

Comprehensive Exam
Spring, 2009
Deviance

Core Questions

1. Please choose two distinctive sociological perspectives/theories (e.g. structural functionalism, Marxism, symbolic interactionism, etc.) and choose a reading from the core list on a topical area (e.g., mental illness, violence, drug/alcohol use, and so forth) that **best** illustrates **each** of these two sociological perspectives/theories. Begin your answer with a summary description of **each** of these two readings and for **each** reading explain why it **best** illustrates a distinctive sociological perspective/theory. Then **compare and contrast** these two readings on a minimum of three dimensions. Examples of dimensions that you may wish to use include (but are not limited to) are: definitions of deviance, causes of deviance, identification of deviance, or consequences of deviance.
2. Durkheim's *Suicide* was an important seminal work in the study of deviance, in large part because of Durkheim's research methodology. Please provide a brief summary description of the methodological approach used in *Suicide*, and then discuss its strengths and weaknesses along the following three dimensions: 1) validity; 2) the empirical value of his approach (i.e., the types of questions that *can* and *cannot* be answered with this method); and 3) another dimension of your choosing (such as sampling or measurement).

Then pick one other methodological approach to the study of sociology and choose a reading from the core list that **best** illustrates this methodological approach as it applies to the study of deviance. For this reading, you are to compare the strengths and weaknesses of this approach to the methodological approach used in *Suicide*. For the reading, begin by providing a brief description of the method used and why it **best** illustrates the distinctive methodological approach you have chosen. Then discuss the strengths and weaknesses of this method along the same three dimensions used in your discussion of Durkheim: 1) validity; 2) the empirical value of each approach (i.e., the types of questions that can and cannot be answered with this method); and 3) another dimension of your choosing (such as sampling or measurement), always comparing this distinctive methodology to the methodology used in Durkheim's *Suicide* throughout your answer.

Extended Questions

3. **Describe and explain** how social control agents may contribute to or amplify the deviant behavior of persons dealt with in their official capacities. What reforms or policy changes would reduce this amplification of deviant behavior or deviant careers?
4. Explain how deviance is socially constructed and how this construction is or is not related to power, using one of the topical areas on the reading list – (e.g., mental illness, violence, drug/alcohol use, and so forth). You must discuss a different topical area than you used to answer question #1.