CHAPTER 7: DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

The Nature of Deviance

deviance - behavior that departs from societal or group norms
- negative - failure to meet accepted norms (obesity)
- positive - overconformity to norms (anorexia)

deviant - a person who breaks significant societal or group norms

social control - ways to encourage conformity to society's norms
- internal - lies within the individual (do something because it's right, don't do something because it's wrong)
- external - based on social sanctions (rewards and punishments designed to encourage desired behavior)

Functionalism and Deviance

functionalism - theoretical perspective that emphasizes stability and the way the different parts of society contribute to the whole

- negative effects of deviance:
1. erodes trust
2. can cause nonconforming behavior in others
3. expensive (law enforcement, prison system)

- positive effects of deviance:
1. clarifies norms by exercising social control to defend its values (negligent parents taken to court)
2. temporary safety valve (teen rebellion)
3. increased unity within a society or group (deviance reminds people of something they value)
4. promotes needed social change (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

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anomie - social condition in which norms are weak, conflicting or absent -> societies become disorganized

strain theory - deviance more likely when a gap exists between cultural goals (money and prestige) and the ability to achieve them by legitimate means

(goal -> success and material possessions   approved means-> education & hard work)

- four deviant responses to strain:

1. innovation - use of illegal means to achieve goal (robbery, drug dealing)
2. ritualism - goal rejected - person goes through the motions without believing in the process
3. retreatism - both means and goals are rejected
4. rebellion - new set of goals and means are substituted (militia group)

control theory - compliance with social norms requires strong bonds between individuals and society

- four basic components of social bonds:

1. attachment 2. commitment 3. involvement 4. belief

Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance

differential association theory - people learn deviance in proportion to number of deviant acts they're exposed to

- three characteristics:

1. ratio of deviant to nondeviant individuals
2. whether deviant behavior is practiced by significant others
3. age of exposure

labeling theory - society creates deviance by identifying particular members as deviant

- allows us to understand the relativity of deviance (example: unmarried pregnant teenage girls are more negatively sanctioned than the teenage biological fathers)

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<u>primary deviance</u> - occasional breaking of norms that is not a part of a person's lifestyle or self-concept

<u>secondary deviance</u> - a person's life and identity are organized around breaking society's norms (career criminal)

<u>stigma</u> - an undesirable characteristic or label used by others to deny the deviant full social acceptance (example: stigma-> prison record - can be used to discredit the person's individual worth)

Conflict Theory and Deviance

-conflict theorists - look at deviance in terms of social inequality and power
- they believe that minorities receive unequal treatment in the criminal justice system
- when criminal offense in the same, African Americans/Latinos are more likely than whites to be convicted
- African Americans - 13% of U.S. population -> make up 43% of pop. on death row
- conflict theorists claim that minorities don't have money to buy good legal services, and crimes against whites tend to be punished more severely than crimes against minorities

<u>victim discounting</u> - process of reducing the seriousness of the crimes that injure people of lower status - if the victim is less valuable, the crime is less serious -> penalty is less severe

<u>white-collar crime</u> - job-related crimes committed by high-status people (examples: price fixing, insider trading, tax evasion, embezzlement)

- white-collare criminals are often treated more leniently than other criminals, less likely to be imprisoned

- those who do serve time often sent to minimum-security prisons with luxuries like tennis courts and private rooms ("Club Fed")

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Crime and Punishment

crime - act committed in violation of the law

- crime increased sharply in the U.S. between the 1960s and 1990s

- violent crime rates are considerably higher in the U.S. than in most industrialized countries

- FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) - major source of U.S. crime statistics

    - juvenile crime between 1993 and 1998:

    1. juvenile murder arrest rate dropped by 1/2
    2. juvenile arrests for weapons violations dropped by 1/3
    3. juvenile rape arrests dropped by 1/4

        - factors for decline:

        1. less demand for crack cocaine
        2. stiffer penalties for repeat offenders
        3. juvenile police crackdown on illegal guns on the street

criminal justice system - made up of institutions and processes responsible for enforcing criminal statutes

deterrence - discouraging criminal acts by threatening punishment

    - 3/4 of Americans believe the death penalty acts as a deterrent to murder

    - 71% of Americans support death penalty for murder, 19% oppose it

retribution - punishment intended to make criminals pay compensation for their acts

incarceration - keeping criminals in prisons

rehabilitation - an attempt to resocialize criminals

recidivism - repetition of or return to criminal behavior

    - 30%-60% of prisoners released are sent back in 2-5 years

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- reasons: 1. basic nature of the offenders 2. influences of more hardened criminals
     3. stigma of being an ex-convict

<u>Alternatives to Prisons:</u>

1. prison/probation combination
2. community-based programs for inmates (reintroduce criminals into society under supervision)
3. diversion strategy - offenders are referred to a community-based program <u>instead</u> of prison or probation

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