

One page response on 'wayward puritans' by kai erikson



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Deviance has always been an interesting topic for me. As the introduction of Erikson in *Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociological Deviance* says, deviance has no objective boundaries. Deviance is defined not by the action itself but through the response of the people or the community against that action. This shows that deviance is a subjective rather than an objective subject. Being subjective, it varies depending on the perspective of the society or culture, or even the group, wherein the action occurs. As the article indicates, one's actions may be deviant in one society and a way to sainthood for another community. One classic example to this is cannibalism. Most societies deem this as immoral but there are few communities that practice it thinking that eating their enemies will strengthen them, or similar to that line. The article enlightened my perspective in understanding deviant behavior. A group has subjective boundaries, something that changes through time depending on the experiences and situation that they are subjected to. These experiences become the string that attaches each member to each other, forming the community's spirit and conformity. These experiences also set the behaviors that conforms and deviates with the group. It is important to note that when someone behaves differently from the group, it does not automatically mean that they are deviant. There are still levels of deviance that the group tolerates, being expected deviance such as teenagers behaving raucously. With this, the study of deviance revolves not one the individual that behaves differently but on the reactions and responses of the group that the individual belongs to. Deviance has and will always be part of our lives. I may have done deviant deeds but not to the extent that the group will shun me and discriminate me. This opened my eyes that our actions will always depend on our social environment.

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