Duncker & Humblot.

Spencer, H. (1851). Social Statics. John Chapman.

Spencer, H. (1873). The Study of Sociology. University Press of the Pacific.

Spencer, H. (1876-1896). The Principles of Sociology. D. Appleton and Company.

Spencer, H. (1884). The Man Versus the State. Williams and Norgate.