**SOC 3290 Deviance**

 **Overheads Lecture 11: Social Control Theory**

\* Social control theory:

 - assumes people will deviate

 - focuses on why people conform to society

 - argues deviance results from lack of control

 **Theoretical Images:**

**\*** Definitions of social control: (1) Deterrence

 (2) Related to socialization

\* Deterrence: formal social control of rationally calculated actions

 through punishment. Three components:

 (1) Severity

 (2) Certainty

 (3) Swiftness

\* Two types of deterrence: (1) General (i.e. the public)

 (2) Specific (i.e. the offender)

\* Increased questioning of deterrence led to broader focus on

 socialization / informal social sanctions rooted in social

 disorganization theory

 - normative chaos disrupts socialization

 - disrupted socialization weakens internal normative constraints

\* Walter Reckless (1973): containment theory: social disorganization mediated by social psychological factors:

 (1) Inner containment &

 (2) Outer containment.

\* If outer containments are disrupted by disorganization, inner may still

 restrain the individual from deviating

\* Ivan Nye (1958): focus on the family as agent of socialization. Basic

 animal instincts restrained by:

 (1) Internal control

 (2) Indirect control

 (3) Direct control

 (4) Need satisfaction

\* Travis Hirschi (1969): Strong social bonds bearing conformist values

 inhibit criminal behavior. Four types:

 (1) Attachment

 (2) Commitment

 (3) Involvement

 (4) Belief

\* John Braithewaite (1989): social control may be accomplished through

“reintegrative shaming” / invoking remorse in the wrongdoer while

 showing them respect

\* D. Matza (1964): Emphasizes neutralization of delinquent acts through

process of rationalization

\* Gottfredson & Hirshi (1990): General theory of crime focuses on low self control rooted in childhood with inconsistent punishment

\* Sampson & Lamb (1993): Life course theory: trajectories &

transitions

\* All variants of social control theory suggests that some form of control

 prevents deviance, & lack of control releases it

 **Social Control Theory & Social Policy:**

\* Formal deterrence: increase the severity, certainty & swiftness of

 punishment

\* Informal socialization: counseling, education & work projects

  **Assessment of Social Control Theory:**

\* Formal Deterrence:

 - inconsistent empirical support

 - specific deterrence often has opposite effect on recidivism

 - not all crimes rationally calculated

 - public unaware of penalties for specific crimes

 - “real world conditions” where punishments anything but swift,

 certain or severe

 - general deterrence shows inconsistent support/ varies by crime

 - adjusting swiftness/certainty of punishment may be

 unconstitutional/violate human rights

\* Informal Socialization:

 - vague concepts / overlap conceptually

 - relative importance of inner/outer controls little studied

 - empirical support for Hirschi’s theory with adolescents/ not

 adults (where multiple attachments may be a problem)

 - reintegrative shaming may not work in our culture/ with hardened

 criminals

 -distinction between deviants/conformists an oversimplification

 - social control practices may cause of deviance

 - more research needed on relative effects of formal/informal

 Social controls