

The Century Social Science Series

# MEANS OF SOCIAL CONTROL

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*New York and London*  
THE CENTURY CO.  
1925

## PREFACE

"In 1899 I began to write out a textbook of sociology," says Professor Sumner in the *preface* to his "Folkways," "from material which I had used in lectures during the previous ten or fifteen years. At a certain point in that undertaking I found that I wanted to introduce my own treatment of the 'mores.' I could not refer to it anywhere in print, and I could not do justice to it in a chapter of another book. I therefore turned aside to write a treatise on the 'Folkways' which I now offer."

This paragraph presents my own situation exactly—the years excepted. Two or more years ago I began work on a textbook dealing with the social order and its maintenance. I found before going very far that I wanted to introduce my own treatment of a number of "means of control." I could not refer to it anywhere in print, and I could not do justice to it in a chapter or two. I therefore turned aside to write out a description of some control-devices, which I now offer.

Let it be clearly understood at the beginning that each chapter title really reads, "Rewards as a Means of Social Control," "Praise as a Means of Social Control," "Flattery as a Means," etc.

The study is for students and the general reader. It will not contain much of interest and certainly nothing new for the scholar. In consequence, I have not been scrupulously careful to include the latest word in technical terminology. I would rather not have readers get hung up on new terms, strange terms, which often remain but terms. Hence I have gone along with the usual language in order that the reader may forget the medium and attend

strictly to the ideas which I have endeavored to set forth.

I realize fully that I am guilty of some repetition, but do not regard this as a heinous offense. Repetition is simply one method of stepping ideas down to where they may unfailingly be grasped by beginners; it is one method of reinforcement; it is the inevitable tax teachers have to pay if they compete successfully with the numerous and diverse appeals of the day.

After much study I am painfully aware that I have only scratched the surface of the symbol-mechanisms which I have attempted to describe, and I hope some day to elaborate on some of these beginnings and to conduct experiments which will give more certainty with respect to the *follow-through* to which reference is made at several points. I shall feel rewarded for the present effort, however, if I succeed in stimulating readers to reflect upon the intimate control devices which I have discussed and to isolate others.

I am indebted to many people for helpful hints. It would be invidious to single out any of them with the exception of Professor Ross and Professors Park and Burgess whose writings in this field are unexcelled and well known. I am under an unpayable debt to Professor Ross for carefully reading the manuscript and making many valuable suggestions.

Other helpers will suffer least by remaining anonymous; possibly the gentlemen mentioned would also. But all helpers will know themselves who they are and if by chance their eyes should light upon these pages, I hereby make most grateful acknowledgments. My wife, by relieving me of many duties, has been one of the chiefest of these helpers.

Having opened this preface with the words of one distinguished scholar, also a student of social control, I cannot find anything more expressive of my own feelings, in conclusion, than the words of another,—also from the

preface. In his classic study, "Social Control," Professor Ross says: "In taking up this task I have had no other thought in mind than to see things as they are and to report what I see. I am not wedded to any hypothesis nor enamoured of my conclusions, and the next comer who, in the true scientific spirit, faces the problems I have faced and gives better answers than I have been able to give, will please me no less than he pleases himself." I only wish I might have uttered these words *first*.

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MEANS OF SOCIAL CONTROL





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*By F. E. Lumsley*

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. THE SOCIAL ORDER

**T**HE essential characteristics of *order* are arrangement and relationship. If these marks can be assumed for a given whole or unit, and if there is uniformity in nature, there appears an additional feature of enormous importance to man—dependability. These three qualities form the basis of prediction. These points are important enough to linger over for a moment.

By *arrangement* we mean that chosen units, whether worlds, marbles or atoms, are located in ascertainable places and present the appearance of a pattern. The keys on a typewriter are arranged; the pages in this book, the words on the pages and the letters in the words, are arranged; so with the goods in a store, the houses in a city, the parts of a machine. These are space arrangements. There are also time arrangements. Columbus discovered America *before* the American Revolution. The Civil War occurred *after* the French Revolution. The street cars now on the city streets are separated in space, they are now located in various parts of the city; but they are also separated in time, since one comes along after another. There may be much or little time or space between them.

But arrangement is not of great significance for man unless there is also *relationship*. Unrelated units make a junk-heap. It is really relationship that gives importance

to arrangement. By relationship we mean that units, of whatever type chosen, are continuous with each other, are able to run into, push against or otherwise affect each other; we mean that the explanation of any one of them would not be complete without showing its connections with others; we mean a condition of "tied-togetherness" such that the impulses or activities of any one flow across and set up impulses or activities in others; by relationship we refer to that ultimate indivisibility and inseparability of units which we discover everywhere about us. A stove is related to a house, a horse is related to a cart, an engine is related to the wheels of an automobile, a boy is related to his father. There are many varieties of relationship, but we wish only to emphasize the general fact.

On the basis of arrangement and relationship, we impute that quality called *dependability*. Units being found in certain patterns, and being tied together to some extent, we can rely on a measure of stability; we can rest assured. The house remains where we left it this morning so that we can find it again at night, the street car comes along at predictable intervals, the seasons come and go in well-known fashion, this book will not disintegrate and vanish while it is being held. But if there is change, as there always is, we can also learn to calculate its rate and so remain confident. The world would be a very horrible place in which to live if we could not depend on anything and could predict nothing. There is much that is undependable and unpredictable—some of us in paying our debts for example; and this part of our world is a most baffling and irritating part. But there is much that we can safely assume and rely on. The opposite of these features that we have mentioned would be chaos.

Now, these characteristics apply to that part of the world order which we have called society. There is a social order. Human beings are units, and they are arranged over the earth, some living here and some there, some living above



and some below, some living before and some after others. They are also related, tied together, continuous with each other, affected by one another in thousands of ways. Some are connected by blood relationship, some by religious aspirations, some by political enthusiasms, some by sex interests. In countless forms, what any one of them or any group of them does or fails to do, affects and determines what other individuals and groups can or wish to do. If some work, others can play; if some die, others will have to work or go to the poorhouse; if some worship, others are moved to do the same or the opposite. Our life-procedures are interlinked and interlocked in innumerable and complicated ways.

They continue to be interlinked and interlocked for longer or shorter periods of time. Always some people are organizing industries and perpetuating them, some are founding families and holding them together, some are moving according to the ways of creed and ritual, some are establishing schools and colleges and requiring the young to attend them. Look where we will in the social life about us, we see individuals and groups behaving uniformly, repetitiously, regularly. For all that fashions and fads, individual distinctions, novelties and differences, appear in such profusion, be not led astray; these are to the social order what the ripples and waves are to the ocean. Back of the ripples are the waves; back of the waves are the slow-moving tides; back of the tides are the mammoth currents and the almost changeless deep.

The social order has its "almost changeless" deep. It is composed of these regularities, repetitions, uniformities in human activity-patterns which are structural and functional, and provide our social home. Sumner speaks of these activity-patterns as folkways and mores; sometimes these folkways and mores are enacted into laws. The folkways are the beginnings of social action. People have similar individual needs and begin to satisfy them in similar

ways in the same environment. This procedure makes folkways. The people did not *intend* to make folkways; they intended to satisfy their personal needs. But in doing this, they acted uniformly, repetitiously; they made mass action. "The folkways, at any time," says Sumner, "provide for all the needs of life then and there. They are uniform, universal in the group, imperative, and invariable. As time goes on, the folkways become more and more arbitrary, positive, and imperative. If asked why they act in a certain way in certain cases, primitive people always answer that it is because they and their ancestors always have done so. A sanction also arises from ghost fear. The ghosts of ancestors would be angry if the living should change the ancient folkways."<sup>1</sup>

People are caught in the folkways before they know it, just as they acquire habits before they know it. Whenever they become aware of the fact that they are "in" the folkways, and criticize them and approve them, and continue to follow them, these folkways become "mores." The mores are those folkways which have been examined, judged useful and beneficial and made into approved activity-patterns. Then, if these ways are deemed very essential, they are sometimes made into laws with definite and specified penalties for infraction attached. The whole then becomes what Sumner calls the "prosperity policy" of the group.

Every group, whether fraternity, university, city, state or nation, has its own network of folkways, mores and laws. Indeed, these are the basis of the group's coherence, of its existence. Take away these invariable and imperative uniformities, and the group dissolves; it ceases to exist. The individuals composing it continue to exist, but the group has passed into nothingness.

Because these ways have been long-standing activity-patterns, because they were started by ancestors, now

<sup>1</sup> *Folkways*. 2.

spirits, because they provide for the needs of the time and place, they are the approved and the *right* ways. They form a standard; they become a force. The young are brought up in them and imitate them. The old, in addition, teach them to the young and require conformance. Thus there is gradually set up a massive, stable, compelling social structure, a vast, inclusive, inescapable network of *ways* of life. The masses are comfortable in them, believe in them, support them and defend them. As we shall see, there is woe for such as depart in any sense from them.

There is a prevailing standard-complex for any inclusive group like a race or a nation. There are similar and consistent standard-complexes for lesser groups like churches, lodges, business organizations and sororities. The ways of these latter must conform, in the main, to the ways of the larger whole. Woe to them if they hesitate or diverge at any significant points.

Any society is a number of people interacting according to these widely prescribed ways, moving their bodies around in conformance with the plan-network, feeling in harmony with the prevailing and acceptable "feel," and thinking in the characteristic thought-patterns. The members of any given group *are* members by virtue of their harmonious and co-operative actions, feelings and thoughts. There is no other kind of membership. The older the society, the more harmonious, the more integrated, the more interlocked do these action-, feeling- and thought-patterns become. Observed at any point of time and in any given place, this is the social order.

## 2. DISRUPTIVE FACTORS

But a given network of interlinked and interlocked life-ways never becomes everlastingly fixed and unchangeable like cement. They "set" and harden, as we have seen, but they do not become utterly inflexible. The history of any

society, any organization, shows that it is ever being made and remade; change, to a greater or less degree, is always going on. What are the reasons for this? The answer is that there are always disruptive forces at work. We may speak of these as (a) external and (b) internal.

Noting the former first, we may recall that the physical environment, to which many of these structures are erected as saving adjustments, is not itself unchanging. We are all too well acquainted with the fact that it leaps forth into action extraordinary in quite unexpected and incalculable ways and places; and we know, to our sorrow, that it throws these life-patterns into confusion. Environmental manifestations like earthquakes, tornadoes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, droughts, devastating fires, occur at unpredictable intervals and wreck or fracture social organizations just as they do buildings. No social order, so smitten, has come out unmodified. The stories of Pompeii, Rome and Yokohama furnish pertinent illustrations. The environmental factors are always at work in quieter but none the less compelling ways as well.

Such forces are subject only to limited control by man, and, whatever control he achieves, he accomplishes mainly by introducing more flexibility, which means more intelligence, into his social system. But while he introduces more flexibility, he is always loath to have less structural invariability and well-grounded certainty. And here is where the internal disruptive forces appear. The membership of any group we care to name is always composed of two classes—those who insist upon and defend invariability, inflexibility, unchangeableness in the life-patterns, and those who insist upon and defend variability, flexibility and change. The first group, the routineers, is fascinated by the fairly satisfactory and comfortable adjustments of the *now*; they wish not to fly into situations which they do not understand. The second group, the innovators, usually composed of those who are not quite happy in the present



arrangements, is captivated by some vision of a possible and better future; they agree that conditions could not be much worse.

The everlasting struggle between these groups is at once the source of endless trouble and damage to the social order and also the basis of its salvation. Since the physical environment changes, the social order must change to keep intact; this is the point emphasized by some innovators. But since the network is so well integrated, since the whole is so large, since we cannot always know where we are going, it is better to stay where we are or move very slowly, say the routineers. Thus the battle of the ages goes on. If both groups were composed solely of scientists devoted wholly to discovering and applying the truth, the struggle would not be so bitter nor so destructive. But being composed for the most part of selfish, stupid, ordinary human beings, the battle is, at times, exceedingly ruthless and damaging. It is here that "man's inhumanity to man makes countless thousands mourn,"—angry, blindly loyal, scornful, insane, criminal. Nature is vicious enough in her attacks upon his social system, but man is far and away his own worst enemy. The historical record testifies unanswerably to this fact.

Within any society, some persons are always too dull to imitate successfully or to see the importance of imitating; some are too sick to imitate or to see the desirability of it; some are brought up in such impoverished environments that they never are confronted with good patterns or have much positive teaching; some definitely and positively repudiate the prevailing standard-patterns because insane or infatuated with a vision; some are taught specific anti-social, non-conformance ways.

To illustrate more precisely, take our own prevailing life-pattern. The majority eat three meals each day; but some eat four and some only two. These are variants, but their departures are not very serious; they incon-

venience few others. There are prevailing standards of dress; but some garb themselves too scantily. This is rather more serious because of the sex-taboo. We have prevailing standards of loyalty and patriotism; but some preach radical doctrines of various kinds and stir up excitement among many. This type of variation becomes insupportable to the loyal and the patriotic. Some won't work, some will steal, some will kill; this is variation from long-standing norms, and becomes intolerable because others have to suffer thereby. So there are no limits to the possibilities for divergence, innovation. Thus for many causes, some violate the accepted rules of the social game, thereby interfering with its smooth procedure and starting damaging impulses in all directions. We are not making wholesale condemnations; we are simply stating the fact that innovation is generally held, by those thoroughly loyal to the age-old usages, to be inimical to social order; and it will continue to disrupt it and confuse it until there can be a reconciliation between the routineers and the innovators.

There is and there can be no absolute standard for judging innovators, either in logic or experience, because conditions change. Consequently there have been and there are the greatest differences in the estimates of those who vary. One group admires and follows Jesus; another group does not. One age administers the poisonous cup to Socrates; another age worships him. One sect sends John Huss to the stake; another sect enthrones him and concentrates its loyalty upon him. Napoleon is a hero and a saviour to one nation; others fear, detest and struggle to eliminate him. The Bolsheviks are admired and supported by certain people in Russia; they are hated and abominated by certain people in other parts of the world.

The masses and their network of sacred activity-patterns and belief-standards are the line to which people have to hew—in practice. And the masses always thrust up stand-pat and compromising leaders who manœuvre their fol-