



Deviance: Anthropological Perspectives

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In this volume composed of a number of cross-cultural case studies in deviance, the authors show how an anthropological comparative study can shed new light on the subject. Anthropologists have tended to avoid studying deviance as a phenomena in and of itself, concentrating instead on particular sorts of deviance such as sorcery, alcoholism, and suicide. Anthropology's total immersion in the culture being studied is well suited to a fuller understanding of deviance. An anthropology of deviance is likely to create new models that challenge many of the sociological assumptions currently used to interpret and understand deviance.

The results of fieldwork in the Arctic, the West Indies, India, Europe, Africa, and the Far East are presented in individual ethnographic essays, and the data is formulated into three new theoretical models that address the differences between smart and proper behavior, the distinction between soft and hard deviance, and the social and political uses of staged deviance. These innovative models provide a context in which the data collected cross-culturally make sense in general and make deviance more understandable. Anthropology lends a greater objectivity to the study of deviance through a great concern with the validity of data, a focus on small-scale systems and a meticulous scrutiny and acknowledgment of the models that will be used to interpret the data. This unique book improves not only our understanding of deviant behavior, but of sociocultural order as well.

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