Communication and Control in The Fabric of the Social Construction of Reality

Comunicação e Controle no Tecido da Construção Social da Realidade

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ABSTRACT:

This article aims to reestablish the dialog between communication and control by providing central arguments that the relation between both concepts is not only documented in many authors' works on the subject, but also by reflecting that these works helped maintain the central point that social control and communication lie in the very fabric of the social construction of realities, from the regulation of interactions to whole societies. Communication science, too, is a result of this process, not merely a consequence of the development of industries, but rather an outgrowth of knowledge of regulatory problems of society in general. Communication science was built in America upon the necessities of understanding the control of human affairs and politics through public opinion and mass media in the urban areas. The history of communication science has taken the concept of control for granted and connected it either to cybernetics and "mainstream sociology" as in the work of functionalists, creating a stalemate in the discussions around communication and its means of control developed in many theories, as well as preventing our studies from connecting to larger social and criminological grand narratives.

RESUMO:

Este artigo visa restabelecer o diálogo entre comunicação e controle, fornecendo argumentos centrais de que a relação de ambos os conceitos não está apenas documentada em muitos trabalhos de autores sobre o assunto, mas também refletindo que esses trabalhos ajudaram a manter o ponto principal de que o controle social e a comunicação estão na própria estrutura da construção social das realidades, da regulamentação das interações a sociedades inteiras. A ciência da comunicação também é um resultado desse processo, não sendo apenas uma mera consequência do desenvolvimento das indústrias, mas sim um resultado do conhecimento dos problemas regulatórios da sociedade em geral. A ciência da comunicação foi construída na América sobre as necessidades de entender o controle dos assuntos humanos e da política por meio da opinião pública e da mídia de massa nas áreas urbanas. A história da ciência da comunicação rejeitou o conceito de controle e o conectou à cibernética e à "sociologia *mainstream*" como no trabalho dos funcionalistas, criando um impasse para as discussões em torno da comunicação e seus meios de controle desenvolvidos em muitas teorias, bem como impedindo que nossos estudos se conectem a grandes narrativas sociais e criminológicas.

KEYWORDS:

communication, social control, communication history, communication epistemology

PALAVRAS-CHAVE:

comunicação, controle social, história da comunicação, epistemologia da comunicação

1. COMMUNICATION AND CONTROL: TWIN-BORN CONCEPTS

The history of civilization is the history of men struggling for control, since they cannot completely dominate the uncertainties of time and space. The modern striving for control is just a specific one in this history. Control became an object of study since it was uprooted from the taken from granted activities of men and turned out into a problem. Science and its "revolution" were one of the main propulsors of this need to understand the activity of control. Basically, for the positive sciences, if we know how control happens, we can apply it to a large societal level (social planning). More than that, we can intervene in the very "natural" process of control and make our own artificial process. This ambition lies in the spirit of scientific thought and attitude. We can say that it is in the natural attitude of the theoretician, because when faced with the system of science, much was taken for granted, as the will to control and progress. The scientist comes to a world where concepts are already constructed. The discovery of control over nature, behavior, government, and society was a need to reassure men's safety in a world with secular symbolic means. If society was to rely on science to its progress, then social control had to be understood and acted upon. This is present in the vision of the first sociologists and social psychologists in America, as well as in the work of pragmatists such as John Dewey.

We usually tend to connect communication and control to the work of cyberneticians. Some claim that the notion of cybernetics was connected to Greek philosophy under the term *kybernetes* and its inflections, from which derives the notion of "steering". Some would argue that steering, in these studies, was connected to the notion of governing. In Wiener's cybernetics, control is pure regulation made possible through information and communication. In Deutsch's *Nerves of Government*, the issue of power is left aside to give space to the problem of control in governments. In America, though, the issue of *social* control was first brought to sociology from the social psychology of Edward A. Ross. He did not invent the term "social control", it was already spread all over the political vocabulary of people in Europe and America. Newspapers before Ross show the use of social control in many instances. In Ross's, though, the problem of social control, its means, limits, and directions, a lot was analyzed and synthesized like never before in the literature of sciences. No matter how far back we search for the concept of control, it will be there, because it is born in experience, in the interaction of human beings trying to organize and make sense of their knowledge in the very process of social construction (that is why it seems tricky sometimes). The concept and activity of control are born in experience, as we can presume from the social *construction* of knowledge, which enables and feeds back from social *control* of knowledge. Within their space, social and symbolic men will search for control, organization, and safety. Notions of control from *above* or *over* sometimes imply that something regulated afar is imposed in the experience of beings, so they fight back in order to make sense and incorporate these notions. The idea of control over can be even traced back to the control of Gods and Nature over human endeavor. These are commonly designated "social control systems", sometimes invisible, sometimes visible as in the form of institutions, the State, the police, the law.

When tracing the history of the concept of social control, which developed primarily in America, it is necessary to understand the narratives that surrounded the emergence of this conceptual need. According to Dorothy Ross, two intertwined strands of narrative comprised the structure of American historiography: "one was the story of Western progress, a liberal story of growing commercial development, representative political institutions based on democratic consent, and the advance and diffusion of knowledge-processes that were projected to remake the entire world." The second one "was the liberal/republican story of American exceptionalism, which seated world progress in the American nation. The special place of the United States in this story was attributed in part to favorable historical conditions that allowed it to form a New World antithetical to the old", and this included "the heritage of Anglo-Saxon institutions, the republican frame of government, the continent of uncultivated land, the opportunity offered by a free market of small producers", as well as "divine favor, a favor that began with the Puritan mission to New England and was sealed in the American Revolution and Constitution." For Ross, in sum, "the country's unique foundation located it in millennial as well as historical time, freeing it from the ills of Europe and guaranteeing it an ideal future, exemplary for the world." (Ross, 1995, p. 652). These two trends are intertwined as the author defends, and they have to be considered as crossing space and time when telling a history of a concept as social control.

We usually say that communication studies were born out of the necessities of industries in an increasingly capitalist and globalized world (Administrative Research), but here I go further and see that communication studies are born, from the point of view of Beniger, Melossi and interactionists as Berger and Luckmann, as an outgrowth of knowledge of regulatory problems of society in general, not only industries. Communication science was built in America upon the necessities of understanding the control of human affairs and politics through public opinion and mass media in the urban areas. By researching the evolution of how the social was known and theorized, we get hints on how the control of the social was also thought and theorized (for a social history, see Bogardus, 1922). Following this evolution that has much history told and untold behind ("roads not taken"), communication research, as a construct of social thought, was somehow also concerned about social control, especially because sociologists in America could not explain how individual and society come together without reference to problems of public opinion, mass persuasion, social suggestion and many terms that reflect the work of the process of communication. In communication science, social psychology and its vocabulary have entered our system since at least James Winans first claimed scientific basis for the discipline of speech in America, in 1915, the beginnings of communication research for some. By this time, intellectual thought had already received the influences of utopian thought, progress, the improvement of rationality in individuals, and the perfectibility of social order. The rhetorical tradition of communication studies put up an agenda, which also stems from the progressive era of the US, focused on persuasion studies, psychology and matters of social adjustment and control.

GALÁXIA

Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

Works that emphasize the twin-born characteristics of communication and control, apart from Wiener's cybernetics, are usually not very famous. Sociologist and communication scientist James Beniger, in the 1980s, in his work entitled *The Control Revolution*, was mostly interested in theorizing a way to explain how control is part of our communicative endeavor in economic and technological terms. However, he was not concerned about examining how communication scholars have already treated the concept and the state of the art of its use in history. Dario Melossi, an Italian criminologist, developed a history during the 1990s of how communication science became a solution for matters of social control in America during the progressivist era. Janowitz, an important figure in the history of communication science, since the Chicago School studies on communication worked as a guardian of the original meaning of social control. Here, we will highlight these authors and, later, argue that symbolic interactionists as Blumer, Goffman and Berger and Luckmann, also helped keep the tradition of early American progressivists and pragmatists alive after the 1960s. These authors were labeled microsociologists, creating assumptions that social control, in their work, lies "only" in social interaction, not participating in the construction of social order in a macro sense. Some authors, such as Giddens, in his structuration theory, are said to have solved the problem of the duality between individual and society and micro and macrosociology. We claim, however, that this problem was solved much earlier by social interactionists since at least Mead, who referred to the duality of social control at both micro and macro aspects.

1.1. James Ralph Beniger's theory of control and communication

James Ralph Beniger (1986), in his quest to comprehend the centrality of information in contemporary material life, initiates his significant work, "The Control Revolution," by prompting us to contemplate why, among the many things that humans value, information emerged as the dominant force in the largest and most advanced economies globally. Why are computers and cybernetic machines, which process information, prominent now? Information wouldn't have become a commodity and a service without a reason. Why information, and why now? The answer lies in a revolution in the way control operates. In other words, the Control Revolution involves "a complex of rapid changes in the economic and technological arrangements through which information is collected, stored, processed, and communicated and through which programmed or formal decisions can affect social control" (p. vi). Beniger (1986) argues that history alone cannot explain why information becomes so crucial to the economy and society. The mechanical brain that operates and controls this new information process in the cybernetic era exists solely due to the centrality given to information theory. In other words, matter does not equate to information, but one depends on the other. "The mechanical brain does not secrete thought as the liver does with bile, as primitive materialists believed, nor does it externalize it in the form of energy, as muscles externalize their activity" (Wiener, 1970, p. 171). Thus, "information is information and not matter or energy. No materialism that does not admit this can survive today" (Wiener, 1970, p. 171).

The path paved by cybernetics to conceptualize a "mechanical brain" has also opened avenues to contemplate similar processes in all living systems, making information have its counterpart and foundation of validity in the most complex realms of science and in life itself. Therefore, the answer must be sought "in the nature of all living systems - ultimately, in the relationship between information and control" (Beniger, 1986, p. vi). The reason for this is simultaneously simple and complex: life inherently involves control, in cells and organisms, no less than in national economies or any other purposive system (Beniger, 1986). Societies are systems of material processing, a role that became increasingly apparent as the Industrial Revolution accelerated the pace and speed at which matter was processed. There came a point when the need for faster processing exceeded human capabilities, necessitating new economic and technological advances to create tools conducive to processing what life has always required: information. The rationale for information is also clear: the need for control has become ever greater. Control begets control, and in this, the speed to control surpassed human rhythm in the periods around and after the Industrial Revolution, requiring extensions to control control itself and, as a consequence, to process information and communication.

Understanding the expanding information economy as a means of control seems to be merely a different way of looking at things. Nevertheless, Beniger's aspirations are greater: to propose a synthesis of partial knowledge about information societies, bringing all truths produced within others that encompass the whole (1986). Thus, a series of theories of modernity with different terms have been created, which, at their core, refer to a common truth: the need for control. Control has roots in the biological, physical, and anthroposociological, forming an important starting point for complex thinking.

Information processing, according to Beniger, "is essential for all purposive activity, which is by definition directed toward a goal and must, therefore, involve the continuous comparison of current states to future ends, a basic problem of information processing" (1986, p. 8). Alongside the comparison between inputs and objectives, a mutual communicative interaction between controller and controlled must also occur, "not only to communicate the influence of the former to the latter but also to communicate back the results of this action (hence the term 'feedback,' due to the reciprocal flow of information back to the controller)" (Beniger, 1986, p. 8). Hence, the centrality of information processing and mutual communication between the controller and the controlled. According to Beniger, this conception influenced not only Wiener in his definition of Cybernetics but also the pioneers of the mathematical theory, Shannon and Weaver. For them, as Beniger notes, communication was intentional control, or the set of procedures by which one mind could affect another. They observed that "either communication affects behavior or it has no discernible or probable effect" (Beniger, 1986, p. 8).

Applying this concept of control, inseparable from the activities of information processing and communication, at the level of a society, Beniger (1986) asserts that the ability of a society to maintain control at all levels (from interpersonal to international relations) will be directly proportional to the development of its information technologies. Information processing, Beniger explains, may

GALÁXIA
Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

be more difficult to appreciate than the processing of matter and energy, as is evident in the processing of coal, steam power, and cotton fabrics through the inventions that led to the Industrial Revolution. This is because, unlike the processing of matter and energy, information is epiphenomenal, meaning it "derives from the organization of the material world on which it is entirely dependent for its existence" (Beniger, 1986, p. 9). Despite being derived from matter and energy that constitute this material world, information is directly linked to living systems that require organization, order, and power. In summary, according to Beniger, "all living systems need to process matter and energy to maintain themselves against entropy, the universal tendency of organization toward collapse and randomness" (1986, p. 10). And as observed earlier, with control being necessary for such processing, information is, in turn, essential for control. Consequently, information processing and mutual communication, as elements that differentiate living systems from the inorganic universe, are defining elements of life, "except for some recent artifacts of our own species" (1986, p. 10).

Beniger identifies the crisis of control, leading to the Control Revolution, in Émile Durkheim's description of the industrialization process of societies. According to Durkheim (Beniger, 1986), industrialization tends to break down barriers to transportation and communication that isolate local markets, referred to by Durkheim as the "segmented type," extending the distribution of goods and services to the "organized type" of market, which encompasses national and global markets. When this occurs, there is a disruption of the balance under which production is regulated through direct communication between producer and consumer. Durkheim's description, found in the book "The Division of Labor in Society," represents what Beniger characterizes as a "crisis of control." The resolution to this crisis would be found in new means of communication designed to control economies organized at levels more complex than the mere segmented, localized type. There is, as Beniger states, a growing "systemization" of society, where the ability to communicate and process information is directly linked to what structural functionalists like Durkheim called the "problem of integration" (Beniger, p. 11), that is, "the increasing need for coordination of functions that accompanies differentiation and specialization in any system" (Beniger, p. 11).

For Beniger, what Durkheim describes as a crisis of control in the social sphere has its counterpart in the realm of individual psychology. Durkheim's concept of "anomie" arises from the collapse of norms governing group and individual behavior. Anomie is a pathological state of behavior, an exception to Durkheim's own rule, which saw the increasing division of labor directly associated with normative integration and social solidarity. However, the state of anomie does not primarily result from changes in the structure of the division of social labor but from the collapse of communication between increasingly isolated social sectors. Thus, both the problem of economic integration and that of anomie result from the inability to communicate. Throughout his book, Beniger continues to illustrate the technological and economic efforts to make communication possible.

For Beniger, the primary technological responses to this crisis of control are found in the works of Max Weber, who first analyzed the rapid growth of formal

GALÁXIA
Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

bureaucracy at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century (Beniger, 1986), most notably in "Economy and Society." Bureaucracy is the technology that controls other technological inventions capable of managing the complex organization brought about by the crisis of control. Despite the emphasis on the formality of bureaucracy in this new historical moment, novelty should not be attributed to the phenomenon. The ancient nation-states of Mesopotamia and Egypt required centralized administrations, giving rise to the bureaucratic apparatus, which continued to be used and refined, reaching pre-industrial empires such as Rome, China, and Byzantium (Beniger, 1986). Bureaucratic organizations, Beniger synthesizes, "tend to appear wherever collective activity needs to be coordinated by many people toward explicit and impersonal goals, that is, to be controlled." Thus, "bureaucracies have served as generalized means of control for any large social system in most institutional and cultural arenas since their emergence around 3,000 B.C." (Beniger, 1986, p. 13).

According to Beniger (1986), due to the pervasiveness of the bureaucratic form, history and its historians tended to discuss its role in the late 19th century with superficiality as a major control technology. With the help of new means of communication that become part of this perfected control object, the survival of an entire social economy becomes possible, along with the profits sought by individuals with increasingly centralized economic power. The state apparatus, more evident than the economic one, took advantage of this new organization of the material world, being able to enforce the law with the help of tentacular control means such as bureaucracy. Bureaucracy is thus a constituent, both economic and political, in modernity. It appropriates the imperium to enforce its laws and control social order, and the economy to continue surviving, even maintaining old patterns of exploitation.

Bureaucracy can be seen as a larger means of communication that organizes smaller ones. If communication, as an object, is situated at these crossroads of controls, how can we speak of "free" communication, of a "free" flow of information? Just as power does not easily reveal its materiality to the emerging society, being "hidden" in a network of control and survival, we can say that the communication circulating there can only serve it. Morin's assertion that "power is hidden and communication is a servant" is a corollary of the idea that the organization of control and communication has not received much attention. Moreover, his complex thinking has shown that the organizational form of things cannot be ensconced in a black box where processes are unseen and reduced to the input-output scheme of trivial machines. Control and communication, in their relationship, only become topics open to discussion again, albeit marginally, with Cybernetics when humans have the apparatus or machine in their hands to analyze and control it, observing in it the flows of communication and control; otherwise, the machine would control them.

A bureaucracy, as an organizing machine of flows, could never be seen in its humanity for the purposes of systemic power. But what is the reason for the impersonality of bureaucracies? Why hide the human element behind their operation? As Beniger states, "any attempt to humanize this bureaucratic machinery, Weber argued, would be minimized through a clear division of labor and definition of responsibility, hierarchical authority, and specialized functions

GALÁXIA
Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

of decision and communication" (1986, p. 14-15). Human labor or force becomes responsible for control and survival itself; however, human labor cannot see itself in this way, running the risk that the impersonality of this power can be brought into question and taken over by particular interests, which indeed happens in the relationship between exploiters and the exploited, an expropriation of the workforce by those in control, with their lives determined by those who actually have the control. Thus, impersonality and hierarchy are dogmas to be observed and respected, but impossible to be the subject of criticism because, when they are, they disrespect the functioning of an entire system and its ultimate authorities, jeopardizing the political and economic functions of an organized society.

Alongside bureaucracy, another broad technology of control highlighted by Beniger is rationalization, also attributed to Weber. The central idea of rationalization, for Beniger, is that "control can be increased not only by increasing the capacity to process information but also by decreasing the amount of information to be processed." Rationalization can also be seen as "pre-processing," or "destruction or ignorance of information to facilitate processing" (1986, p. 15). From then on, we can open our minds to the vast power of rationalization in digital technology, so prevalent today in both the economy and politics. A computer can process much more information at a higher speed due to the language that architects its processing: digital language, which rationalizes information that used to occupy sheets and sheets of paper within any bureaucracy into digits of 1 and 0. But the computer and digital language are just current examples of rationalization. Much was done before to rationalize information. A simple example is the development of standardized forms of paper use, both in format and content (hence forms, memoranda, official letters, etc., where only useful information is recorded, following pre-processing standards). Now, returning to the subject of the impersonality and objectivity of bureaucracy, rationalization shows its pervasiveness when modern society tends to regulate interpersonal relationships in terms of a set of impersonal and objective criteria. The subjectivity of such relationships is pre-processed by the imposition of legal norms that dictate how one should act in a given situation. Beniger (1989) reminds us of Saint-Simon, who, even though he only lived through the early stages of industrialization, observed such rationalization as a movement from the government of men to the administration of things.

With the significant development of these broad technologies, rationalization and bureaucratization in the mid and late 19th century, we had a succession of new information processing and communication technologies. These innovations, together, made it possible to contain the control crisis of industrial society in all areas of economic activity: production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services (Beniger, 1989). We can continue Beniger's analysis of the transformations in these three economic realms, caused by the advent of various control technologies, with emphasis on Herman Hollerith, who extended Jacquard's punched cards around 1890 for tabulating U.S. population census data, the birthplace of control techniques. This was "an information processing technology that survives to this day largely because of the corporation that

GALÁXIA
Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

Hollerith's invention brought to life, the International Business Machines (IBM)" (Beniger, 1986, p. 17).

A vast list of inventions is considered by Beniger as responsible for the changes that brought about the control revolution in the economy, including Frederick Winslow Taylor's scientific management (1911), Henry Ford's modern assembly line (after 1913), and statistical quality control (1920s), among others. Within this, we can also mention the refinement of legal techniques, especially economic and contractual law. These technologies that directly influenced mass production consequently impacted the entire economic chain, requiring innovations in distribution and consumption. In distribution, there are increasing transportation infrastructures, including railway networks, steamship lines, urban traction systems, "dependent on control in a corresponding information processing and telecommunications infrastructure" (telegraph, for example) (1986, p. 17). The coevolution of the telegraph and railway networks, according to Beniger (p. 17), led "to the development of another mass distribution and consumption control infrastructure: postal systems (mail)."

In the context of mass production, means of control for demand and consumption emerged. These technologies ranged from those that needed to communicate information about goods and services to stimulate consumption (advertising, radio, television) to those that, conversely, provided the collection and storage of information about the preferences and behaviors of the consuming public, true feedback tools that brought back to the controller what was needed to control consumption that industrialization expanded from the local to the national and global levels, such as market research (marketing). It is clear, therefore, that mass media alone is not sufficient to achieve control, requiring constant monitoring of consumer habits. Despite the emphasis of these control technologies in the market, according to Beniger's study, he himself says that a parallel force of the state was necessary to be in control of all these controls: "while corporate bureaucracy began to control increasingly larger markets at the turn of this century (Beniger wrote in 1986), its power was increasingly checked by the parallel growth of state bureaucracy" (p. 20).

1.2. Dario Melossi's theory of the state of control

In the 1990s, Dario Melossi developed maybe the most recent important contribution to the revival of the concept of social control, after Beniger. In *The State of Social Control*, Melossi develops his argument that in the 1960s, political radicalization brought the concepts of State and Social Control to the front, making them the targets of a confused critique. State-centered concepts of social control started to reappear in intellectual efforts, and the efforts of Ross and early American sociologists and social psychologists were overshadowed. The analysis of French philosophers as Foucault, who related control to discursive and disciplinary devices, also helped bring more confusion to the meaning of the concept. The book written by Melossi had a simple but powerful statement: State and social control are concepts with different intellectual traditions and historical backgrounds. "State" is a European concept. Social control is an American concept. Many European philosophers did not have access to what

was being developed in America at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century with the pragmatist philosophers and social control reformists. What we see in Foucault at his time would probably be different if he had access to the thought of American scholars. In 1990, in *Pourparlers*, in a little influential text called *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, Foucault's friend Gilles Deleuze wrote that the disciplinary societies of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are now being replaced by societies of control in the thought of Foucault (Foucault never paid much attention to an explicit concept named "social control" in his writings). This control was much more orchestrated by higher forces than the organic control of Ross that is born in the individual and his relations. Control was put back again in structures of power in a pessimistic account. It was "fluid", like all post-modernists liked to call things.

Melossi argued for an American rejection of a State concept in favor of a Social Control concept. The period between the Civil War and the 1930s brought the American intelligentsia of the time to conclude that the best remedy for the ills of democracy was democracy itself. The weakness of the State referred to the American exceptionalist experience by European commentators was actually, for the American, due to the strength put on democratic process of social control. "The North American situation furnished the colonists with a cohesive concept of their individual destinies, a cohesion that allowed them to dispense with the necessity of the Hobbesian 'artificial man'" (Melossi, 1990, p. 101). The breakdown of the traditional space of America in the form of constellations of rural island communities urged for new establishment of order. But Melossi argued that that was not done much by the rise of a Leviathan but by resorting to public opinion and communication. The development of communication science in its many primary forms, rhetoric, speech, public opinion, journalism, propaganda, and finally communication during this period was not a coincidence. It meant that democracy in America was more tolerable through the advancement of discussion and public participation and integration in common endeavor. The subsequent development of Chicago, Columbia, Harvard, and Yale's contributions to communication can all be considered a consequence of a mentality of democratic social control, and shaping consensus was at the heart of this territory formation. Melossi noticed that, in America, there was a shift from control centered on censorship to one centered on the production of social meanings through a shift from governmental social control by law to social control produced by means of social interaction, a visible orientation of the reformist and especially Chicago scholars.

Melossi sees that the higher point where social control has transformed its meaning was during Parsons' era. Social control that was to be produced in interaction from the time of Mead and Dewey was being blurred by social control through law as a means of integration, much present in Parsons's account. While for Mead and Dewey deviance was a product of social control, for Parsons, it was the absence of social control. Legalism and state-centered concepts of control were increasing at the time. Other critical and non-critical works on social control based on the social construction of meaning or "social control of meaning", as Melossi rephrased it, besides the high influence of Parsons, kept on developing. During the 1960s, Melossi noticed a resurgence

of the concept of State in literature, relating social control as a device of the State. By making social control a product of the concept of State, social control became politicized. The necessity of angry young men and women to give an oppressor the role of the evil for what was happening during the time also brought the necessity to give it a name, and the State and its "social control" apparatuses were the main aim.

The 1960s were a time of increasing political economists of communication theories with critical views between the symbiosis of State and economy to emerge, like the ones provided by Herbert Schiller, Dallas Smithe, and other critical scholars benefiting from theories of the Frankfurt School. Critical political economists, Marxists, emphasized more and more the problems of communication and its relation to the control of elites backed up by state policies. All these, and other changes are discussed by Gouldner in the 1970s. The resurrection of Leviathan and theories of State in America overshadowed but did not destroy the earlier concept of social control. Many theories in communication science still discuss the role of social control in the constructive process of meanings in interaction and formation of realities. However, after the 1960s, Janowitz still defended that we should come back to the original definition of social control. Why that? Is it possible to revive the concept?

In 1993, ten years after the special Ferment in the Field issue in the Journal of Communication had been published, Robert T. Craig claimed that the field was still in ferment and required rethinking where understanding the boundaries of communication research was concerned. In this 1993 issue of the Journal of Communication, Beniger claimed that we should not embrace the field of communication, but the subject as a strategy to overcome excessive fragmentation in the field. When we look at the subject, the field cannot escape 4Cs, as Beniger claimed: cognition, control, culture, and communication. Choosing any of these points of departure will lead us to a common ground that will facilitate the legitimation of the field in the social sciences. Choosing the history of social control, we will definitely find interconnections with the subject of communication and, better, how this concept participates in the construction of what we now know as communication science, with its traditions, crossing all of them (Craig, 1999). (Social) control became more than a concept. It could be used as an approach to integrate theories on the social-psychological tradition and theories on the sociocultural tradition, as shown by some pioneers who claim this or something along these lines.

1.3. Janowitz's preservation of the old meaning of social control

On *Social Change and Politics* (first published in 1978), Janowitz utilizes the concept of social control in the reformers' sense. Social control, for him, is basically the capacity of a social group or a society to achieve self-regulation in terms of a set of "higher moral principles". With this definition in mind, Janowitz goes on to analyze strains on social control with the changes provoked after World War II, that is, what is keeping society from achieving a desired self-regulation based on

higher moral principles. Three major master trends, such as changes in political participation, social stratification and military participation have contributed to a stalemate on social control. These master trends show an attenuation of social control and failure of institution building from an industrial to an advanced industrial society that could affect the level of social control that democratic policies require.

Janowitz shows an increasing detachment of the citizenry from political parties and also a volatility towards them. The "depoliticalization" and lack of interest in politics by the citizenry has shown that the mass media has served more to stimulate personal gratification towards consumption than to real effective social control, in the sense of forming moral constraints and being an institution capable of leading society to control its own issues. The shift in the military's role in American society to a practice of deterrence, an ongoing and permanent process of debate on national defense and security over issues, such as gun control, strained the old concept of the military service as a device for maintaining and strengthening democratic ideals of citizenship. The increasing control of the welfare state has also confused people's role in the social structure. His position is not only a function of his place in the occupational structure of the division of labor, but is related to expectations generated by the welfare state.

This contributes to unstable patterns of electoral participation and weak democracies, according to Janowitz. The disarticulation of institutions is a result from these changes that "complicate" the work of social control. The master trends also produce problems such as the increasing complexity of social groups with striking primary-group solidarities, making it even harder for the institutions to attain their distinct goals. Mass media, Janowitz defends, has rather failed in their expected roles as agencies of societal socializations. Instead of clarifying political self-interest, the mass media has served more to raise suspicions and mistrust in social structures. For Janowitz, social control is a perspective, it "is both a mode of analysis and a value orientation". Self-regulation "is a moral aspiration and is multivalued in orientation". For him, "there is in fact a hierarchy of values, one that requires continual clarification." As a moral aspiration, "social control assigns the highest importance to the reduction of coercion. But at the same time it assumes that the pursuit of effective social control both depends on and will enhance personal and political freedom" (Janowitz, 2017, [1978], p. 551). The centrality of rationality in social control continues to be of extreme importance to apply this perspective on social change.

Social scientists have to contribute with their assistance in improving the capacity of extraparliamentary agencies to resolve conflicts and overcome institutional disarticulation, since the legislative arena is too overburdened to effect adequate conflict resolution. Social control also serves as a symbol to mediate the interaction of the social scientists and the political leader. The term social control has continuity for Janowitz at least for three value commitments: 1) the reduction of coercion, although it recognizes the irreducible elements of coercion in a legitimate system of authority; 2) the elimination of human misery, again, it recognizes the persistence of some degree of inequality and 3) a commitment to procedures of redefining societal goals in order to enhance the role of rationality; this, however, may be considered inherent in the first two

14 **ARTICLE**

e68497

Communication and Control in The Fabric
of the Social Construction of Reality

GALÁXIA

Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

(Janowitz, 2017, [1978], pp. 29-30). Janowitz has made the claim to use social control from this perspective and not as a mechanism of conformity.

In a brief intellectual history, Janowitz noticed that the concept became what Blumer called sensitizing concept. He explains that the concept was originally used as an opposition to coercive control in American society. Also, the intellectual interest in the idea of social control is derived from a rejection of early American sociologists of economic self-interest theories. This was clear in Ross. The claim was basically that the individualistic pursuit of economic self-interest could not account for neither social behavior nor the existence of social order and, maybe more importantly, was not an adequate basis for the achievement of "higher values" as proposed by the reformists and progressists of the beginning of the twentieth century in American thought. These values were multiple at the time, but they are adjustable to any needs or goals a society has to solve its conflicts and unrest. Empirical research on social control must constantly investigate forms and mechanisms of social control to achieve social goals, determining which form of control is most effective, that is, "which forms enable a social group to regulate itself in accord with a set of 'higher norms' with a corresponding reduction of coercive control" (Janowitz, 2017, [1978], p. 30).

Social control is not a concept constructed to refer only to modern societies. Its sensitizing aspect, as shown both by sociologists and anthropologists, makes it fit to understand the mechanisms of organization of tribal, peasant, industrial, or advanced industrial social orders. There is no parallel between social control and stability or repression as the concept was first conceived. It is a tool to understand societies in its dynamics and processes. Social control actually, when effective, is capable of producing harmonious orders. Therefore, it stands at the exact opposite of repression and non-dynamic perspectives. Also, social control was constructed in a time of criticism towards the "evolutionary" Gemeinschaft-Gesellschaft models entering American culture. Critics of Tönnies and Simmel saw social order living in interaction, and interaction was the basis for the development of control forms suitable in both Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft.

As seen in America, a transition to industrial societies was not a negation of Gemeinschaft aspects, since many controls already existent in that kind of society still kept on working on the basis of social interaction. And this was actually welcome to the eyes of reformists, who wanted to see the reduction of coercion and a replacement for communication and debate to solve conflicts. The thesis underlying this work is exactly that, at this point, communication science starts to articulate theoretical positions to understand the mechanisms of social control created by mass media, without leaving the rhetorical and interrelational aspects aside. Explaining the ingredients of communication, the processes of social influence and persuasion as well as the effects that all of this had on people was a necessity of the time to understand social control properly. As the mother of invention, this necessity would lead to the institutionalization of communication science by the middle of the twentieth century. Social control, from this perspective, provided a framework where public opinion, originally, social interactions, and many communicational elements considered today, could be seen as mechanisms to solve social problems.

GALÁXIA

Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

Social control, in this sense, was a conceptual tool that helped bridge sociology and social psychology to communication studies, which, in turn, became our main tradition of communicational thought. Finally, social control, as a perspective, is nothing more than a useful tool to serve as an interface to connect micro and macro aspects of society, combining the psychological interplay of minds and the resultant structural aspects of the process of social control. Social control, in this vein, is closely associated with a pragmatist, phenomenologist view of constant relation between mind and body in process, which we here call the social construction of reality. Social control, according to Janowitz, is not only a perspective for qualitative studies, since the sociological task can be "to identify and wherever possible to quantify the magnitude of the variables which facilitate or hinder the group pursuit of 'higher' collective and moral goals" (Janowitz, 2017, [1978], p. 34). It is also a perspective to help variable researchers connect findings in a more comprehensive aspect. Another important observation made by Janowitz is that social control, since its roots, is not only related to social norms, since it is related to everything we can codify as possibly helping social groups solve social conflicts in order to achieve specific goals or values. By the 1920s, sociologies did not perceive social control as a mechanism of conformity, because society, and its processes could not exist on the basis of conformity since it needed active collective problem solving.

By the 1940s, alternative formulations of social control were being constructed, as the process of socialization leading to conformity. The increasing influence of European thought also included power analysis and Marxist economic determinism that, in a certain way, weakened the usual concern connected to social control through voluntaristic and purposeful processes which seek to modify the social order. "This occurred during the Great Depression and the New Deal – which created ideological and political currents that impinged on sociology, in a fashion comparable to the events of the 1960s, which made the ideal of social control or any equivalent 'unpopular'" (Janowitz, 2017, [1978], p. 44). Although making the idea unpopular, it did not mean that the concept was dead and did not have any continuity. Only in communication science we can see that this is not the case. Parsons, Merton and other functionalists had revived the concept of social control, although with an important connection to Durkheim notions of deviance and anomie. Also, at this time, many sociologists and social psychologists relabeled social control as social regulation. Preoccupations appeared, too, on the issue of the social control of science. This issue "has been used to focus attention on both the conditions under which science develops and in the social and political consequences of scientific knowledge" (Janowitz, 2017, [1978], p. 47).

"Bernard Barber, in Science and the Social Order, has probed the direct involvement of scientists in wartime research and the new orientations toward their social responsibility that have emerged" (Janowitz, 2017, [1978], p. 47). "Progress", for the first sociologists and social psychologists, was one of the central values on which these scholars based their idea of social control. "They thought of the specific content of progress as being filled in by the relatively spontaneous interaction among persons and social groups guided by a generalized commitment to rational enlightenment and particularly to the containment of coercion" (Janowitz, 2017, [1978], p. 51). In advanced industrial societies, however, scholars

16 **ARTICLE** Communication and Control in The Fabric
of the Social Construction of Reality
e68497

GALÁXIA
Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

saw that it was unattainable to think of a single value to refer social control to. In democracy, applying the social control perspective implies a balancing of interest but also of multiple values and goals.

Janowitz remembers the work of Lasswell on values in democratic societies and he elected eight values as means and ends in social organization: power, respect, rectitude, affection, well-being, wealth, skill, and enlightenment. Janowitz (and also Beniger), refers to Nadel (1953) to whom control is effective unless it endorses what most people hold desirable (or value), "which point is amply illustrated by the difficulties of enforcing laws no one believes in or of maintaining a hated regime (...) Even societies relying on machineries of control, then, must rely also on values simply held" (Nadel, 1953, p. 270). In the continuation of the concept of social control, Janowitz finally says that "the issues of coercion versus persuasion which constitute pervasive dimensions of value analysis are ones that continue the original orientations of sociologists concerned with social control". (Janowitz, 2017, [1978], p. 52). In fact, much research in communication science has been influenced, since its beginning by the role of persuasion in communication as a means to avoid coercion in democratic societies. That is also why communication and social control are twin-born concepts, and it is valid to say that the conceptualizations on social control in America served as a way to give a point of departure to the conceptualization of communication since its "pre-history".

2. INTERACTIONISM AND SOCIAL CONTROL

In a book uniting many of his earlier papers, Blumer (1969, p. 77) notices that in Mead's scheme socialization "shifts in character from being an effective internalization of norms and values to a cultivated capacity to take the roles of others effectively." Social control happens, then, not only as a "thing" "from above", but also "becomes fundamentally and necessarily a matter of self-control." Social change is another social process that overlaps with social control processes: "social change becomes a continuous indigenous process in human group life instead of an episodic result of extraneous facts playing on established structure". Human group life, as Blumer goes on to explain, is seen "as always incomplete and undergoing development instead of jumping from one completed state to another". When society is disorganized, there is not necessarily a breakdown of structures, but stalemates to mobilize social action, which, as Blumer saw in Mead, "has a career" and "is recognized as having a historical dimension which has to be taken into account in order to be adequately understood." (Blumer, 1969, p. 77).

Social control may go as far as a social ascendency, represented in visible institutions, but it is, at the same time, a result of the feelings of individuals, being born from within them and being represented in normal everyday life routine social action. Blumer goes further on the topic of social control and acknowledges that "the ultimate test of the validity of scientific knowledge is the ability to use it for purposes of social control", that is, knowledge must be useful enough to control aspects of life and also change it. This type of scientific attitude is proper of reformist American sociology, positivist sociology, as well as behaviorist,

GALÁXIA
Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

socio-psychological and pragmatist thought. Symbolic interactionism, as Blumer labelled the tradition set by his mentor, Mead, is a theory that follows the same scientific attitude towards control and prediction from these other groups of thoughts that are all interrelated in American scientific culture.

Control, for them, had a sense of being able to interfere and change society towards progress and a better quality of life. It was by knowing the mechanisms of control that are inscribed in human affairs that we find out how to control and predict as social scientists. In the same book, Blumer also calls the social scientists' attention to concepts, especially social control and related ones, that are constantly devoid of empirical instances, vague, and attempts at definition hardly say what the concept covers and what it does not. This is one of the central problems in social theory for Blumer, and one that leads him to make a differentiation between definitive concepts and what he calls "sensitizing concepts". As the former refers to fixed attributes, sensitizing concepts do not. Sensitizing concepts give the researcher a general sense of reference and guidance while approaching empirical instances. There are no prescriptions for what counts as definitive concepts, they are suggestions of directions, of where to look, lacking a precise and delimited content *a priori*.

"Why are there sensitizing concepts in social theory lacking definition, then?" is the question that Blumer proposes. He invites us to think if it is because there is a lack of sophisticated inquiry between scientists or it is because the nature of the empirical environment affecting our conceptualizations? By this, Blumer is not asking us to abandon the refinement of concepts, on the contrary, he assumes we have a tendency to take things for granted and find sensitizing concepts to represent them, especially because the empirical nature from which the concept comes is also hard to be definitive and have fixed structures to be described in just one final way. This is typical of the concept of social control, which has an enormous amount of empirical content connected to it that cannot be identified in everyday life. This is the same for many other concepts in social psychology as Blumer finds in the concept of "attitude".

Erving Goffman, also considered an interactionist, created his view of social order and control. His social control lies in the activities of individuals acting out their roles and managing their impressions to meet the expectations of an audience. For Goffman, we are con artists, who learn the artificialities of language and play with it in order to persuade others. "Regardless of the particular objective which the individual has in mind and of his motive for having this objective, it will be in his interests to control the conduct of the others, especially their responsive treatment of him." In order to control others, in this fashion, Goffman believed that each individual should be able to influence "the definition of the situation which the others come to formulate, and he can influence this definition by expressing himself in such a way as to give them the kind of impression that will lead them to act voluntarily in accordance with his own plan" (Goffman, 1956, pp. 2-3). Goffman shows us how control is inherited in our performances in order to manage our impressions. It turns out to be almost impossible to live in society without exercising this control. As con artists, however, we face a problem of managing the information available, so we are not caught up in the act. Otherwise, our deviant character is brought about. "One

overall objective of any team is to sustain the definition of the situation that its performance fosters. This will involve the over-communication of some facts and the under-communication of others." This process involves the control of information in a performance, and it turns out that "a basic problem for many performances, then, is that of information control" (Goffman, 1956, p. 87).

In a social order driven by the discontent of arbitrary systems of language and its use to manage impression for self-control, the control of situations and the control of others, a logical failure in this management leads to sanctions born from a deviation from what the audiences expect, from a single joke that might not lead the audience to laugh and have a bad impression of the comedian to the distrust of public authorities caught in corrupt actions (see Goffman, 1956). Goffman further explored the notion of deviance and its management in a book called *Stigma* (1963). In this work he writes about two types of social control that are created by stigmatization and "ill-fame": formal social control (through official professional of bureaucracies trying to frame an individual based on his records, for example) and informal social control (through the public at large, not only officials ad hoc, but every citizen capable of accessing the "image" of someone. Mass media, for Goffman, plays a central role here, making it possible to transform a private person into a public figure and make his image and information on his bad conduct available to others).

Actually, symbolic interactionism also helped create a field of studies on deviance. As we noticed with Herbert Blumer, Collins (1985) stated that other sociologists such as Alfred Lindesmith, Howard Becker, and Ewin Schir got interested in the situation of the "violators of society", with an approach to social control that is different from the "official viewpoint of social control agencies" (Collins, 1985, p. 202). Howards Becker, for example, created a concept of "moral entrepreneurs" in order to analyze the categories of deviance on the "official side" that are imposed on others. Collins notes that symbolic interactionism has tended to accept conflictual views from Marxist theory and also functionalist views with the so-called "role theory". The one thing to keep in mind is that, either way, symbolic interactionism was concerned about how to conceive social order "from below" all the way up, and the concept of social control was kept by this tradition also in order to understand those who do not fit the institutional paths constructed or the roles socially available to them.

2.1. The social construction of realities

Interactionists developed and helped maintain the concept of social control as it was envisioned by the early American reformists and sociologists. By the end of the 19th century until the 1920s, social control was seen as a social process that is responsible for the ongoing self-regulation of a society according to determined higher values (see Janowitz above). This self-regulatory process can be seen on another very influential work during the 1960s, called The Social Construction of Reality by Berger and Luckmann.

If social control is the process of self-regulation of social realities according to determined values, the process of self-regulation as well as of construing values is

only possible through symbolic transaction or communication. Communication becomes, then, a symbolic process whereby social realities are constructed and controlled towards determined values. This is where social control and communication overlap as social processes. Knowledge is created as a consequence of this communication process which is used to create protocols for everyday life routines and legitimate institutions and structures that retain information to maintain order by guaranteeing the self-regulation process itself. Communication science, then, from this view, is seen as just one of the organizations and stocks of knowledge or institutions that helps construct or control the social.

Social control then is not just the visible institutions that are the result of people in interactive communication. Social control and regulation overlap with the very process of social construction, therefore, and the whole work of Berger and Luckmann can be read as a work explaining how social regulation works from interactions to the development and legitimation of institutions and social structures that guarantee order. Social control is an outcome of interactions, but we cannot disregard the ontological fact that every human being seeks shelter and safety from dangers of the unknown environment and nature. They determine their own territorialities by organizing their own space, and constructing their own systems of routines.

The development of human organisms is considered by Berger and Luckmann as one that happens both in natural and human environments, that is, in relation to their natural environment and, at the same time, with their specific cultural and social order environment, this last one mediated to them by significant others. Human nature, however, does not entail a "fixed substratum determining the variability of the socio-cultural formations" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 67). In other words, "while it is possible to say that man has a nature, it is more significant to say that man constructs his own nature, or more deeply, that man produces himself" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 67). This is not to negate the self´s genetic presuppositions, but to emphasize how the self is experienced, that is, later in life as subjectively and objectively recognizable identity (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 68).

The coexistence of homo sapiens and homo socius, for the authors, is one of balance in which one cannot exist without the other. If the organismic body of men were to produce social order alone it would lack the equipment to provide stability to human conduct, that is only apprehended while he uses his body in function to construct and maintain the stability of his social environment. Men's ongoing externalizations construct the environment, and it is not derived from any "laws of nature". It is through his activities organizing this environment that chaos is kept at bay. Berger and Luckmann stress that men's externalizations through their own activities as to accomplish social order is an "anthropological necessity" which is grounded in biological equipment (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 70): "The inherent instability of the human organism makes it imperative that man himself provide a stable environment for his conduct", by specializing and directing his own drives and instincts. The necessity of social order stems from man's biological equipment (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 70).

Other than only order imposed by their biological equipment, the nature of human order is based on their patterns of habitualization that are discovered while they are involved in human activities. These patterns of action that become habitualized are a way to make the ongoing process of life economical, as the typification schemes. Retaining these patterns is a way to maintain social order during time. Besides the economical effort connected to habitualization, there are psychological gains, as choices from the complexity of the environment are narrowed, bringing the possibility of specialized activities. "Habitualization provides the direction and the specialization of activity that is lacking in man's biological equipment, thus relieving the accumulation of tension that result from undirected drives" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 70). For our purpose here, we can also say that habitualization and the construction of directed and specialized structures, narrowing choices from all those possible through suggestion from the environment is a primitive work not only of social but self-control, making the social construction of knowledge also a social psychology. The economy of decision-making processes provides spare energy for innovation and deliberation, which, otherwise, would be flooded by the instinctual apparatuses of human beings trying to satisfy their own needs without reference to any rules coming from habitualization. This is the basis for the institutionalization processes occurring in society's order.

> Institutionalization occurs whenever there is a reciprocal typification of habitualized actions by types of actors. Put differently, any such typification is an institution (…) The typifications of habitualized actions that constitute institutions are always shared ones. They are available to all members of the particular social group in question, and the institution itself typifies individual actors as well as individual actions (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 72).

Institutions imply historicity and control, so we cannot understand an institution and its capacity to control without its history and, by setting patterns of conduct, institutions control human conduct. "It is important to stress that this controlling character is inherent in institutionalization as such, prior to or apart from any mechanisms of sanctions specifically set up to support an institution. These mechanisms (the sum of which constitute what is generally called a system of social control) do, of course, exist in many institutions and in all the agglomerations of institutions that we call societies (…) The primary social control is given in the existence of an institution as such" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, pp. 72-73).

Moreover,

> to say that this segment of human activity has been institutionalized is already to say that this segment of human activity has been subsumed under social control. Additional control mechanisms are required only insofar as the processes of institutionalization are less than completely successful (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 73).

Wagner Piassaroli Mantovaneli

GALÁXIA

This is also the process whereby actors gain roles and the attitudes of one can be predicted by others, as well as taken by the others in order to manage social relations. This process goes back at least to Mead's symbolic interactionism and Schütz´s phenomenology. Having the capability of predicting and controlling the other's role is a way to alleviate tension in social affairs, since this process will culminate in a taken for granted system. Division of labor is also an aftermath of this process, requiring new habitualizations and so on. This is the constructive character of social reality behind human activities. The growth of the institutional order will be a consequence of already established systems of control which give way to more innovations. And, in between, the system of communication goes hand in hand with the institutionalization process and grows along with it, being also a habitualized and institutionalized tool. Symbols and concepts will be part of this process as they are communicated to relieve tension and anxiety from men's organismic drives and instincts.

When institutions are experienced as "having a life on their own", that means that they are "freed" from the individual activity and is now imposed as an objectified reality, which will, in turn, be internalized to each subjectivity, even as a coercive fact, as they will be become taken for granted and even forgotten to be a result of men's own activities to organize and control their own space. The world now becomes that which will be explained to new generations as: "this is how things are done", a natural attitude towards a long construction process. The institutional world, as it has now an objective reality, has a history "that antedates the individual's birth and is not accessible to his biographical recollection. It was there before he was born, and it will be there after his death". In other words, the person is born in a world where objectified institutions already exist, and all the historicity and control they carry with them, will be taken for granted in a natural attitude. Socialization takes care of the internalization of objectified worlds. And the process of communication of it through generations will also work both to internalize and also justify the order for new generations – a process of legitimation (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 77).

Legitimation for new generations is an important aspect of the construction of reality, according to Berger and Luckmann. They create a problem of compliance. Deviance from the paths preestablished by institutions are expected, since these paths or courses of action become realities divorced from their original context of relevance, and might not seem meaningful at all. New mechanisms of control, then, are also expected to maintain social order as this paradox created by objectifications arises. The problem of contingency in the system of control established by institutions will always be expected. Not to forget, "the edifice of legitimation is built upon language and uses language as its principal instrumentality" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 82). The mechanisms of control are not constructed without bodies of knowledge based on language manipulation carried from generation to generation. The body of knowledge specific to each institutionalized activity has their own vocabulary matrix which controls conduct. The processes of communicating these bodies of knowledge are only successful through a successful socialization process whereby internalization of the rules of the game will take place. Knowledge is both a social product and a factor in social change. Men act, much of the time, toward a reified world, which

means they are capable of easily forgetting their authorship of the world. The sense of having no control over this world develops from this process. For us here, having no knowledge or control over control means that the concept of social control is easily dehumanized and detached from any biography. "The analysis of reifications is important", the authors state, "because it serves as a standard corrective to the reifying propensities of theoretical thought in general and sociological thought in particular" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 109, our highlights). Sociology of knowledge then serves to prevent these propensities, that is, the estrangement from what men do and think. Also, "no 'history of ideas' takes place in isolation from the blood and sweat of general history (...) the relationship between 'ideas' and their sustaining social processes is always a dialectical one" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, pp 145-146).

The symbolic universe, then, is of extreme importance in this process.

> Considered as a cognitive construction, the symbolic universe is theoretical. It originates in processes of subjective reflection, which, upon objectification, lead to the establishment of explicit links between the significant themes that have their roots in the several institutions (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 122).

The processes of legitimation are, for the authors, conceptual or symbolic universes that serve as machineries of universe-maintenance.

> Specific procedures of universe-maintenance become necessary when the symbolic universe has become a problem. As long as this is not the case, the symbolic universe is self-maintaining, that is, self-legitimating by the sheer facility of its objective existence in the society in question. One may conceive of a society in which this would be possible. Such a society would be a harmonious, self-enclosed, perfectly functioning 'system'. Actually, no such society exists. Because of the inevitable tensions of the processes of institutionalization, and by the very fact that all social phenomena are constructions produced historically through human activity, no society is totally taken for granted and so, a fortiori, is no symbolic universe. Every symbolic universe is incipiently problematic. The question, then, is the degree to which it has become problematic (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, pp. 123-124).

The same for socialization: it is never completely successful, as Edward Ross would also say. Conceptual machineries work constantly "to ward off the challenge of heretical groups within society" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 125). The "success of particular conceptual machineries is related to the power possessed by those who operate them" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 126). Having conflictual and alternative conceptual machineries working on a social basis, power is what solves the chaos, at least in a provisory way, and defines a social situation. Conceptual machineries exist basically to substitute military force to impose social definitions. In other words, it is the work of communication processes. Types of conceptual machineries are "in order – mythology, theology, philosophy and science" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 127). "Unlike mythology,

the other three historically dominant forms of conceptual machinery became the property of specialist élites, whose bodies of knowledge were increasingly removed from common knowledge of the society at large" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 130). The institutional arrangement of therapy in history is one body of knowledge created as a means of social control, taking care of those deviants from the institutionalized recipes and giving them the possibility of accepting to live within the rules created by human activity. It is a type of conceptual machine, as it is the case of nihilation, that liquidates conceptually everything outside the same universe. (Berger and Luckmann, 1966).

At large, "to understand the state of the socially constructed universe at any given time, or its change over time, one must understand the social organization that permits definers to do their defining." (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 134). Modern industrial societies are specially challenging in the fight for concepts defining situations because of their pluralistic nature that "presupposes an urban society with a highly developed division of labor, a concomitant high differentiation in the social structure and high economic surplus." Pluralism "encourages skepticism and innovation and is thus inherently subversive of the taken-for-granted reality of the traditional status quo". (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 143). Society, for Berger and Luckmann, exists as both objective and subjective reality. Society for the authors, in summary, is a process, a dialectical one, comprised of three moments: externalization, objectivation and internalization. The individual, as a member of a society, simultaneously externalizes his own being into the social world, as we saw with the process of symbolic interaction that creates concepts and typification schemes that are the basis of institutionalized reality, but he also internalizes his existence as a component of the objective reality that he and his significant others have established.

Berger and Luckmann's sociology of knowledge implies "a specific conception of sociology in general". Sociology, for them, has to accompany humanistic disciplines, that is, a sociology in constant communication with history and philosophy. Society as the object of sociology is part of a human world, placing and making men "in an ongoing historical process" (Berger and Luckmann, 1966, p. 211). When we create an intellectual history, analyzing a concept formation and transformation, the social construction of reality by Berger and Luckmann (1966) supplies us with an explanation of linguistic apparatuses serving to objectify reality and institutions through typification schemes created by knowledgeable individuals in symbolic interaction that serves as a maintenance device to the whole system of social control represented by those institutions. Therefore, concepts are used in a dialectical sense of individual and society in constant exchange, helping to communicate both order and disorder, maintenance and change. Communication for us, then, is nothing less than the symbolic process whereby reality is socially constructed and possibly controlled. And by "controlled" we mean a process of social regulation through which reality is constantly constructed, observed, examined, repaired and changed. The status of social control as opposing social change is, therefore, something that does not interest us, as long as it reveals itself to be a problem in scientific construction.

The social construction of scientific knowledge is a problem derived from the observations of Berger and Luckmann. The problem is put forward by Everett Mendelsohn. Following the same spirit of the program of the social construction of knowledge, Mendelsohn (1977, pp. 3-4) states:

> Science is an activity of human beings acting and interacting, thus a social activity. Its knowledge, its statements, its techniques have been created by human beings and developed, nurtured and shared among groups of human beings. Scientific knowledge is therefore fundamentally social knowledge. As a social activity, science is clearly a product of a history and of processes which occurred in time and in place and involved human actors. These actors had lives not only in science, but in the wider societies of which they were members". The social construction of knowledge is against the treatment of science as "viewed as a very separate and almost holy activity (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 4).

As wrote by Berger and Luckmann, Mendelsohn once more emphasized historicity and sociology as the basis of science:

> the techniques for the proper study of science as a human activity will thus encompass the historical and the sociological (and socio-psychological) and be comparative in mode. The underlying assumption will link the cognitive and the social levels of science and the rigid bifurcation between mind and matter will be overcome (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 4).

The social construction of knowledge is also contrary to the image of historical studies as unidirectional progress and understanding of science as cumulative knowledge. "Only recently with the challenge raised from outside the fraternity of historians has any concerted attention been paid to the so-called 'pseudo-sciences' or the folk or popular sciences" (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 4).

> Some historians, however, have joined the sociologists of science and worked on institutional developments. There have been several excellent histories of scientific and learned academies as well as some detailed studies of institutes, universities, and other sites of research and teaching. These works suffer, however, in that they offer almost no recognition that institutions, and the process of institutionalization itself, imply not only historical development but processes of control as well, social control (both positive and negative) of intellectual activity (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 4).

Although Thomas Kuhn's The Structure of Scientific Revolution (1962) had put an effort to demonstrate the role of the establishment of various communities of scientists around the idea of processes of normal sciences, and also the problem with the revolution of this normalcy with conceptual change, for example, Kuhn made an assumption that separates the cognitive content of concepts from the broader institutional and social settings. "It is not that the

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GALÁXIA
Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

question or links between the conceptual, institutional, and social levels were examined and nothing of note detected; rather, the question itself was never posed" (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 7). Simplifying complex issues is also criticized by the author:

> it is not enough to correlate a set of ideas with one social group or class and believe therefore that a social basis has been established. Historians have to delve more deeply and to recognize the historical processes which lay behind the explanations of the social group itself. They must examine the activities in which this group is engaged which in turn could make use of the ideas and techniques in question. Because social imperatives are not uniform for all times, places and groups within society, historians must attempt to identify specific activities and imperatives (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 7).

Additionally, Merton raises queries that were not later investigated: the issues with puritanism, as well as the tendency of social and economic forces to attempt to define the scientific enterprise. Mendelsohn is struck by the fact that these problems of the sociology of knowledge were overlooked, leading him to question: "why were these trends, developed and fairly accessible in the 1930s, dropped or overlooked during the 1940s and 1950s and not 'rediscovered' until the more turbulent and questioning years of the later 1960s?" (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 8). The answers are manyfold, but what interests us here are the processes of social control in and over science, establishing "normal" and "deviant", or "pure" and "impure" sciences. The ways of knowing in modern science are connected to the social turn in Kuhn's ideas, and this implies that modern science "has been socially formed and indeed in continual interaction with the broader social order" (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 12).

During the scientific revolution, this problem is evident. The quest for educational reforms took place, challenging authorities and the university's previous institutional space, since "they were distrusted and indeed had often excluded the new seekers and certainly had not encouraged the new methods and practices" (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 13). The movements of reason and experience helped democratize truth by authority and revelation, as well as increase activities in the capitalist economy. At the same time, a new philosophy of nature was being created. Groups of interest "proposed of achieving human dominion over nature and mastery over things was an ideology in perfect harmony with the needs of the new capitalism and the nascent industrialism". The new scientists and capitalists were together in the same purpose and mission. (Mendelsohn, 1977, p. 16). New societies and universities were gatekeepers for the new science to be established and institutionalized, serving to control the separation of the social dimension and its possibilities of intrusion in the pursuit of the "scientific" compromise of knowledge. The relationship of social order and scientific ways of knowing, in sum, must always be clarified by historians in search of the explanation of why certain concepts and methods are adopted and others left out. One of the reasons why social control and the problem of self-regulation of societies are not being addressed in a consensual way is the acting of social forces trying to reinstate the role of certain methods that criticize the nature

26 **ARTICLE** Communication and Control in The Fabric
of the Social Construction of Reality
e68497

of the very scientific enterprise, that is, an ideology of an orderly and organic world being controlled by science, technology and liberalism.

Social control has such an importance in science that Collins asserts that "the first step toward an explanatory theory in the sociology of knowledge, as in other areas of sociology, is to show that social control exists in science" (Collins, 1968, p. 124). For him, "to show that science is not simply a disembodied intellectual effort must be the sociologist's admission ticket to the arena." Processes that affect all other social phenomena apply to science: "socialization, stratification, and the control of deviance, exist in science as in any other social institution" (Collins, 1968, p. 124). Since the "scientific group exercises normative control over the activities of its members", an important scientific norm that comes from Merton is remembered by Collins: "the original contributions to scientific knowledge must be recognized by the scientific community" (Collins, 1968, p. 125). Social control must also be analyzed in the process of creating disciplines in science. "Discipline formation is a qualitative phase in the history of knowledge and the beginning of the existence of a fundamental structural element in science" (Guntau and Laitko, 1991, p. 23). The process of institutionalization is here also important because the

> performance of a discipline is only attained through certain social institutionalization. Disciplinary institutions are the social forms of existence of disciplines that bestow permanence on them; they are at the same time the 'coagulated' materialized forms of their social recognition (Guntau and Laitko, 1991, p. 20).

CONCLUSION

Lastly, we see contributions to the discussion about how communication and control are connected. While Beniger has created a control theory that emphasizes control aspects in all living organisms evolving through time with the help of information and communication processing, Dario Melossi concentrates on explaining the historical origins of the concept of social control as it was developed in America and its relation to the development of the State. Janowitz insisted on the original meaning of social control until his death in 1988. Social control was established as a process that leads from social interaction to social structures and back again by interactionists such as Blumer, Goffman, and most notably, Berger and Luckmann's theory of the social construction of reality.

Social control and communication are twin born concepts, and we can easily define communication in function of control and vice versa. In America, the main descriptor of the concept of social control focused on public opinion as an important means of the self-regulation of a society. Edward A. Ross, although a polemic figure, should be recognized as one of the forerunners of communication science and, more, Ross also proved that the notion of control in communication is not born only from cybernetics, it is born from the sociological and social psychological traditions. Last, but not least, a second order

observation of our state of social control research in communication science is socially important in the sense of knowing how communication science might help ameliorate the current imbalance between informal means of social control and more formal ones, such as medical and legal control. This imbalance is a consequence of the colonization of the lifeworld, as discussed by Habermas, and is connected to our inability to make decisions for ourselves in an authentic communicative environment where we can really participate in rational civic life. Communication and its "double life", as McChesney would say, are at the center of this problem, and it is important to study what are the types of social control we are creating in society through problems in interaction all the way up to problems regarding the organization and governance of mass media and new media.

Going back to works of Weber, Durkheim, de Tocqueville, Huizinga, Burke, Duncan, Portman, Kuhn, Berger, and Geertz, James W. Carey brings out his own concept of communication. Carey also recognizes that the thought of these scholars can be worked out in tandem with the social thought tradition in communication, coming from "descendants of Dewey in the Chicago School: from Mead and Cooley through Robert Park and on to Erving Goffman" (Carey, 2009 [1989], p. 19). According to Carey (2009 [1989], p. 19), drawing from these sources one can find a definition of communication "of disarming simplicity yet, I think, of some intellectual power and scope": "communication is a symbolic process whereby reality is produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed".

Carey's definitions of communication are much of what we defend here regarding the relationship between communication and social control. When he says that communication is a symbolic process, we can also say it is an informational process, because informational and symbolic processes include the activity of control in order to function. By using the relationship of "symbolic process" with "informational process" we can bridge traditions of the mathematical and cybernetician thought, which got lost and became *passé*, especially because their approach from control to social control in open living cybernetical social systems does not find much dialogue with sociocultural traditions of communication, which is a loss for communication theory coherence. In second place, the terms "produced, maintained, repaired, and transformed" can all be subsumed to a social control concept that comes from Ross and Dewey in the American tradition of communication thought. Social control and communication have an intrinsic duality that is solved by the process of free informational processes in social interactions. Social control, therefore, produces, maintains, repairs and transforms social reality through communication processes. Thus, our change in Carey's concept of communication is small but strategical: "communication is a *symbolic and/or information process* whereby *social* reality is *controlled*".

From that definition, we can assert that the control of social reality depends on communicative processes through information processing in the social arena of interactionism. By controlling social reality, we mean that communication allows for the production, maintenance, repairment and transformation of that very social reality. Therefore, it becomes a self-reflexive process in which the interactional process of human beings constructing meanings, being informed by them, and acting upon the very structure of control that they themselves

GALÁXIA

Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

created is used to negotiate the control of society. This is closer to the American-developed ideal of democratic control. It is when people construct their own structures under which to act, and these structures, with their norms, control their communicative action. Since people are "in control" of their own construct, they can change these structures through communication as well.

When society regulates itself, communication processes create realities of control that must be followed by the social group. But, the same group, because it is a self-reflexive process, can control the control formats that are byproducts of their own communicative action. Social change happens through the very system of social control of communication, because control here produces reality, it is not so stable structure as other sociologists would think. When we lose consciousness of the social control that we ourselves create through communicative interaction, the realm of social control becomes the concept and the reality of control that we see as problematic and chaotic and it is even separated from the reality of scientific constructs.

Scientific constructs in communication science use social control as a taken for granted reality. The organization of the reality of the field reflects that, since there is no common ground on how communication is related to social control, organizing cyberneticians, information scientists, sociocultural and social-psychological oriented programs around the concept of social control is a blind spot in communication research. Media effects theories can concentrate their dialogue, for example, on to what extent these effects are positive or negative to the self-regulation of societies and how they are part of the integration system between communication and social control. Media effects can become a program of research, then, allied to analyzing how social control is constructed through these powerful (or not) effects. This is where the communication scholar finds its connection to a useful aspect of conducting his research, that is, helping society understand how to control itself, or, in other words, how in control or out of control they have become, putting empirical research in the very process of self-reflexivity of communication and social control, helping people rescue control back to their consciousness so communicative action become reasonable and progressive.

If we wish to expand the concept of social control, we can go even further, as Gurvitch (1945) did:

> "Social control can be defined as the sum total or rather the whole of cultural patterns, social symbols, collective spiritual meanings, values, ideas and ideals, as well as acts and processes directly connected with them, whereby inclusive society, every particular group, and every participating individual member overcome tensions and conflicts within themselves through temporary equilibria and take steps for new creative efforts" (Gurvitch, 1915, p. 291).

The solution around the many concepts of social control and the many ways to characterize it, lies in the ability of the researcher to link it to communication forms, acts, and processes. If social control fails, it means that communication

GALÁXIA
Revista Interdisciplinar de Comunicação e Cultura

somehow has failed too. Communication is a process that enables control, but it is not granted that control will be achieved or worked out successfully, and this is how it should be kept. Once we totally control communication to get rid of conflict in society, society ceases to exist. Hence the importance of both processes being intertwined, but it is the contingency of their intricacy that enables social systems to persist. No system can live in spite of chaos, because chaos, risk, contingency, or whatever you might call it, is an ingredient of human survival and control.

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