

## **CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION: What Is Deviance?**

### **True-False Questions**

- 1) Sergio Cicero Zapata, a former top executive at Wal-Mart de Mexico, revealed that bribes were paid to local government officials to obtain permits and favorable contracts to open stores in Mexico; only the most superficial investigation was conducted and the matter was shelved.  
(True, p. 2)
- 2) Almost everyone abides by all the rules all the time.  
(False, p. 4).
- 3) Nearly all people today believe in the axiom, “live and let live”; they do not make evaluations of others on the basis of their behavior.  
(False, p. 4)
- 4) One of the four necessary ingredients for deviance to take place is an audience, someone who judges the normative violation to be wrong.  
(True, p. 4)
- 5) Religious views are off-limits for the sociologist of deviance. (False, p. 5)
- 6) One necessary component of what’s deviant is the existence of a rule or a norm. (True, p. 5).
- 7) One necessary component of what’s deviant is the violation of a rule or a norm. (True, p. 5)
- 8) Deviance is a trans-historical, cross-cultural concept that applies everywhere and throughout history.  
(True, p. 5)
- 9) “Societal” deviance is made up of those actions, beliefs, or traits that are widely recognized in advance and in general to be objectionable and worthy of condemnation. (True, p. 6)
- 10) Sociologists of deviance only study *serious* violations of moral codes, such as the Ten Commandments. (False, p. 4).
- 11) The terms “deviance” and “deviant” are non-pejorative; they are descriptive terms that sociologists use to refer to what members of a society, or social circles in a society, think or how they react to behavior, beliefs, and traits they consider unacceptable.  
(True, p. 5)

12) “Situational” deviance is a society-wide attribute which applies in all social circles in a given society.  
(False, p. 6)

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13) Sociologists of deviance endorse the statement, “Everything is deviant.” (False, p. 6)

14) Sociologically, racial and ethnic characteristics can be regarded as a type of deviance.  
(True, pp. 11, 13)

15) Sociologists of deviance study only motivated behavior; involuntarily-acquired undesirable conditions, such as blindness and dwarfism cannot be regarded as deviance because they are not the person’s fault.  
(False, p. 10)

16) Among the members of a majority of biology departments around the country, believing in biblical creationism is regarded as deviant.  
(True, p. 9)

17) Beliefs are deviant to the extent that they are objectively and empirically wrong.  
(False, p.9)

18) In the United States, the majority of the population regards atheism as deviant. (True, p. 9)

19) Some deviant beliefs are factually correct. (True, p. 9)

20) Since most physical conditions are not the possessor’s fault, it is sociologically unacceptable to refer to them as deviant.  
(False, p. 10)

### **Multiple Choice Questions**

- 1) Sociologically,  
deviance: (a) only  
refers to behavior  
(b) only refers to blemishes of individual character  
(c) only refers to beliefs  
(d) only refers to physical traits or characteristics  
\*(e) none of the above; deviance can refer to all of the above  
(pp. 5-9)
- 2) According to the typology spelled out in Erving Goffman's book *Stigma*--and according to most sociologists of deviance as well--in contemporary America, blemishes of individual character include:  
\*(a) alcoholism  
(b) physical deformities  
(c) blindness  
(d) being Jewish  
(e) none of the above  
(pp. 11, 16)
- 3) Most sociologists of deviance argue that:  
(a) Since it is unfair to label someone with a physical handicap as a deviant, having a physical handicap is not regarded as deviant.  
(b) Since lying and committing adultery are extremely common, lying and committing adultery are not regarded as forms of deviance.  
(c) Since nearly everything is considered deviant to someone, we are all deviants. (d) Since everything can be deviant, deviance is a meaningless concept  
\*(e) none of the above  
(pp. 6, 8-9)
- 4) Why are courses that are called "Deviant Behavior" slightly misnamed? (a) They aren't about *deviant behavior* at all.  
(b) They aren't about *behavior* at all. (c) They aren't about *deviance* at all.  
\*(d) The concept, "social deviance," refers not only to behavior that is designated as deviant, but also beliefs and traits that are regarded as deviant as well.  
(e) none of the above

(p. 7)

- 5) Which of the following is *not* a “necessary ingredient” that defines deviance? (a) the existence of a rule or a norm  
(b) someone who violates--or who is thought to violate--a norm  
(c) an “audience”: one or more persons who evaluate something to be a normative violation  
(d) a certain likelihood that one or more audiences will react negatively to a perceived normative violation

\* (e) none of the above; all are necessary ingredients that define what’s deviant

(p. 4)

- 6) To the sociologist of deviance, when considering whether something is deviant or not, the most relevant question is:

- (a) How does God feel about it?  
(b) Does it violate human nature?  
\* (c) How do relevant audiences feel about it and react to it?  
(d) How uncommon or statistically infrequent is it?  
(e) none of the above is a sociologically relevant question

(p. 10)

- 7) *Most* of the forms of deviance discussed in courses and textbooks on deviance are:

- \* (a) behavioral  
(b) abominations of the body  
(c) violations of esthetic standards  
(d) unconventional beliefs  
(e) tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion

(p. 7)

- 8) Cognitive deviance includes:

- \* (a) holding unpopular, unconventional, unorthodox, or despised religious beliefs  
(b) organizational deviance  
(c) tribal stigma of race, nation, and religion  
(d) alcoholism, addiction, and homosexuality  
(e) none of the above

(p. 8)

- 9) Sociologically:

- (a) Achieved statuses can be the basis for judgments of deviance; ascribed statuses cannot.  
(b) Ascribed statuses can be the basis for judgments of deviance; achieved statuses cannot.  
\* (c) Both achieved and ascribed statuses can be the basis for judgments of deviance  
(d) Neither achieved nor ascribed statuses can be the basis for judgments of

deviance.

(e) none of the above

(p. 10)

10) In defining what's deviant, sociologists *reject* the concept of:

- \*(a) absolutism
- (b) relativism
- (c) "audiences"
- (d) empirical reality
- (e) none of the above

(pp. 11, 17)

11) The form of deviance that Goffman does *not* include in his typology is stigma of: (a) race, religion, and nation

- (b) abominations of the body
- (c) blemishes of individual character

\*(d) organizational  
deviance

(e) none of the above; all are included in Goffman's typology

(p. 8)

12) To the constructionist, deviance exists because:

- (a) Certain behavior is immoral everywhere and for all time. (b) Some behavior violates God's law.
- (c) It is factually and empirically wrong.
- (d) It is caused by certain forces that can be explained.

\*(e) none of the above

(p. 14)

13) The perspective that asks the question, "Why do some people engage in deviance?" is:

- \*(a) positivism
- (b) social constructionism
- (c) defining deviancy up
- (d) defining deviancy down
- (e) the study of cultural representations

(p. 13)

14) Excluded from Goffman's concept of "blemishes of individual character" is: (a) unemployment

- (b) alcoholism
- (c) treacherous and rigid beliefs
- (d) mental disorder

\*(e) physical incapacitation

(p. 8)

15) According to Adler and Adler's "ABCs" of deviance:

(a) Behavior can be the basis for judgments of deviance, but physical traits cannot.

(b) Physical traits can be the basis for judgments of deviance, but behavior cannot.

\*(c) Both behavior and physical traits can be the basis for judgments of deviance. (d) Neither behavior nor physical traits can be the basis for judgments of deviance.

(e) none of the above

(p. 7)

16) The principle of relativity--one of the foundation-stones of the concept of deviance--applies:

(a) across societies, but not through time

(b) through time, but not across societies

\*(c) both across societies and through time

(d) neither across societies nor through

time (e) none of the above

(pp. 11-12)

17) Over time, deviance has been

defined: (a) down, but not up

(b) up, but not down

\*(c) both up and down

(d) neither up nor

down (e) none of the

above

(p. 12)

18) Sociologically, deviance takes place or exists:

\*(a) everywhere and anywhere people engage in behavior, hold and express beliefs, and possess traits that others regard as unacceptable or reprehensible

(b) only among the marginal, disreputable segments of the society

(c) only in the boardroom of large corporations and the headquarters of the military, that is, only among the most powerful segments of the society

(d) only in the private, secret corners of the society

(e) none of the above

(p. 5)

19) According to the author:

(a) Only societal deviance is sociologically relevant; situational deviance is



irrelevant.

(b) Only situational deviance is sociologically relevant; societal deviance is irrelevant.

\*(c) Both societal and situational deviance are sociologically relevant.

(d) Neither societal nor situational deviance are sociologically relevant. (e) none of the above

(pp. 6-7)

- 20) One lesson we learn from the account, “What Is Sexual Harassment? Is It Deviant?,” is that:
- (a) Any action that generates positive reactions in some audiences cannot be regarded as deviant.
  - (b) Enactors of deviant behavior are “versatile”; if they engage in deviance in one area of life, they are almost certainly going to do so in most other areas as well.
  - \*(c) Actions that were common in the past have become uncommon today but they still happen.
  - (d) Deviant and criminal behavior enacted during one’s early years continue throughout one’s lifetime.
  - (e) none of the above
- (pp. 19-21)

### **Essay Questions**

- 1) What are the “ABCs” of deviance? Why are all three regarded as types of deviance? How can sociologists refer to traits or characteristics that are “not the person’s fault” as instances of deviance? Is this fair? Is it sociologically meaningful? What about belonging to a particular racial, national, or ethnic category--can this be regarded as a form of deviance? Why or why not?
- 2) Does the principle of relativity mean that the sociologists cannot make moral judgments at all? Why or why not?
- 3) Cite some instances of the relativity of deviance according to variations from one society to another, through time, and in one situational context versus another. Do you believe that certain actions are “really, really” deviant in spite of the fact that have been accepted, tolerated, even in encouraged in some places, times, and contexts? Is the sociology of deviance *immoral* in its acceptance of moral and ethical relativity?
- 4) What’s the difference between “societal” and “situational” deviance? Why is this distinction important? Discuss some cases that exemplify “societal” but not “situational” deviance and vice versa?
- 5) Spell out a sociology of deviance that is based on essentialism. Do the same for constructionism. Definitions are neither right nor wrong, only more or less useful in helping us understand the world. Which of these two perspectives do you believe tells us more about how the world works? Which is a more *powerful* vision of social reality?

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