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.)
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)
**primary deviance** - occasional breaking of norms that is not a part of a person's lifestyle or self-concept

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

**stigma** - 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

**victim discounting** - 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

**white-collar crime** - job-related crimes committed by high-status people (examples: price fixing, insider trading, tax evasion, embezzlement)
- white-collar 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")
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
- reasons: 1. basic nature of the offenders  
      2. influences of more hardened criminals  
      3. stigma of being an ex-convict

Alternatives to Prisons:
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 instead of prison or probation