

science, individualism, and attitudes toward deviance: the influence of modernization and rationalization

Virginia Rothwell and James E. Hawdon
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Blacksburg, Virginia, USA

Sociologists have long been interested in determinants of deviant behavior. Multiple researchers have concluded that attitudes toward deviance are good predictors of deviant behavior. However, little research has focused on the causes of these attitudes. This research offers an explanation and empirical test of potential causes of tolerant attitudes toward deviant behavior. We hypothesize that a secular worldview and individualism lead to an increased tolerance of deviance. Using 1998 GSS data, results offer support for the hypotheses. These results hold true even when controlling for religiosity and other factors known to be related to deviant behavior.

Sociologists who study deviant behavior have long focused their attention on discovering what causes individuals to deviate from social norms. We are curious about those who challenge the social order and we study their behaviors to discern who they are and how we can prevent their deviance. While research on the subject has focused on both the micro and the macro level, to date, individual-level

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Address correspondence to James E. Hawdon, Department of Sociology, Virginia Tech, 654 McBryde Hall, MC 0137, Blacksburg, VA 24060-0137. E-mail: hawdonj@vt.edu

theories such as differential association theory, control theory, and problem behavior proneness theory dominate the field of study. Each of these theories, either directly or indirectly, incorporate the individual's attitudes toward deviance as important predictors or causes of deviant behavior. Yet, none of these theories addresses possible cultural causes of these attitudes. This study attempts to fill this gap in the literature.

We begin by reviewing the influence of attitudes toward deviant behavior. Then, we discuss a possible genesis of these attitudes. Noting that the modernization and rationalization processes promote a secular, scientifically oriented, worldview and individualism, we argue that these ideological systems promote tolerance of deviant behavior. We conclude with a partial empirical test of the proposed theory. In this article, we are attempting to demonstrate that cultural belief systems other than religion can shape people's moral attitudes. This work therefore is similar to the large literature that analyzes the influence of religious beliefs on deviant behavior among Americans. We believe this analysis, while limited, can advance our understanding of deviant behavior. The research is important because being tolerant of deviant behavior is one of the most powerful predictors of being deviant. Understanding what leads to this tolerance can therefore help extend our understanding of deviant behavior. Moreover, studying attitudes toward deviance is important in its own right. Given the constructionist argument that deviance is socially created, attitudes toward deviance, if aggregated across individuals, can represent our society's moral boundaries. Thus, for example, the more tolerant of deviant behavior a group of individuals are, on average, the more relaxed their groups' moral boundaries. Studying factors that potentially shape these attitudes is therefore important because of the implications this has for the social construction of deviance.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The Importance of Attitudes Toward Deviance

Research has consistently shown that attitudes toward deviance are an important predictor of who will engage in deviance. Attitudes toward deviance correlate with drug

and alcohol use (Benda 2005; Hawdon 1996a, 1999, 2004; Stylianou 2002), selling drugs (Li 2004), binge drinking (Durkin et al. 2005), underage tobacco use (Stylianou 2002; Brook et al. 2005), premarital sex and promiscuity (Hope and Chapple 2005), adolescent pregnancy (Gillmore et al. 1998), and having an abortion (Costa et al. 1995). These attitudes are also associated with gang membership (Hope and Damphouse 2002), risky driving (Stylianou 2002; Jones and Quisenberry 2004), skipping class (Stylianou 2002), pathological gambling (Jones and Quisenberry 2004), academic dishonesty (Bowell and Chen 2004; Mustaine and Tewkesbury 2005), lying (Jensen et al. 2003), and eating disorders (Dukes and Lorch 1989). In addition, attitudes toward deviance predict criminal behaviors such as interpersonal violence (Li 2004; Sellers et al. 2005) and economic crimes (Hawdon 1999; Li 2004; Ford 2005).

This research tradition establishes that tolerant attitudes toward deviance predict who will engage in deviant behavior. In addition to the empirical connection between attitudes toward deviance and a host of deviant behaviors, attitudes toward deviance are prominently incorporated in many of the leading theories of deviance. For example, *differential association theory* (Sutherland 1939) is, at its heart, an examination of favorable and unfavorable attitudes toward deviance. According to the theory, an individual who spends time associating with deviants will develop a preponderance of definitions favorable to deviance relative to definitions unfavorable to deviance (Sutherland 1939). Similarly, *social control theory* (Hirschi 1969) directly incorporates attitudes toward deviance through the concept of "belief in the legitimate order." Central to the concept of belief is the acceptance of the normative system, or, alternatively, being intolerant of deviance. Jessor and Jessor's (1977) eclectic *problem behavior proneness* theory specifically includes "attitudinal intolerance of deviance" in the "personal control system." Thus, these theories, and others, consider an individual's attitudes toward deviance to be a primary "cause" of deviant behavior in some way. The theoretical and empirical centrality of this variable reasonably leads to the conclusion that attitudes toward deviant behavior could be the single most important factor in distinguishing between who is and who is not deviant.

Although most essentialist theories of deviance recognize the centrality of deviant attitudes, these explanations are incomplete. They focus on the proximate causes of deviance but ignore the distal ones. For instance, all of these theories argue or imply that attitudes toward deviant behavior are a result of socialization. Differential association theory stresses the importance of peer groups and intimates in teaching attitudes toward deviance. Yet, this theory fails to specify if these attitudes are due to socialization or selection (Thornberry et al. 1991, 1994). Control theory emphasizes the role of parental socialization; however, we know that peers play an important role in creating attitudes and encouraging deviant behavior (Henry, Tolan, and Gorman-Smith 2001; Svensson 2003; Thornberry et al. 1991, 1994; Walden et al. 2004). Problem behavior proneness theory implies both parents and peers shape one's attitudes toward deviance and, therefore, one's proneness to deviant behavior. However, this theory does not elaborate the mechanism by which these influences occur.

Most importantly, all of these theories neglect the cultural factors that lead to attitudes toward deviant behavior. While deviants are socialized into deviant roles, we need to realize that the peers and parents who socialize them are also socialized and that the socialization process, while similar in form, is culturally specific. Existing theories, for example, do not address the cultural factors that create the parenting styles, peer relations, or ideological systems that lead to or may produce tolerant attitudes. They do not address aspects of the culture that may make deviance more likely to occur. The one cultural factor that theorists consider is the influence of religion in promoting conforming behavior among individuals in society.

Considering Cultural Factors: The Role of Religion

Durkheim argued that religion is a key integrative device that maintains social order and fosters common beliefs and values among its individual members (Durkheim [1915] 1968). These common beliefs often concern the morality of certain actions (Benda 1997) and become reflected in the personal beliefs of the individual, even when he or she is separated from the group. Thus, the norms and values of

the institution translate into individualized moral commitments (Benda 1997; Durkheim [1915] 1968; Marx [1844] 1978; Weber [1904–1905] 1958). Consequently, religious institutions significantly regulate the behavior of individuals through the system of beliefs that legitimize social values, the rites and rituals that reinforce the individual's commitment to the institution, and the system of eternal rewards and punishment that ensure that individuals practice what they preach (Hirschi and Stark 1969; Tittle and Welch 1983; Cochran and Akers 1989). Research has consistently shown that religion exerts a controlling effect on deviant behaviors. Religiosity is inversely related to deviant drug use (Johnson et al. 2000; Longshore et al. 2004; Stylianou 2004), premarital sex (Rostosky et al. 2004), cheating on taxes (Grasmick et al. 1991; Welch et al. 1991), and delinquent acts in general (Cochran 1988; Glueck and Glueck 1950; Nye 1958). It also leads to a greater respect for the law (Hirschi and Stark 1969) and influences perceptions of crime and deviance (Abrams and Della Fave 1976; Harris 2003; Herzog 2003).

Researchers recognize religiosity as a “protective factor” that constrains deviant behavior; however, we have largely ignored similar ideological systems that may be conducive to deviant behavior. It is possible that other cultural traditions also exert or reduce controls over individuals' behaviors and attitudes. Given the level of secularization in modern societies, it is possible that ideologies other than religion—such as individualism, consumerism, nationalism, and so on—shape the socialization process and, therefore, influence beliefs and behaviors. Yet, what ideological systems could promote tolerant attitudes toward deviant behavior? Hawdon (2005) argues that two such ideological systems are scientific rationalism and individualism.

Science, Individualism, and the Tolerance of Social Deviance

According to Weber ([1919] 1946; [1922] 1964; [1922] 1978), Parsons (1977), Habermas (1979, 1984), and others, the processes of modernization and rationalization radically alter the worldviews, normative systems, social structures, and institutions of the societies that experience them. One

notable change is the increasing dominance of science as a means of explaining the world. As “truth” becomes increasingly based on secular, rationalized reason (Habermas 1984b; Weber [1922] 1964), the universal religions that once monopolized human understanding retreat to private conviction (Weber [1922] 1964). Hawdon (2005:152), summarizing the arguments of Weber and others, states,

In general, the rationalization of society is a secularizing process. It is the extent to which the systematic ideas of science supplant the magical elements of thought. It is a process through which religious matters of the supernatural have gradually become differentiated from the social and natural world. They are removed from the total fabric of social life and brought under the control of secularized subsystems.

According to Hawdon (2005), science promotes tolerance because, as it replaces religion as the central means of understanding the world, competing validity claims emerge with no universally accepted normative guidelines to judge their “truth” (see Habermas 1984b). Moreover, science teaches us to be critical of social traditions as rationalism replaces once unquestioned understandings of the world. “According to science, we should not simply accept tradition as ‘true.’ Instead, we must critically examine it” (Hawdon 2005:322). Consequently, moral traditions, regardless if they are based in religion or other cultural traditions, become relative and weaken as science ascends to dominance. Science—or at least the physical sciences and the more positivistic social sciences—deals with empiricism, not values; therefore, according to science, it is impossible to establish which moral code is “right” or “correct.” Thus, science leads to normative ambiguity as functional rationality is emphasized at the expense of substantive rationality (see Weber [1922] 1978; Weber 1946). According to the scientific worldview, we need to explain, not judge, unfamiliar or “odd” beliefs and behaviors. With the rise of science, “norms are not only secularized, they are relativized. Beauty is not the only thing that is in the eye of the beholder; now, so is good and evil” (Hawdon 2005:157). Therefore, science promotes tolerance of others’ behaviors and moral positions, even if these are “odd” or “deviant.”

Another social transformation that occurs with modernization is the rise of individualism. As the unified worldviews that secured social cohesion weaken, normative consensus becomes more difficult to achieve (see Luhmann 1982; Habermas 1984), and societies become increasingly difficult to integrate (Parsons 1977). As a result, individuals' orientations become concerned with the satisfaction of immediate needs (see Weber [1919] 1946), personalities become more autonomous (Habermas 1984), and interests become privately, instead of collectively, defined (Parsons 1951). In addition, relative to "advanced pre-modern" societies, modernization results in less stratification and greater social mobility (see Lenski 1966; Hawdon 2005). With less stratification and a more equitable distribution of power, the group's ability to demand conformity decreases as individual members gain power and status. The individual member's greater power relative to the group reduces the exit costs associated with leaving the group and increases the individual's options. Less social control and lower exit costs allow "individuals (to) gain freedom from cultural traditions and universalistic moral principles and, therefore, freedom in their choices and behaviors" (Hawdon 2005:154). This increased individual freedom is one of the most commonly cited consequences of modernization (see, for example, Simmel [1908] 1971a, 1971b, 1955; Durkheim [1915] 1968; Weber [1919] 1946; Fromm 1941; Parsons 1951, 1977; Habermas 1984; Habermas 1984b; Hawdon 2005; Luhmann 1982; Berger, Berger, and Kellner 1973).

As with science, Hawdon (2005) argues that the ideology of individualism is logically consistent with tolerant attitudes toward deviance. Individualism is the belief "in the dignity, indeed the sacredness, of the individual" (Bellah et al. 1985:142). Such an ideology glorifies the uniqueness of individuals and downplays their similarities. Individuals, according to individualism, should "stand out" from the crowd. Thus, individualism glorifies non-conformity. As Hawdon (2005:325) states, "It is difficult to maintain that you are a unique individual if your behavior, appearance and beliefs are conforming to those around you." Logically, if individuals "should be different," difference is a valued trait. Regardless if one uses a normative, absolutist, statistical, or reactive definition of deviance, "difference" is central to

what "deviance" is (see Clinard and Meier 2004). Thus, those persons subscribing to individualism are more likely to be nonconforming and embrace the differences that make them unique from others. Assuming their glorification of difference extends to people other than themselves, those who subscribe to individualism should logically be more tolerant of deviance.

Thus, according to Hawdon (2005), the ideologies of science and individualism that modernization and rationalization promote are logically consistent with being tolerant of deviant behavior. In a highly modernized and rationalized society such as the United States, those individuals who adopt these prominent cultural belief systems and adhere to these ideologies would likely be more tolerant of deviance than those individuals who embrace a more traditional worldview. Just as the norms and values of the religious institution translate into individualized moral commitments that promote intolerant attitudes toward deviance, the norms and values of other ideologies may also translate into individualized moral commitments that promote tolerant attitudes toward deviance. Based on this argument, the hypotheses for this study are

- (1) the more an individual adopts a scientific worldview, the more tolerant of deviance the individual will be, and
- (2) the more one adopts the ideology of individualism, the more tolerant of deviance the individual will be.

METHODS

The data for this analysis comes from the 1998 *General Social Survey* (GSS). The GSS is an annual poll conducted by the National Opinion Research Center and is based on a probability sample of individuals over the age of eighteen who reside in the lower 48 states. The 1998 survey is used because it asks questions that tap opinions about issues many consider to be deviant, respondents' religious behavior and, most importantly, respondents' belief in a secular worldview (Davis, Smith, and Marsden 2003).

Dependent Variable

The GSS regularly asks respondents their opinions on various social issues and behaviors. The following items were selected to measure opinions toward deviant behavior.

- 1) "Do you think the use of marijuana should be made legal or not?"
- 2) "Do you strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree that methods of birth control should be made available to teenagers between the ages of 14 and 16 if their parents do not approve?"
- 3) "Do you think it is always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes or not wrong at all if a man and a woman have sexual relations before marriage?"
- 4) "What if they are in their early teens, say 14 to 16 years old? In that case, do you think sex relations before marriage are always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?"
- 5) "What about married person having sexual relations with someone other than his or her husband or wife, is it always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?"
- 6) "What about sexual relations between two adults of the same sex, is it always wrong, almost always wrong, wrong only sometimes, or not wrong at all?"

The variable measuring the respondents views toward the legalization of marijuana was recoded as a dummy variable (1 = should legalize, 0 = should not legalize). Views toward teenagers having access to birth control without parental consent was reverse coded so that responses of "not wrong at all" received the highest value. Finally, variables representing the respondent's views toward teenagers having premarital sex, adults having premarital sex, extramarital sex, and same-sex relations remained in their originally coded values where responses indicating higher levels of acceptance received the highest value. Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of each variable. Bivariate correlations calculated between the individual items show that all variables are positively correlated with a range of

TABLE 1 Means and Standard Deviations of Study Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard deviation
Age	46	17.25
Minority	.2087	.406
Female	.5650	.496
Education	13 years	2.928
Income	\$46,265.00	32,363.74
South	.3605	.480
Population	405,140	1322.90
Political views	4.0977	1.390
Religious service attendance	3.6392	2.771
Legalization of marijuana	.2936	.456
Birth control for teens	2.6369	1.094
Teen premarital sex	1.4380	.791
Adult premarital sex	2.6802	1.260
Extramarital affairs	1.2772	.615
Homosexuality	1.9426	1.297
Secular worldview	3.1450	1.165
Individualism	3.9367	1.269

.179 to .542¹ and all of the correlations are statistically significant at the .01 alpha level. Because the variables were highly correlated, we constructed an index to measure an individual's overall tolerance of deviance. Scale reliability analysis shows that the items displayed adequate internal consistency (alpha = .705). Therefore, the variables were summed to form the index *tolerance of deviance*.

Independent Variables

The question "We trust too much in science and not enough in faith" measured the respondent's acceptance of a secular worldview. This question was selected because individuals who responded that they disagree and strongly disagree with this statement think that trusting in science is a positive attribute to have. Moreover, it specifically contrasts a secular worldview with a religious worldview. The variable ranges from "strongly agree" (1) to "strongly disagree" (5). Thus, high scores on this variable indicate an adoption of a secular

¹The correlations are presented in Table 2.

worldview. The mean response this question is presented in Table 1.

The second independent variable in this analysis is individualism. The question selected to measure individualism is "If you had to choose, which thing on this list would you choose as the most important for a child to learn to prepare him or her for life? To think for himself or herself?" This question was selected because those responding that being able to think for one's self was the most important thing for a child to learn to prepare them for life would be more likely to believe that people should strive to stand out from the crowd and to question the existing social structure. This variable was reverse coded so that those who responded that thinking for one's self is the most important received the highest coded value.

Control Variables

The control variables for this analysis include age, race, sex, education, income, political views, region of the country, population size of the area in which the respondent lives, and religious service attendance. Race, sex, and region of residence were recoded as dummy variables. For race minority was coded as 1 and White was coded as 0. Females were coded as 1 and males as 0. For region, South² was coded as 1 and all other regions were coded as 0. The variables age and income were recoded to the midpoint of each category. Finally, political views, population size, and religious service attendance remained in their original coded form. High scores on political views represent a conservative political position, and religious service attendance ranges from no attendance (0) to attending several times per week (8). For purposes of this analysis, religious service attendance will serve as a measure of an individual's religiosity. The means and standard deviations of all the variables are presented in Table 1.

²For the variable region of residence, codes for South Atlantic, East South Central, and West South Central are recoded as 1 (South) and all other regions are recoded as 0 (Not South). We chose to compare the South to all other regions as the South reports higher levels of religiosity and those with higher levels of religiosity have lower tolerance of deviance.

ANALYTIC STRATEGY

To determine the effects of a secular worldview and individualism on tolerance of deviance we begin by calculating bivariate correlations between each of the study variables. These correlations illustrate the direction and the significance of the independent and control variables on tolerance of deviance. The second step in our analytic strategy is to perform an OLS regression with tolerance of deviance regressed on the control and independent variables.

RESULTS

Table 2 presents the correlations for the study variables. Based on the correlations, education is positively correlated (.220, $p < .01$) with tolerance of deviance. Individuals who reside in the South ($-.203$, $p < .01$) and political conservatives report less tolerance of deviance ($-.455$, $p < .01$). Similarly, those who attend religious services regularly ($-.455$, $p < .01$) and older respondents ($-.264$, $p < .01$) have less tolerant attitudes toward deviant behavior. Finally, as predicted, the adoption of a secular worldview (.431, $p < .01$) and individualism (.283, $p < .01$) are positively correlated with tolerance of deviance.

Moving to a multivariate analysis, OLS regression is used to determine the effects of a secular worldview and individualism on an individual's tolerance of deviance while controlling for other variables known to have an effect on tolerance of deviance and deviant behavior. The results of the multiple regression analyses are presented in Table 3. Model One contains the effects of the control variables on tolerance of deviance. Age, conservative political views, and religiosity are all statistically significant ($p < .001$), negative predictors of tolerance of deviance. Education is a statistically significant, ($p < .001$) positive predictor. No other control variable achieves statistical significance. Of the control variables, religiosity has the strongest effect on tolerance of deviance (beta = $-.384$). The model including the control variables is statistically significant ($F = 23.364$, $p < .001$) and explains 42.9% of the variance in tolerance of deviance. The effects of the control variables are all in the predicted direction.

TABLE 2 Bivariate Correlations

	A	M	F	E	I	P	PV	R	FCA	LM	TBC	TS	PS	ES	H	TD	SWV	IND	
A	1																		
M		1																	
F			1																
E				1															
I					1														
P						1													
PV							1												
R								1											
FCA									1										
LM										1									
TBC											1								
TS												1							
PS													1						
ES														1					
H															1				
TD																1			
SWV																	1		

Key: A = Age, M = Minority, F = Female, E = Education, I = Income, P = Population, PV = Conservative Political Views, R = South, FCA = Frequency of Church Attendance, LM = Legalization of Marijuana, TBC = Teen Birth Control, TS = Teen Sex, PS = Premarital Sex, ES = Extramarital Sex, H = Homosexuality, TD = Tolerance of Deviance, SWV = Secular Worldviews, IND = Individualism.
* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$.

TABLE 3 Tolerance of Deviance Regressed on Secular Worldviews and Individualism

	Model 1		Model 2		<i>n</i> = 269
	B	B	b	B	
Age	-.039*** (.011)	-.180	-.038*** (.010)	-.176	
Minority	-.525 (.440)	-.060	-.306 (.419)	-.035	
Female	-.018 (.333)	-.003	.031 (.317)	.001	
Education	.256*** (.065)	.212	.156** (.065)	.129	
Income	.000 (.000)	.020	.000 (.000)	.010	
Region	-.582 (.346)	-.081	-.384 (.331)	-.054	
Population	.000 (.000)	.005	.000 (.000)	.015	
Political views	-.802*** (.119)	.119	-.734*** (.113)	-.306	
Religiosity	-.499*** (.064)	-.384	-.396*** (.064)	-.305	
Secular worldviews668*** (.150)	.225	
Individualism331** (.135)	.119	
Constant	13.573 (1.169)		10.724 (1.222)		
R ² (Adjusted)	.429		.486		

p* < .01; *p* < .001. Standard Error in parenthesis.

Model Two adds the key independent variables individualism and a secular worldview to the analysis. As predicted, secular worldviews (beta = .225) and individualism (beta = .119) are both significant predictors of tolerance of deviance ($p < .001$ and $p < .01$, respectively). While conservative political views and religiosity remain the strongest predictors of tolerance of deviance, the adoption of a secular worldview follows as the third best predictor of tolerance of deviance. Moreover, when secular worldview and individualism are added to the model, the unstandardized regression coefficient for religiosity changes from $-.499$ in Model One to $-.396$, indicating that these variables account for a portion of religiosity's relationship with tolerance of deviance. Secular worldviews and individualism explain an additional 5.7% of the variance in tolerance of deviance. This additional explained variance is a significant improvement over Model One (F change statistic = 24.079, $p < .001$). Thus, even when holding all other variables constant, individualism and adopting a secular worldview are significant predictors of tolerance of deviance. The full model accounts

for 48.6% of the variance in respondents' tolerance of deviance.³

DISCUSSION

The literature presented in this study led to the hypotheses that the adoption of a secular worldview and valuing individualism increase an individual's tolerance of deviance. As modernization and rationalization occur, individuals move from religious explanations of the world toward secular explanations of the world. As these processes unfold, there is also an increase in the value placed on individualism. Individualism stresses the value of standing out from the crowd and challenging the existing social structure. Both the secular worldview and the ideology of individualism lead to an increased tolerance of ambiguity and, therefore, an increased tolerance of behaviors and conditions that deviate from social norms (Hawdon 2005). The analyses performed in this study lend support to the argument that the adoption of a secular worldview and valuing individualism increases tolerance of deviance. Given the known correlation between attitudes toward deviance and engaging in deviant behavior, this study also suggests the adoption of a secular worldview and individualism may lead one to engage in deviant activities. Thus, the propositions stated in this paper may also predict who will engage in deviant behavior.

These findings also have implications for the understanding of deviance culturally and historically. We know that rates of deviance vary across both time and space (Hawdon 1996b; Hawdon 2005); however, few theories of deviant behavior address the source of these variations. Most existing theories lead one to question why, for example, people from developed nations have, on average, higher rates of deviant drug use than those living in developing nations (see Hawdon 2005; UNODC 2003, 2004). If we assume it is because members of developed nations have lower levels of self-control, we must wonder why this is so. Similarly,

³White's test for heteroskedasticity indicated that heteroskedasticity was not evident in the model (White's $\chi^2 = 11.79$; $p < .05$). Moreover, the error terms were normally distributed and multicollinearity was not present (i.e., none of the variance inflation factors exceeded 1.49).

why would people from modernized nations be more likely to associate with deviant peers than people in less-developed nations are? Few existing theories can answer these questions. The theoretical insight offered here can possibly account for this cross-cultural and cross-national variation. We know that levels of modernization and the extent to which society is rationalized varies cross-culturally. If Weber, Parsons, Habermas and others are accurate in arguing that modernization leads to the adoption of a secular worldview and individualism and the findings reported here hold cross-culturally, then differences in rates of deviant behaviors found across the globe may be, in part, due to differing levels of modernization and rationalization.

Similarly, changes in rates of deviant behavior over time could be addressed, in part, by changes in the extent to which a culture promotes a secular worldview and science. From a relatively long historical view, the secularization of society has increased rather steadily. There are certainly more competing normative traditions from which to choose in contemporary American than there were 100 years ago. For example, Eisgruber (2006:46) states,

Secularization in the sense of differentiation' has certainly occurred in the United States. Domains such as higher education, once subject to religious control, have developed autonomous, nonreligious norms... Differentiation is an essential feature of a modern, pluralist society.

There is also little doubt that we, as a society, are more tolerant of numerous behaviors today than we were 100 years ago. For example, divorce, cohabitation, same-sex unions, and other "alternative family styles" are much more acceptable today than in the recent past. Similarly, body piercing, tattoos, non-traditional hairstyles and fashion, pre-marital sex, and a host of other "deviant" behaviors are tolerated more today than they would have been in the past. Thus, the general argument that modernization and rationalization lead to greater tolerance would seem to be supported based on cursory historical evidence.

Yet, from a shorter-term perspective, it could be argued that the extent to which science and individualism are valued by our culture fluctuates if not by the year, by the decade. Despite the general tendency for our culture to

secularize and rationalize, there have been resurgences of religious faith from time to time (see, for example, Wuthnow 1998). Similarly, more collectivistic ideologies have been promoted at different times in our recent history. These shorter-term fluctuations can possibly account for changing rates of deviant behavior. For example, the decreased rates of illegal drug use witnessed in the 1980s could be due, in part, to the more collectivistic ideology and the resurgence in traditional religions the decade also witnessed.⁴ This study, therefore, may offer supporting evidence to a more general theory of deviance and its construction that can account for attitudes toward deviant behavior across both time and space.

Still, this study has limitations. Although we address the question as to whether or not the adoption of a secular worldview and valuing individualism lead to an increased tolerance of deviance and conclude that they do, we do not directly test whether the adoption of the secular worldview and individualism are significant predictors of engaging in deviant behavior. Furthermore, although our study may have cross-cultural and historical implications, we do not explore whether these conclusions hold true cross-culturally or historically. Future studies should address these limitations. Our study is much less ambitious.

Despite these limitations, this study suggests that other culturally produced ideological systems besides religion may shape individual beliefs concerning deviant behavior. While there is a long-standing body of literature that documents religion's "protective" influence against engaging in deviant behavior, little research has analyzed the influence of other ideological systems on an individual's tolerance of deviant behavior. The research offered here is an early attempt to do so. It may eventually further our understanding of the distal causes of deviant behavior. It may also help us explain rates of deviant behavior across time and space.

⁴ GSS data provides evidence that "religiosity" increased in the 1980s. The average percentage of respondents who said their religious beliefs were either "strong" or "somewhat strong" increased from 47.4% in the period 1974–1980 to 50.6% in the period from 1981–1990. This percentage then decreased to 48.9% in the period 1991–2004. These changes are statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 22.52$; $p < .001$).

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