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Sociology 101 – Text Journal Chapter: 7

“Control theory suggests that our connection to members of society leads us to systematically conform to society’s norms. According to sociologist Travis Hirsch and other control theorists, our bonds to family members, friends, and peers induce us to follow the mores and folkways of our society. We give little conscious thought to whether we will be sanctioned if we fail to conform. Socialization develops our self-control so well we don’t need further pressure to obey social norms” (Schaeffer, p.146)

The above quote is contradictory to some of the experiences that I have had with defiant individuals. The perception that individuals are likely to be obedient if they have bonds with friends and family is not true according to my observations. During my time in the military, I met with individuals who were quite rogue and less controlled in their behavior. Interestingly, such individuals had firm bonds with their spouses and family more than those who were compliant and docile. This nullifies the theory that having a connection to the society contributes to a person conforming to laws. I believe that self-control is developed from a personal interest. At high school, the individuals who had no disciplinary issues were those who had made the personal decision to be compliant. Their attachment to family played an insignificant role in shaping their self-control. The learners who had most disciplinary problems had backup support from their friends and members of family who extensively defended their bad behavior. Juveniles emanate from societies and families and this raises the question as to why they behave in the manner they do if having a sense of belonging should shape one’s behavior more. There are advanced factors that can induce us into following the social norms. For instance, taking etiquette lessons about one’s community can enable an individual to fit in a community’s standards of behavior. Looking into the trends of the contemporary society, there is a need for developing better ways for us to conform to the norms of society rather than relying on bonds made with our close counterparts.