
Talk about timely—a reference book about insurgency arrives for review just as the Islamic State insurgency declares itself a caliphate. Someone might say this is an argument against reference books, that they can’t possibly keep up with the pace of world events. But such a book edited by such a respected scholar as Tucker is relevant for anyone who wants a better understanding of where the Islamic insurgency fits in the flow of history. That history runs as far back as the Maccabean Revolt and right up to the wars of our time.

Tucker’s format is conventional, with more than 400 alphabetized signed entries and a few illustrations across 636 pages. Each entry offers further readings. People (“Tecumseh”), insurgency movements (“Mujahideen in the Soviet-Afghan War”), theories (“Hearts and Minds”) and tactics (“Propaganda”) are among the types of topics, with special attention to the American experience. The variety of topics is intended to show that various kinds of factors determine how an insurgency begins and how it fares. Also provided are a chronology, a bibliography, a list of contributors, an index and a small section of maps.

Insurgency is a rich subject for military thinkers. Between the colonial wars of the past century and the ethnic and cultural wars that just keep happening today, sustained violent opposition to various governments has been much more common than war between nation states. The publisher Routledge is mining this vein with special vigor. Among its recent titles are Tim Berbowl’s and Rod Thornton’s Dimensions of Counter-Insurgency: Applying Experience to Practice (2014), Isabelle Duyvesteyn’s and Paul B. Rich’s The Routledge Handbook of Insurgency and Counterinsurgency (2014), and Bruno C. Reiss and Andrew Mumford’s The Theory and Practice of Irregular Warfare: Warrior-Scholarship in Counter-Insurgency (2013). All are more academic than Tucker’s work, and while some handbooks are ready reference books, the Routledge handbook is a collection of only 29 essays.

Most similar to the new encyclopedia may be Ian F. W. Beckett’s Encyclopedia of Guerrilla Warfare (ABC-CLIO, 1999), but it was published before 9/11 and covers only the previous few centuries. In many respects it can still serve well, but a public librarian hoping to put 21st century insurgencies in a larger and more political context will find the Tucker volume helpful. —Evan Davis, Librarian, Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana.


The editors of the Encyclopedia of Social Deviance set out to create a work on social deviance that provided a broad and comprehensive set of entries written by top scholars in the field. While the editors sought out to be as inclusive as possible, given that the behaviors that fall under the label of deviant are wide ranging and always changing, it would be impossible to be completely inclusive and exhaustive. They focused on theoretical, philosophical, methodological, and substantive topics.

Like all encyclopedias, the Encyclopedia of Social Deviance, is arranged alphabetically. The only standardization in the 313 entries is that they each have a “see also”, in which they direct readers to other entries within the encyclopedia, and they each end with a list of citations for further reading. The entries have been written by top scholars in various discipline, including sociology, anthropology, psychology, criminology, politics, and religion. The Encyclopedia of Social Deviance also contains twenty-two thematic Reader’s Guides. These guides group related entries by topic.

Due to the fact that the number of behaviors that can be labeled as deviant is nearly endless, the entries stick to those behaviors that have been traditionally labeled as deviant. Various criminal, drug related, and sex related behaviors are included. Relatively uncommon, unheard of, or new behaviors were not included.

While I was unable to find another encyclopedia, I looked at two other sources for comparison. The first was John A. Humphrey and Frank Schmalleger’s Deviant Behavior, 2nd ed., Jones & Bartlett Learning, 2012. The individual chapters in this book also include learning objectives and theories on deviant behavior. The behaviors listed are much broader than in the Encyclopedia of Social Deviance. The second source I used for comparison was Rowland Atkinson’s Shades of Deviance: A Primer on Crime, Deviance, and Social Harm, Routledge, 2014. This source groups the behaviors into parts, such as “Acts of Transgression” and “Subcultures and Social Codes”. The entries in this source are much shorter than in the Encyclopedia of Social Deviance. The entries in both sources used for comparison are not nearly as exhaustive or as inclusive as those in the Encyclopedia of Social Deviance.

I think that the Encyclopedia of Social Deviance would be a good addition to any undergraduate library, especially those with programs in sociology, psychology, or criminology. The source is easy to use and covers a wide range of deviant behaviors. The Reader’s Guides are a nice feature because they “help the reader locate similar entries and, hopefully, stimulate new lines of thought” (xxvi).—Mina Chercourt, Head of Cataloging and Metadata, John Carroll University, University Heights, Ohio.


The distribution of food is one of the greatest challenges of the 21st century. While some struggle to find enough to eat to meet their minimum nutritional needs, others are eating themselves to death, consuming foods high in sugar, fat and salt that lead to cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer and