

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
DEVIANCE, LAW AND SOCIAL CONTROL
WRITTEN PRELIMINARY EXAMINATION

August 22, 1994

PART I. MORNING

A. ANSWER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS:

1. A nagging problem or question in the field of deviance concerns the extent to which attempts to control or limit deviant behavior may serve to make it worse. Attempts to control deviance in a specific individual may promote deviance in a group or vice versa, and efforts to limit deviance in individuals or groups may simply lead to more deviance of one sort or another. One may understand these possibilities using various theories and at different levels of generality.

a. Review three or more distinct theories or theoretical perspectives on deviance, indicating in what ways each of these could explain or account for such counterproductive efforts.

b. Review research which would support your arguments. Cite specific theory and research as appropriate.

2. The publication of Constructing Social Problems, by Spector and Kitsuse, led to renewed interest in the social constructionist perspective on social problems. This perspective has been applied to various types of crime, juvenile delinquency, atypical sexual behaviors, and behaviors involving emotional and intellectual functioning (e.g., mental illness, hyperkinesis).

Social constructionism is often contrasted with the objectivist or positivist perspective on social problems and deviant behavior. The two perspectives differ in several important ways.

a. Select one of the (types of) behaviors listed in the preceding paragraph. Summarize the social constructionist view as it has been applied to this behavior. Identify the major assumptions, and define the key terms used by this perspective.

b. Summarize the traditional objectivist/positivist view of this behavior. What are the principal differences between the two views?

(see page 2 for c and d)

- c. Summarize one empirical study of the behavior which utilized a constructionist approach. Summarize one empirical study of the behavior which utilized an objectivist/positivist view. What are the principal differences between the two studies?
- d. What has the constructivist perspective contributed to the study of this behavior? More generally, what has it contributed to the study of deviance, law and social control?

B. ANSWER ONE OF THE FOLLOWING TWO QUESTIONS:

1. Efforts to study deviance in formal organizations, such as industrial corporations, hospitals, or government bureaucracies, pose certain methodological problems. Some of these are conceptual and some are operational or practical.
 - a. Discuss methodological problems which are unique or prominent in the study of deviance in formal organizations. Give examples from the research literature.
 - b. Discuss typical or preferred ways of handling such problems. Cite relevant research and theory.
2. In most studies of crime in the United States, the amount of crime is measured by one or more of three techniques: The FBI's Uniform Crime Report (UCR), The National Institute of Justice's National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) and self reports.
 - a. Explain how each measure is constructed and give examples of research using each.
 - b. Critically evaluate the quality of each technique for purposes of research on crime. How are the strengths and weaknesses discussed in your critique evident in the research you discussed in part a?

3. Juvenile crime in America has spawned a variety of "quick fix" efforts to turn around delinquents. In the late 1970s and into the 1980s, scared straight programs were very popular. They were modeled after The Juvenile Awareness Project at New Jersey's Rahway State Prison where "lifers" intensively confronted groups of at-risk juveniles. Today juvenile boot camps are becoming popular. The omnibus crime bill now in Congress would fund states to establish these camps for certain juvenile offenders. Boot camps are modeled after military basic training, and since the late 1980s have been set up in many states, but until now have been used primarily for young adult offenders.

- a. Describe the operation of the scared straight model and the theory of crime control behind it. Is this theory of control the same or different for juvenile boot camps?
- b. Describe the research on scared straight programs and critically evaluate it.
- c. Based on your critique, design a research project that would test the effectiveness of juvenile boot camps and the theory behind them.