CHAPTER 11

Prisons and Jails
Prisons

- Prison
  - A state or federal confinement facility that has custodial authority over adults sentenced to confinement
- Huge disparity between African Americans and Caucasians in prison
  - Incarceration rate for African American males was seven times greater than the figure for Caucasians.
FIGURE 11-1   State Prison Populations, 1925–2013
Note: Numbers may not reflect the actual number of persons sentenced to incarceration because some states, like California, have begun to house substantial numbers of inmates in local jails rather than in state prison facilities.
The Philosophy of Imprisonment

• A contemporary model of imprisonment based on the principle of just deserts
• Emphasizes individual responsibility and the punishment of offenders
• Has become the operative principle underlying many of today's correctional initiatives

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The Philosophy of Imprisonment

• Imprisonment is seen as a fully deserved consequence of criminal behavior.
• "Get tough" philosophy has been here for some time.
• "Three strikes" laws
Overcrowding

• The just deserts philosophy led to substantial and continued increases in the American prison population, even as crime rates were dropping.

• Prison capacity
  - The size of the correctional population an institution can effectively hold
Intermediate Sanctions

• Rated Capacity
  ▪ The number of inmates a prison can handle, according to experts

• Operational Capacity
  ▪ The number of inmates a prison can effectively accommodate, based on management considerations

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Intermediate Sanctions

• Design Capacity
  • The number of inmates a prison was intended to hold when it was built or modified
Selective Incapacitation: A Strategy to Reduce Prison Populations

• Collective Incapacitation
  ▪ Found in states that rely on predetermined, or fixed, sentences

• Selective Incapacitation
  ▪ Seeks to identify the most dangerous criminals with the goal of removing them from society
Security Levels

- Minimum Security
  - Generally housed in dormitory-like settings, free to walk the yard and visit most of the prison facility

- Medium Security
  - Inmates generally permitted more freedom to associate with one another
  - Less intense supervision.

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Security Levels

• Maximum Security
  - High fences, thick walls, secure cells, gun towers, armed prison guards
  - Death-row inmates are all maximum-security prisoners.
Prison Classification Systems

• Classification System
  ▪ A system used by prison administrators to assign inmates to custody levels based on offense history, assessed dangerousness, and other factors

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Prison Classification Systems

• Adult internal management system (AIMS)
  ▪ Record of misconduct
  ▪ Ability to follow staff directions
  ▪ Level of aggression toward other inmates
The Federal Prison System

- Five security levels
  - Minimum security
  - Low security
  - Medium security
  - High security
  - ADMIAX
- ADMIAX
  - Acronym for administrative maximum
Jails

• Jail
  ▶ A confinement facility administered by an agency of local government

• Purposes of jails
  ▶ Receiving individuals pending arraignment, holding for trial, conviction, sentencing
  ▶ Readmitting probation, parole, and bail violators
Jail

- Detaining juveniles
- Holding individuals for the military
- Releasing inmates upon completion of sentence
- Housing inmates for federal, state, or other authorities because of overcrowding in their facilities
Women and Jail

- Women comprise 12% of the country's jail population.
- They are the largest growth group in jails nationwide.
  - Over 30% of women who are admitted to jail have a substance abuse problem.
  - In some jurisdictions, it may be as high as 70%.
The Growth of Jails

- Jails are called the "shame of the criminal justice system".
- Many are old, poorly funded.
- Scantily staffed by underpaid and poorly trained employees.
- Low priority in local budgets.
Direct Supervision Jails

• Temporary confinement facilities that eliminate many of the traditional barriers between inmates and corrections staff
• Emerged during the 1970s

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Direct Supervision Jails

• Appear to be substantially less susceptible to lawsuits brought by inmates

• Correctional personnel sometimes lack the training needed to make the transition to the direct style of supervision.
Jails and the Future

• Jails receive relatively little attention from the media.
• Have generally escaped public scrutiny
• National efforts are underway to improve the quality of jail life.

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Jails and the Future

- Regional Jails
  - A jail that is built and run using the combined resources of a variety of local jurisdictions
- The emergence of state jail standards
  - Purpose is to identify the basic minimum conditions necessary for inmate health and safety
  - Increased standards are costly
Private Prisons

• Privatization
  ▪ The movement toward the wider use of private prisons

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Private Prisons

Private Prison

- A correctional institution operated by a private firm on behalf of a local or state government
  - Private prisons hold 6.8% of all state prisoners and 16.5% of federal prisoners.
  - The growth rate of the private prison industry has been around 35% annually.

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Private Prisons

• Barriers to privatization
  ▪ Old state laws that prohibit private involvement in correctional management
  ▪ Strikes by correctional officers
  ▪ The state's liability will not transfer to private corrections