

Define *belief systems* and identify the two relationships that exist between belief systems and deviance.

We all hold a variety of beliefs. **Beliefs** are propositions that one considers to be true. For instance, you might believe that “nice guys finish last” or that most people are kind; each of these beliefs may or may not actually be true. **Belief systems** refer to interrelated sets of beliefs, such as those that underlie various religions (for example, Judaism), scientific disciplines (for example, physics), or political parties (for example, the NDP). Belief systems are developed and enacted by people at the institutional level within, for example, religious organizations, university departments or research centres, or governments. Belief systems are intertwined with the notion of deviance in two different ways (see Figure 1).



At times, belief systems, and people who act upon given belief systems, are categorized as deviant and subjected to measures of social control. At other

times, the belief systems themselves, or the ways they are interpreted by certain people, indicate which people, behaviours, or characteristics are believed to be deviant and in need of punishment, a fix, control, prevention, or cure (Bereska, 2018).

Classify different religious groups by using the traditional typology, and explain why some groups are more vulnerable to deviantization.

A range of different of religious belief systems and associated groups exist. The nature of the specific beliefs of each group varies, as do the number of followers they have, the requirements they place on group members, and their relationships with the larger society (see Figure 2)



Figure 2. Traditional typology of religious groups.

Although any religious belief system can be subject to critique, some are more likely than others to be deviantized because they operate with more tension within the larger society (see Figure 3).

Groups that are categorized as sects or cults operate with more tension within the larger society



Figure 3. Factors that affect the amount of tension experienced by a religious group.

Describe the different measures of social control that are directed at “deviant” religions and how members of these groups resist these measures.

Measures of Social Control

Although international human rights laws guarantee freedom of religious belief and practice, governments have the right to violate that freedom if there is (a) a threat to public health, (b) a threat to public order, or (c) a threat to the rights of others. Intervention is most likely to occur when groups promote belief systems that create the potential for acts of mass violence or mass suicide. Groups with these characteristics are commonly monitored by branches of government, such as the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), or their equivalents in other countries.

For example, in the early 1990s, the American government became



Figure 4. Beliefs that support mass suicide in religious groups.

increasingly concerned about a group known as the Branch Davidians, which was stockpiling weapons (presumably to prepare for an act of mass violence). In 1993, the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) tried to storm the Branch Davidians compound in Waco, Texas. This led to a 51-day standoff that ended with the deaths of 4 agents and more than 70 members of the religious group.

While the belief systems of the Branch Davidians (and some other groups) provide a foundation for mass violence, some other belief systems establish a foundation for acts of mass suicide. One of the most infamous examples is the People's Temple Agricultural Project (also known as "Jonestown"), which was led by Jim Jones. In 1978, more than 900 members of the group died after drinking Kool Aid laced with cyanide. Members of other religious groups have committed mass suicide as well, such as those in the Solar Temple (1994) and Heaven's Gate (1997). Introvigne and Mayer (2002) identified the beliefs that are shared by members of some groups, which can create the potential for mass suicide (see Figure 4).

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Some groups constitute a clear and legitimate threat to public health, public order, and the rights of others; governments attempt to control such groups to prevent harm. In other cases, governments exert measures of social control over groups that do not present legitimate threats of harm; in these cases, governments are creating barriers to religious freedom. The US Department of State releases an annual *International Religious Freedom Report* that documents such cases. Each year the US Secretary of State (under the authority of the President) compiles a list of “Countries of Particular Concern” (CPC); in 2013 these included Burma, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan (US Department of State, 2016). There are five barriers to religious freedom that some governments may implement (see Table 1).

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Table 1. *Governmental Barriers to Religious Freedom*

Barrier	Example
Authoritarian measures used to control religious beliefs and practices	In China, a person who teaches any religious ideology (outside of Communism) to children under the age of 18 is subject to arrest and imprisonment
Hostility toward non-approved religious groups	In Iran, groups that are defined as "protected religious minorities" (for example, Christians, Jews) report being imprisoned, harassed, and encouraged to leave the country by government officials or police
State neglect of the problem of discrimination directed against non-approved religions	In India, the government has failed to prosecute extremist attacks on minority religious sites
Discriminatory legislation or policies that disadvantage certain religions	In Burma, some local governments prohibit Muslims from owning land
Stigmatization of certain religions by wrongfully associating them with dangerous cults or sects	In Russia, Baptist and Pentecostal groups (which are denominations of Christianity) and the Salvation Army (among other groups) are labelled cults and subjected to strict controls

Certain

religious

groups are also subjected to measures of social control exerted by sources outside of government, such as the media, the anti-cult movement, and the countercult movement.

Measures of Resistance

Religious groups that have been deviantized frequently resist the social typing process. The Church of Scientology is especially well-known for aggressively counterattacking critics by using a strategy they call “fair game.” In 1997, University of Alberta professor Dr. Stephen Kent was targeted by a fair game campaign after presenting an academic paper that was critical of some of Scientology’s practices. Among other efforts, Scientologists picketed at multiple locations on the university campus, wrote letters of complaint to the Chair of the sociology department, made threats of litigation, and paid for a 16-page insert in the *Globe and Mail* that compared Kent to neo-Nazi leader Ernst Zundel (*The Walrus*, 2015). In 2015, the Church of Scientology engaged in similar tactics following the release of the HBO documentary, *Going Clear*, that targeted HBO executives, the filmmaker, and the author of the book upon which the documentary was based (*The Walrus*, 2015)

Explain how religion served as a social typer of deviance in the cases of witch persecutions, residential schooling, and the child-savers movement.

Sometimes religious belief systems or associated groups are deviantized and subjected to measures of social control. At other times, however, religious belief systems and groups engage in social typing themselves, and dictate particular people, behaviours, or characteristics as acceptable and others as unacceptable. This process can occur at both the micro and macro levels.

At the micro level, one’s own religious belief system governs perceptions of right and wrong. You can consider your own religious affiliation, if you have one. What behaviours or characteristics are deemed to be right or wrong, moral or immoral according to your belief system? Are you expected to engage in any specific routines or rituals as part of your day or week? Are you expected to eat (or avoid) certain foods overall, or at certain times of the year? Are you expected to treat people in certain ways?

Table 2. *Examples of Scientific Misconduct*

Examples of Misconduct	Description
Forging	Falsification of data, such as reporting observations that never occurred
Trimming	Manipulating observations so they support the theory being examined
Cooking	Selectively reporting only data that supports a claim and suppressing other data
Ethical violations	Failing to adhere to requirements that protect research participants

At the macro level, religious belief systems may be intertwined with political belief systems and this can influence laws and social policies. We can see this in some places in the world today, particularly certain nations that have religious-based governments (for example, Saudi Arabia, Iran). Historically, there have been many examples of religious belief systems exerting influence over political systems (Bereska, 2018). In the assigned reading, you will learn about the witch persecutions (past and present), the Victorian child-savers movement, and residential schooling.

Describe the origins, causes, and control of scientific misconduct.

What is Scientific Misconduct?

Science can be deviantized when an unacceptable act or acts occur in a body of science—that is, when scientists engage in **scientific misconduct**. There are many different forms of scientific misconduct that scientists may engage in (see Table 2 for some examples).

One well-known example of scientific misconduct involved research done by medical researcher Andrew Wakefield who, in 1998, claimed there was a link between

childhood vaccines and autism. His research was later found to be an elaborate fraud grounded in several different forms of misconduct (Godlee, Smith, & Marcovitch, 2011). In 2011, the academic journal that had published his research officially retracted it, and Wakefield subsequently lost his medical license. The consequences of his misconduct were considerable: Some parents chose not to vaccinate their children, and this has resulted in a resurgence of many life-threatening diseases that were previously considered to be thoroughly under control—or even eradicated—such as whooping cough and measles (Picard, 2011). In the assigned reading, you will learn about other historical and recent examples of scientific misconduct.

Causes of Scientific Misconduct

Some scholars argue that misconduct is relatively rare, while others claim it is far more common than we think. These contrasting perceptions of misconduct are associated with different explanations (Bereska, 2018).

According to **bad apple** or **bad person theory**, scientific misconduct is relatively rare because of the norms that govern scientific endeavours (Merton, 1973) (see Figure 5).

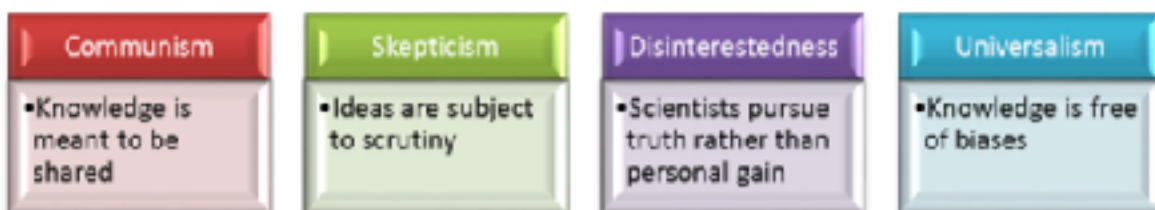


Figure 5. The normative structure of science.

In other words, there are just a few “bad apples” in science, just as there are in any other occupation. Thus, when a few scientists engage in

misconduct, the misconduct is a result of something about those individuals, such as personality factors.

In contrast, **iceberg theory** proposes that misconduct is far more common than we think—that those who are caught are just the tip of the iceberg. Proponents of this view suggest that the structure of science itself—its competitive nature, publish-or-perish university environments, and commercialized science funded by industries with vested interests—facilitates misconduct. You will read more about the corporatization of science and its relationship to misconduct in the assigned reading.

Controlling Scientific Misconduct

There have been various approaches—or what Montgomery and Oliver (2009) call institutional logics—to controlling misconduct over the last several decades (see Figure 6).

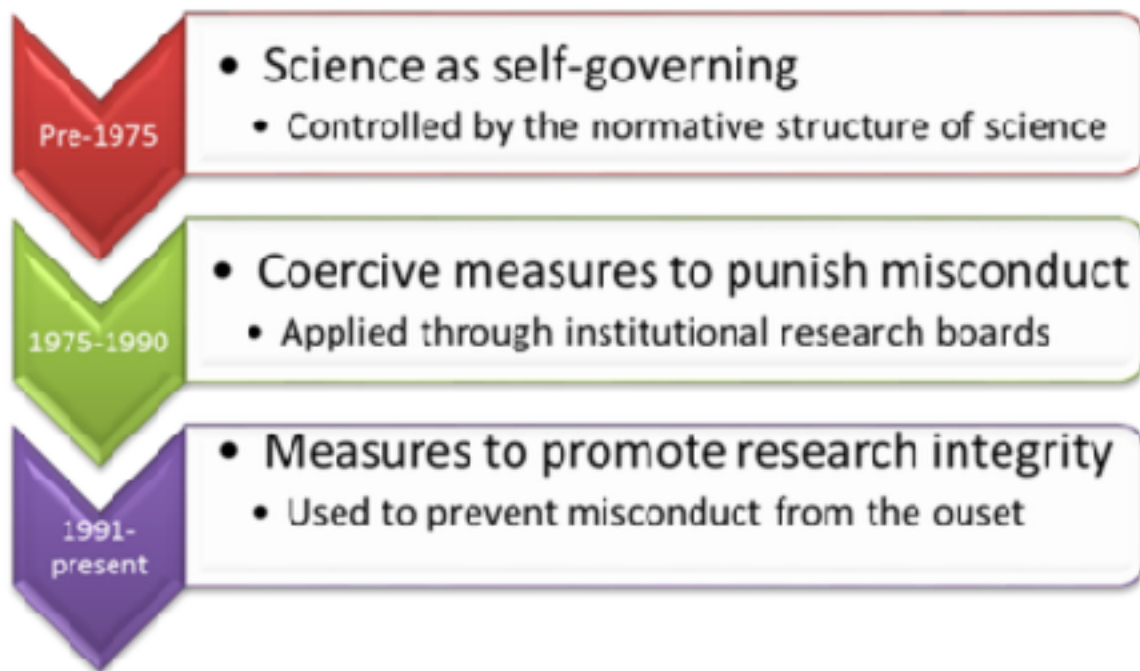


Figure 6. Changing institutional logics.

Explain why a science's location on the continuum of deviant science and real science may change over time, and use examples.

Sometimes it is not just certain activities practiced by scientists that are deviantized and subjected to measures of social control; sometimes an entire body of science is deviantized. Some belief systems are considered to constitute legitimate science (for example, quantum mechanics), while others are labelled as "pseudoscience" or "junk science" (astrology, for example). In the assigned reading, you will learn more about how perceptions of certain scientific belief systems can change over time, due in part to the conservative nature of science.

Explain why science is a powerful social typer of deviance and how that power has manifested itself through history, and provide examples.

Sometimes, specific acts conducted by scientists—and even entire scientific belief system—can be deviantized and subjected to measures of social control. Nevertheless, science plays a central role in steering the social typing process by helping to determine which behaviours or characteristics are normal and which need social control. In this regard, science has historically played a central role in justifying several acts that contemporary society deems to have been unacceptable, such as the eugenics movement and the colonization of Indigenous peoples. You will learn about both examples in the assigned reading.

In contemporary society, the role of science is even more pervasive, as you have seen in the variety of behaviours that you have seen being medicalized throughout the course (e.g., smoking, obesity). Most fundamentally, medicalization today is informed by genetic science, such as gene editing. You will learn more about the role of genetic science in the social construction of deviance and normality in the assigned reading. The following Ted talk addresses some of the ethical concerns surrounding certain forms of genetic science:

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Knoepfler, P. (2015). *The ethical dilemma of designer babies*. [Video file]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/paul_knoepfler_the_ethical_dilemma_of_designer_babies. (Running time 18:19).