· Social Deviation

Social Deviation

By

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New York

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1939

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Published April, 1939

SET UP AND ELECTROTYPED BY T. MOREY & SON
PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

To my wife KATHERINE MORROW FORD

with gratitude for her constant aid and collaboration

PREFACE

Social change in recent years has been rapid in the fields covered by Applied Sociology, and especially that of Social Pathology. Many traditional policies of state and local governments have since 1933 been either displaced or dominated by Federal policies, systematic, coördinated, and subject to long-range planning. The entrance of the Federal government into the fields of poor relief in 1933, and social security in 1935, may, in the perspective of history, rank in importance with the inauguration of the Elizabethan poor laws or the English Poor Law of 1834. Scarcely less radical have been the developments in research, in the treatment of many types of handicap, and in economic and social planning.

The student seeks primarily a thorough understanding of existing conditions and policies. Because a course in Social Pathology commonly provides his first systematic study of social deviation and its consequences, emphasis upon current issues and policies and their interrelations may well take prior place. Nevertheless, the reciprocal relations of social data and sociological principles need to be shown in such an introductory course, even though the student may pursue theory at will in later and more advanced courses, after he has illustrative, factual data at his command.

In no branch of sociology is its synthetic function more requisite than it is in the field of social pathology. The initial standards of reference by which deviation is recognized proceed from the group culture by way of medicine, psychiatry, criminology, economics, and a host of other sciences. Current treatment of deviate individuals or groups, and of social "reforms" and policies—legitimate subject matter for objective treatment by sociology—likewise largely proceeds from these other disciplines.

While seeking objectivity in this volume the author has nevertheless undertaken to apply, among other standards of reference, an optimum standard, as outlined in Chapter IV, with which the reader may compare his own value system. The purpose is not dogmatic but solely to stimulate the student to develop his own system of thought (as distinguished from opinion or emotional reaction) among the almost infinite complexities of the subject

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matter. Here lies the teacher's opportunity in classroom discussion to aid the student to distinguish mental stereotypes and unsupported opinions from views backed by evidence and judgment.

The concept of social deviation has been utilized in the title and throughout the book because of the limitations of the concepts of social disorganization and social pathology, as outlined in Chapter I. The individuals and problem groups with which this volume is concerned are identified by their departure or deviation from accepted standards of reference. Such standards are outlined in Chapters I and IV and elaborated in other chapters. Negatively valued deviations are obviously the field of social pathology. Positively valued deviations, comprised under the rubrics "genius," "leadership," etc., will be treated in a book in the field of Community Organization, which is now in process.

The deviations of the individual are treated ahead of deviations within economic, family, and group relationships, so that the roles of biological, physical, and mental factors may be understood before dealing with human relations in these larger environments. There is fuller treatment of personal deviations (handicaps) and economic inadequacy (poverty) than of other subtopics, because these are the traditional subject matter of courses in social pathology. There is briefer treatment of the pathology of family and group relationships because ordinarily college students will find these subjects covered amply in other courses—e.g., the Family, Social Conflict, Community Organization, and Social Work—where the deviations in question will be seen in their larger bearings.

The purpose of the Questions for Discussion or Examination which follow each chapter is primarily to suggest to the student a basis for organizing his information and his thinking. The purpose of the section entitled Problems for Individual Study is to facilitate the assignment of original work by the student. The suggestions for supplementary readings are almost exclusively limited to American and English works because these are so much more readily available to students. To save space few references have been made to articles in periodicals and conference proceedings. Particular care has been taken in the footnotes and reference lists to expedite the use of library catalogues by students in their researches.

Acknowledgment is here made to the authors and publishers cited for their generous coöperation in permitting the quotations from their writings (individually acknowledged in footnote refer-

ences), and to my wife, Katherine Morrow Ford, and The Macmillan Company for their consent to the incorporation, chiefly in Part III and Chapters XXX and XXXI of considerable sections of our earlier collaborative essay entitled "The Abolition of Poverty."

To Ellsworth Faris I am especially grateful for his careful reading of the galley proof and his excellent suggestions and criticisms. From my colleagues Dr. Robert K. Merton and Dr. Edward P. Hutchinson, and my assistants Nicholas J. Demerath and Walter C. McKain I received many penetrating criticisms and recommendations, chiefly with regard to chapters in Parts I, IV, and V, for which I wish to express my appreciation. To Katherine Morrow Ford I am deeply indebted for continuous assistance and invaluable collaboration throughout this study.

JAMES FORD

Cambridge, Massachusetts February 23, 1939

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