

Study Questions, Week 6

Topic for the Week: Deviance and Social Control

Readings for the Week: Macionis text, Chapter 6

Questions:

- (1) Provide a sociological definition for the term *deviance*. What is the difference between deviance and a *crime*? Does deviance imply that something is bad? Explain.
- (2) What is meant by *social control*? What are the mechanisms through which social control operates?
- (3) How do the *biological*, *psychological* and *sociological* explanations of deviance differ? Provide an example of each that illustrates the difference.
- (4) Describe each of the following theories of deviance. For each, identify the role that *socialization* and *choice* play in the theory. What are some problems with each theory?
 - Containment Theory
 - Strain Theory
 - Labeling Theory
 - Differential Association Theory
 - Control Theory
- (5) Can deviance be considered *functional*? Explain.
- (6) *Labeling* is an important concept in understanding deviance. What does labeling mean? How does labeling form part of processes of social construction? What are some products of labeling?
- (7) Explain the relationship between deviance and *capitalism*. What causes someone to be labeled deviant in capitalist society? What is the role of law and power in this process?
- (8) How do *structural-functionalist*, *symbolic-interaction*, and *social-conflict* approaches to deviance differ? In your response, include (a) a summary of each approach; (b) important concepts in each approach; and (c) an example of how each approach explains deviance.
- (9) Under what conditions does a deviant act become a criminal act? What is the relationship between opportunity and crime? Explain how and why the following are deviant: white-collar crime, corporate crime, organized crime, hate crimes, victimless crimes
- (10) What is the purpose of the *law* in society? How is the law functional? How is the law an instrument of oppression?
- (11) What is the role of police and courts in the U.S. criminal justice system? Is this system appropriate for dealing with ALL criminal acts? What other groups are involved in reducing or punishing crime? Under what conditions might criminals avoid being punished to the criminal justice system?
- (12) How is crime punished? Describe different types of punishment for criminal acts. Under what circumstances is each most likely to reduce crime?