Deviance labelling and normative strategies in the Canadian "new religions/ countercult" debate*

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Abstract. Using primary material that has not appeared in scholarly literature, this paper presents a sevenfold categorization of labelling strategies utilized by religiously deviant ideological organizations and their countermovements in attempts to secure resources for themselves and deny them to their opponents. These strategies involve public self-presentations by the groups as being either normative or tolerable, and portrayals of their opponents as being intolerable deviants. Designations of both tolerableness and intolerableness take place in three dimensions (legitimate, non-criminal, and criminal), and the debates between the "cults" and the "countercults" involve competing claims to the public concerning the most appropriate ways to interpret each side's behaviours and beliefs. Labelling perspectives and resource mobilization theory provide the broad contours for my argument, and my conceptual scheme builds upon work recently published by Robert Stebbins on "tolerable" deviance.

Résumé. Cet article propose une catégorisation en sept points des stratégies d'"étiquetage" employées par des organisations religieuses déviantes et leurs contre-mouvements en vue d'obtenir des ressources et d'en bloquer l'accès à leurs adversaires. En mettant en oeuvre ces stratégies, les groupes peignent pour consommation publique un portrait d'eux-mêmes comme étant tolérables ou normatifs, et peignant leurs adversaires en intolérables déviants. Les désignations du tolérable et de l'intolérables se déploient selon trois dimensions (légitime, non-criminelle, criminelle); dans les débats entre "cultes" et "contre-cultes," le public est appelé à départager les façons les plus appropriées d'interpréter les actions et croyances de chaque camp. Mon propos est basé sur les perspectives de l'"étiquetage" et sur la théorie de la mobilisation des ressources, alors que mon modèle conceptuel est développé à partir des travaux récemment publiés de Robert Stebbins sur la déviance "tolérable." L'analyse est menée en utilisant des données primaires inédites.

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Despite extensive public attention given by North Americans to the debate over "new religions" or "cults" in the 1970s and early 1980s, no major historian or sociologist of deviance has comprehensively examined the Canadian material in an attempt to determine its significance and meaning for this country (see Ralston, 1989; Mackie and Brinkerhoff, 1983).[1] Regrettably, almost all of what Canadian deviance scholars know about religious "cults" (or, as I prefer to call them, "ideological organizations or groups")[2] and the countermovement organizations that oppose them comes from American sources, since limited theoretical work, few ethnographic studies, and no historical accounts are based upon Canadian "cult" or "countercult" information. Two deviance studies that have discussed the Canadian "cult/countercult" debate are books published by Vincent Sacco (1988) and Robert Stebbins (1988). Not surprisingly, both authors relied heavily upon American sources (especially Bromley and Shupe, 1981), thereby telling us little about the debate in Canada per se.

In order to provide an appropriate forum for the discussion of the reputed transgressions that each side puts forward against the other in Canada's "new religions/countercult" debate, I propose a new deviance model that combines insights from Robert Stebbins's (1988) theoretical discussion of tolerable and intolerable deviance with basic assumptions from both resource mobilization theory and the "deviance labelling" perspective. Resource mobilization theory (McCarthy and Zald, 1973; 1977) has influenced the analysis of contemporary deviant religions (Bromley and Shupe, 1979), and recently I have expanded its application to include deviant religions as social movement participants (Kent, 1988). It postulates the availability and quest after resources as key determinants in the activities of social movements and social movement organizations, and the theory has made initial contributions to the analysis of "movement/countermovement" interaction along the lines that I am about to discuss (Zald, 1980; Zald and Useem, 1987).

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1. Although Ralston cites most major Canadian sociological articles, a few notable additional studies exist (albeit not all sociological ones). Among them are: the Committee on the Healing Arts 2, 1970: 494-95, 497, 498, 504-10; Lee, 1970: 57-88; 1976; Scientology [Canadian Churches of], 1973; Hill, 1980; Bird, 1977; 1980; 1986; Palmer, 1980; Westley, 1982; Mol, 1985 (a study which contributes nothing new to the field), and Spencer, 1981. A book with some scholarly interest, despite occasional polemics, is Richardson (1980).

2. Terminology has been a persistent problem when sociologists have discussed the groups about which the data of this article depends. The simple designation, "ideological organizations," however, captures the essential point that *their members collectively refuse to question the primary assumptions about their groups' fundamental doctrines.* Members may have private doubts, but all of these groups specifically prohibit the public expression of them. While organizations (and for that matter, individuals) can be ideological in numerous ways (including religious, political, psychotherapeutic, medical, economic, familial, etc.), the important sociological point concerns the members' uncritical, collective stance toward their groups' fundamental or core beliefs. When the groups are religiously ideological, then their fundamental or core beliefs concern their supernatural claim to legitimacy, along with the reputedly divine nature of the compensatory rewards and punishments that these groups offer to members (Kent and Mytrash, 1990).

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Useful in an analysis of resource mobilization competitions is a modification of traditional labelling perspectives from the sociology of deviance, specifically as applied to antagonistic ideological organizations that "have access to forms of social power [that] can be used to influence the agents of social control" (Hampshire and Beckford, 1983: 213). Unlike most discussions of deviance labelling in which the deviant is a passive recipient of a designation that is imposed by uniformly critical agents of social control, research published by Annette Hampshire and James Beckford indicated that "the deviant label [against religiously ideological organizations] may be rejected, neutralized or avoided" by the groups themselves (Hampshire and Beckford, 1983: 213). Moreover, the entire process of negative labelling may take place in a social environment of "differential toleration of deviance among different social groups" (Hampshire and Beckford, 1983: 212). Taking its lead directly from Hampshire and Beckford's modifications of traditional labelling perspectives, this article argues that negative labelling of opponents as intolerable, and positive self-labelling as either tolerably deviant or normative, are resource mobilization tactics that ideological organizations and their opponents utilize in attempts to gain resources and diminish the success of their antagonists. In outlining specific labelling tactics that both sides utilize in their quests for resource control, I introduce a substantial body of information from internal documents and media accounts that heretofore have been neglected in discussions about "sects, cults, and new religions" in Canada. The new theoretical framework that I propose, however, has broad applicability outside of Canadian borders.

A tolerance/intolerance labelling model
In order to conceptualize the competition for resources among Canadian ideological organizations and their countermovement opponents, I developed a dynamic model of "tolerable and intolerable labelling strategies" that takes its lead from an existing model of deviance proposed by Stebbins (1988). From his perspective, social acceptance (and not merely tolerance) of a group or behaviour stems from its societal evaluation as being *morally normative* — *it* sets the community standard against which other groups and behaviours are judged. All other classifications in Stebbins's system involve deviant (rather than normative) designations, and within these deviant designations a crucial distinction occurs between community judgements about tolerableness versus intolerableness (Stebbins, 1988: 3-4).

As specific types of tolerable deviance, Stebbins identifies three subcategories. First, there exists in society *criminal tolerable deviance,* which is "actually illegal according to criminal law, [but] generally treated by the police and the wider society alike as if it were of minor importance when compared with mainstream intolerable deviance" (Stebbins, 1988: 4). Next there exists *non-criminal tolerable deviance,* which is behaviour that "lies outside the jurisdiction

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of the law" (Stebbins, 1988: 5). Finally, there exists *legitimate tolerable deviance,* which "is actually guaranteed by law" (1988: 5). These forms of deviance "stand as tentative alternative solutions to the basic problems of human collective living" (Stebbins, 1988: ix).

Altering Stebbins's "tolerance/intolerance" model so that it conceptualizes the heated "cult/ countercult" debates is relatively easy, and it can be accomplished in two small steps. First, researchers need to expand Stebbins's categories so that there are as many types of intolerable deviance as there are tolerable forms. Thus, both tolerable and intolerable deviance can take the appearance of legitimate, non-criminal, or criminal behaviours or groups.

Second, these expanded categories should be seen as *socially negotiated entities that are fought over by various interest groups,* rather than as fixed entities that can be assigned by dispassionate researchers. Ideological organizations and countermovements (which themselves may have strong ideological bases) engage in evolving tactics of appealing to "publics, reference elites, authorities, and other external groups" (Zald and Useem, 1987: 252) in efforts that are aimed at "neutralizing, confronting, or discrediting" their opponents (Zald and Useem, 1987: 248).

After making these two adjustments to Stebbins's framework, I now can identify the basic strategy of the countercult movement by its continued *efforts to get ideological opponents socially labelled as intolerably deviant through allegations of illegal, immoral, and unethical practices.* This opposition movement invokes a variety of arguments and strategies to get the "cults" labelled as criminally intolerable, non-criminally intolerable, or even, in some interesting cases, intolerably legitimate. The countercult movement's moderate success at "discrediting" the "new religions" goes well beyond whatever support some mental health personnel and psychiatrists have given to them (contrary to what Stebbins and others claim; see Stebbins, 1988: 241; Robbins and Anthony, 1982). In defending themselves, however, the religiously ideological groups launch essentially the same charges of criminal intolerableness against their "countercult" opponents. As complementary "resource mobilization labelling" tactics, both sides try to enhance their charges by getting themselves socially defined as morally normative or at least legitimately, non-criminally, or (in extreme cases) criminally tolerable. Depending upon the issues being debated, organizations and their opponents may target specific segments of society (such as the legal system, political or bureaucratic officials, the public at large, etc.) with self-enhancing or opponent-damaging "information." I am advocating a new conceptual model that is represented in the accompanying chart.

The social designation of both normativeness and deviance categories, therefore, is an ongoing, fluid process, as antagonistic parties attempt to define or label themselves as normative or tolerable at the same time that they present their opponents as being unfavourable and intolerable. These attempts are strategies or tactics that both sides utilize when trying to acquire resources for

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Figure 1. Normativeness and religious deviance

	Legitimate	Non-criminal	Criminal
Tolerable [high to limited societal resource access]	2. guaranteed by law, and not threatening to society	3. not considered in legal codes, and not threatening to society	4. illegal but considered acceptable
Intolerable [very limited to no societal resource access]	5. guaranteed by law, but threatening to society	6. not considered in legal codes, but threatening or repugnant to society	7. illegal and considered unacceptable

1. *Morally normative* = the community standard against which other groups or behaviours are judged [highest societal resource access]

themselves, often while simultaneously trying to achieve the denial of resources to their competitors and detractors. The remainder of this article will be devoted to providing examples of this new schema's utility in relation to the current Canadian "cult/countercult" debate.

"Cult" and "countercult" attempts to secure normative labels (Category 1)
Substantial legal, economic, and social benefits are available to "socially acceptable" religious organizations in Canada, the United States, and other democratic countries (see Beckford, 1985).[3] Most fundamental is the state's twofold obligation to protect the right of individuals to hold religious beliefs if they so choose plus the right of citizens to freely and publicly associate for purposes of worship. These benefits help to explain why many ideological groups and organizations attempt to get themselves defined as religiously normative, which they do through institutional channels that are available for registering religious organizations with various levels of government, and by winning general acceptance from the public at large. Normative acceptance of a religious group in Canada is not likely to take place at the expense of the Catholic, Anglican, or United Churches, but probably room exists alongside these mainstream denominations for groups that are able to demonstrate ecumenism, religious and social tolerance, and a sense of community responsibility.

3. A significant difference, however, exists between Canada and the United States regarding state funding of religious schools. While the American system has legal separations between church and state that prevent the government from funding religiously based schools, the British North America Act of 1867, which served as the basis for the Canadian constitution, "enshrined public funding for Roman Catholic schools up to Grade 8" (McLeod, 1985). At least on the issue of tactics that ideological organizations have at their disposal to coopt institutional resources (Jenkins, 1983: 533) for religiously based educational schools, researchers must not assume that Canadian circumstances parallel those of its southern neighbor.

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The most basic strategy that ideological groups utilize in their efforts to attain normative status involves availing themselves of the governmental opportunities to be registered as non-profit organizations.[4] Churches, educational foundations, charities, and various social or civic clubs routinely receive this designation, and it simply means that no individuals profit from revenues that the organizations acquire. Several of the groups that Stebbins identifies as "sects and cults" actually have various levels of *governmental recognition* as legitimate religions, of equal status (at least on some grounds) as the normative ones (see Robbins, 1985). ISKCON (International Society for Krishna Consciousness), for example, submitted Letters Patent[5] in November, 1969, and the Church of Scientology of Toronto had its Letters Patent approved by the province of Ontario on 8 September 1967 (Kent Col./ Scientology/Organizational Structure/ Canada/Letters Patent [Charters]). Likewise, the Unification Church (i.e., Moonies), under its formal name, The Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity, filed its Letters Patent with Ontario on 9 May 1973 (Kent Col./ Unification Church/Organizational Structure/ Canada /Letters Patent [Charters]; see Famularo, 1987: 19, in Kent Col./Unification Church/History/ History/ Canada). In an official, legal sense, therefore, all of these ideological groups are as normative as mainstream or established churches, synagogues, and mosques in the eyes of the federal or provincial governments.

While government recognition of religions is a matter of formal application, social and moral recognition of these groups by existing normative groups is a matter of public, social approval, and, therefore, much harder to obtain. As, however, *a second normative tactic, many of the ideological groups will try to*

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4. Basically, a non-profit organization (which can be a club, society, or association, with some limitations) is "organized and operated exclusively for social welfare, civic improvement, pleasure or recreation or for any other purpose except for profit, if no part of its income is payable to, or available for the personal benefit of, any proprietor, member or shareholder" (*Canada, National Revenue for Taxation*, 1983: para. 1). A federally registered charity must promote one or more of the following: "the relief of poverty; the advancement of religion; the advancement of education; or other purposes beneficial to the community as a whole in a way the law regards as charitable" (Minister of Supply and Services, 1985: 2). In essence, neither non-profit organizations or their more general forms as charities are designed to make profit for people, so some tax officials prefer to call them "not-for-profit" organizations.

   On a provincial level, a group of people may form a "society" in order to "promote their common interests," which may be "recreational, cultural, or charitable." Provincially formed societies "may be eligible for tax benefits as a registered charity" when filing federal taxes (see Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Societies Act Information, January, 1988: 1).

5. Letters Patent are legal papers filed with either the federal or provincial Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (in accordance with the Canada Corporations Act) that, if approved, register a group as a not-for-profit "national, patriotic, religious, philanthropic, charitable, scientific, artistic, social, professional or sporting" organization (see Letters Patent Incorporating [the] International Society for Krishna Consciousness [Canada], dated 6 November 1969, recorded 8 January 1970, Film 251, Document 123, filed in Kent Col./ ISKCON/ General/ Organizational Structure/ Canada/ "Letters Patent" [Charters]).

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obtain recognition from existing "gatekeeper" religions, despite the high risks of rejection and the resultant likelihood of being deviantly labelled. Several of the same ideological groups that have obtained formal recognition as religions in Canada also have tried to obtain socially normative status among religious and civic leaders as well as among the public at large, but they have met with variable success. ISKCON, for example, has tried to convey to the press and public that its beliefs and practices stretch back into antiquity in India (Subhananda dasa, 1979), and it has won normative acceptance among a sizable portion of the immigrant Indian and Hindu community.[6] One of the Unification Church's larger ecumenical attempts backfired after it invited United Church ministers to take expense-paid trips to Korea and Japan for the announced purpose of "fostering unity and understanding among Christians of all denominations, races, and cultures." In response to these invitations, the United Church of Canada's Division of World Outreach sent a letter to all of its Canadian ministers in which it expressed "concern about the participation of United Church ministers in this program," and raised "the gravest possible reservations about the faith and practice of the Unification Church."[7] Clearly, therefore, Canada's Unification Church has not received normative acceptance by all Canadian Christian groups, but neither have several other groups that have received non-profit status from the government.

While Scientology has received endorsements from several religious and academic figures, these endorsements nonetheless have failed to bring it widespread acceptance among normative religious leaders. Moreover, its failure to meet the Canadian Council of Better Business Bureaus' (CCBBB) standards for charitable solicitations further isolated it from most normative religious (and business) groups, although it shared this stigmatized category with the Unification Church, the Apostles of Infinite Love, Hari Krishna Churches [sic], the Divine Light Mission, Jews for Jesus, the Way (International), plus the Christianpreaching ministries of Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, Oral Roberts, Peter Popoff, Rex Humbard, and Robert Schuller.[8]

The most effectively marketed religion in Canada and the United States is TM, which owes its success, paradoxically, to its *denial of its religious core,* and thus

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6. This conclusion is based upon an examination of ISKCON Life Membership lists for the (Prabhupada) Toronto and Montreal temples. The pattern of ISKCON temples in Britain receiving substantial acceptance from segments of the Indian community is described in Carey (1983).

7. Memorandum to Members of the Order of Ministry and Chairs of Session, from Ann Elson, Chair, Division of World Outreach and Marion Best, Chair, Inter-Church and Interfaith Committee, Re[garding] Letter of Alert and Warning Concerning Unification Church, 5 April 1988; filed in Kent Col./ Unification Church/ Counter/ Canada/ United Church of Canada.

8. This information comes from a CCBBB pamphlet dated Spring, 1986. Note that the pamphlet mistakenly thought that the Hari [sic] Krishna Churches and the Divine Light Mission were the same organization. The watchdog organization's standards reflect evaluations performed on groups regarding their public accountability, "reasonable" use of funds, "appropriate" solicitations and informational materials, regulated fund-raising practices, and responsible governance (Kent Col./Cults-Counter/Canada/ Better Business Bureau).

represents *a third normative tactic* that some religiously ideological groups utilize in their efforts to obtain widespread social acceptance. Occasionally groups will deny their religious roots and instead claim connections with other societally accepted structures or normative practices, such as science, business, medicine, psychotherapy, or other forms of healing. In TM's case, its initial appearance in the United States and Canada occurred through the Spiritual Regeneration Movement, which claimed to be founded on the *Vedas* and thought itself to be "a path to God" (quoted in Woodrum, 1982: 93).[9] In 1965, however, a TM practitioner presented the meditation as an integral aspect of higher education (Jerry Jarvis interview in Rose, 1976: 92), and from then onward the organization has asserted that TM is a scientifically proven method for improving many aspects of normal life. Although TM's scientific claims often are based upon seriously flawed experiments and data interpretations (Persinger, Carrey, and Suess, 1980: 39-86), this aura of science has allowed the practice to attain a scientifically normative status among large segments of the public. Discreetly kept from the public, however, is the fact that its organization's "inner sect" remains devoutly religious, celibate, and ascetic (see Woodrum 1982: 98, see 93).[10]

If one social cost of a religious label is the public perception of ideological bias, then clearly such a label is something that most "countercult" groups wish to avoid. Although occasionally counter organizations in Canada actively identify with particular religious ideologies (such as Calgary's Christian Research Institute — Canada; Bettson, 1985; see Martin, 1981), most of them insist that their support from the normative religious community does not sacrifice or compromise their secular orientations or religious neutrality.[11]

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9. TM books that specifically reveal the Vedantic Hinduism upon which the practice is based include Mahesh Yogi, 1967; 1968; and Olson, 1979. A 19 October 1977 American court case which ruled that TM was a religion (Malnak et al. v. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi et al., United States District Court, New Jersey) was reprinted in *Spiritual Counterfeits Project*, 1977).

10. Current followers of (Guru) Maharaj Ji also insist that their former "Lord of the Universe" no longer leads a religious group but instead simply is a wise teacher. I cannot say precisely how Divine Light Mission (DLM)'s retreat from religion took place, but it may have had something to do with the embarrassing and damaging internal disputes that broke out in the group during the mid-to-late 1970s. In essence, the leader himself may have lost charismatic legitimacy in too many people's eyes, including many of his own family's, for him to continue claiming divinity for himself.

11. The Cult Project's basic publicity and information pamphlet openly acknowledges that it "operates under the auspices of the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation of Montreal" and receives funds from the "Allied Jewish Community Services of Montreal" (Kent Col./Cults/Counter/ Organizations/ Quebec/Montreal/Cult Project/Advertisements/Pamphlets). The Council on Mind Abuse (COMA) material from the early 1980s (with which I am most familiar) did not indicate any official ties with religious organizations, and its former director, Ian Haworth, insisted that his criticism of "cults" arose largely from concerns over allegedly coercive, deceptive, and fraudulent practices. Nevertheless, its message received a receptive audience among mainline churches, and individual congregations often paid small fees (fifty to seventy-five dollars) for talks and presentations.

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While they do not claim the status of scientific organizations, they do align themselves with the respected value of scientific research — "objectivity" — an alignment that is loudly challenged by the various ideological groups themselves. As a strategy, therefore, roughly analogous to the one adopted by TM, *Canada's major "countercult" organizations deemphasize any religious content to their message for fear of being labelled as ideologically biased, and instead stress the critically objective content of their material.*

The lesson for sociologists of deviance that emerges from these normative claims and counterclaims is a multilayered one. The attainment of an officially recognized religious organization is a desirable achievement for many (if not most) ideological groups, even though it comes with several bureaucratic, governmental, and social restraints. Partially due to these restraints, it remains an undesirable attainment for particular ideological organizations (such as TM), and, likewise, for most organizations within the "countercult" movement.

Debates involving tolerably legitimate deviance labels (Category 2)
The desirability of a religiously normative image for ideological groups and their opponent organizations stems largely from the access to resources that this designation can bring. In a pluralistic society such as Canada, however, where a fairly wide expression of religious practice exists, groups still can receive resources if they are defined merely as deviant in a tolerable way. If groups must settle for deviant designations, then *the most desirable label is tolerable legitimacy,* meaning that their right to non-normativeness remains guaranteed under Canadian law (see Stebbins, 1988: 5).

Strategically, groups can attempt to have themselves defined as tolerably, legitimately deviant in a number of practical ways. First and foremost, *groups can attempt to control the terms by which crucial sectors of society define them.* In essence, groups can attempt to shape public and government opinion by both continually stressing those aspects of their operations that are religious in nature, and downplaying or neglecting to discuss other aspects of their operations that are more obviously related to business, politics, psychotherapy, medicine, or economics. Most of the religiously ideological organizations that are operating in Canada are in fact multidimensional, multinational corporations (see Wallis, 1976: 248; Bromley, 1985: 257 n.4), with aspects of their organizations having at best tenuous connections to apparently religious enterprises.[12] In the public arena, however, these groups demand that they be called religions, and, if they fall short of a normative designation, then they usually prefer to be categorized as "new religious movements." These groups attempt to impose a *"demanded (deviance) designation"* upon society, in a manner that is opposite to the sociologically familiar process of society labelling a person or group with a master status.

As defined a number of years ago by Howard Becker (1963: 33) and elaborated by Edwin Schur (1971), a master status is a label that outsiders place

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upon deviants which engulfs all of their other societal roles. It eliminates a view of the deviants as multifaceted individuals who play different and variable roles in society, and instead restricts evaluations of them according to the narrow confines of simply one negative, dominant, or "master" label. By analogy, *a demanded designation is a positive label placed upon deviants by the deviants themselves that attempts to prohibit consideration of all other social behaviours or organizational operations.* It eliminates a view of the deviant groups as multifaceted structures for whom ideology plays different and variable functions, and instead restricts evaluations of them according to the narrow confines of simply one, positive, dominant or "master" label. These demanded designations can involve self-labels of normativeness, but more likely they involve self-labels of tolerable deviance (since the latter are easier to justify).

Illustrations of this demanded deviance strategy appear in Scientology's practice of getting written endorsements from religious leaders of various denominations, but especially from denominations that themselves are notbroadly normative. In Canada, Scientology has received endorsements from (among others) a Bible Holiness minister in British Columbia (Reverend Wesley Wakefield), a pastor from an Evangelical Lutheran Church in Toronto (Pastor Juris Calitis), and an Eastern Orthodox priest (Father Petro Bilaniuk). In a related example of strategy, Scientology, the Unification Church, ISKCON, and other ideological groups have received endorsements from academics who claim that the supposedly widespread intolerance and persecution against these contemporary non-normative organizations is analogous to the persecution suffered by such currently accepted and generally tolerated groups as the Mormons (see

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12. Several examples come to mind of businesses that had intimate connections with ideological organizations. In addition to the art rental business and gallery that Oakland/San Francisco-based Moonies operated in Calgary (Silberman, 1981), the main Canadian office in Toronto directed two animal farms on and near Rice Lake, Ontario that raised elk, sika deer (Moon, 1984), and (as I saw during my visit to them in the autumn of 1987), chinchilla, mink, and fox. (A current member, however, informed me that Revenue Canada has refused the Unification Church's attempt to have these farms exempted from taxation.) The Unification Church also sponsored a lobster business on New Brunswick's Grand Manan Island (*Daily Mercury*, 1984: 22; Beltrame, 1985: G4). Most recently the Unification Church is putting up money to build an auto plant in Huizhou, China (*Globe and Mail*, 1989: B27). Under the branch of Scientology known as the Watchdog Committee, a management organization known as the World Institute of Scientology Enterprises International (WISE INT) "has the purpose of getting L. Ron Hubbard's administrative technology broadly disseminated and used in the business world" (Scientology, Executive Director International?, n.d.: 20, see 9, 20-21). Chiropractors (and possibly dentists and other professional groups) across Canada have taken WISE sponsored courses. A brief, critical discussion of these particular WISE-based management programs appears in *The Cult Observer*, 1989b; 1989c. Finally, members of ISKCON throughout the country sold artwork door-to-door and in shopping malls (which I know from numerous conversations and interviews with current and former members).

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Bromley and Shupe, 1981: 8-9, 19-20)[13] and the Quakers (see Kent, 1987; 1982).

Debates over tolerable criminality labels (Category 4)
More problematic than demands for deviant toleration are the examples of deviance that may be at the same time tolerable but illegal, which occurs when laws clearly are being broken but the offenders claim justification for doing so through extenuating or unusual circumstances. These alleged circumstances resemble the "appeal to higher loyalties" that David Matza and Gresham Sykes identified as one technique of deviance "neutralization" (Matza and Sykes, 1961: 669). Moreover, law enforcement officials occasionally involve themselves in these legal violations, either through *strategic non-enforcement or covert facilitation* (Marx, 1981).

By far the best example of alleged tolerable criminal deviance in Canada and elsewhere is the forcible removal and/or detention of ideological group members by friends or relatives, along with (usually) hired personnel known as "deprogrammers." "Deprogrammers" argue that "cult" members lose the ability to critically and objectively reflect upon their group involvement because they have been "brainwashed" by rigorous and manipulative "indoctrination" programs (Bromley, Shupe, and Busching, 1981: 35). By removing members from restrictive group environments (by force, if necessary), "deprogrammers" claim to return the dignity, rationality, and freedom to individuals that had been taken away by the ideological groups. In many cases, "deprogrammers" hoped to recruit the recently "deprogrammed" person into the "countercult" movement itself, either as spokespersons against their former groups or as "deprogrammers" themselves who understood the language and doctrines of their former ideological organizations. "Deprogramming," therefore, partly was an attempt to "recruit the other group's members" (Zald and McCarthy, 1987: 260, 264), and quite a few Canadians who were forcibly removed from groups subsequently were involved with "deprogramming" efforts against others (see, for example, Dampier, 1980a; McCarthy, 1982; Dampier, 1980c).

Numerous "deprogrammings" have taken place in Canada or have involved Canadians outside of the country, not all of which have succeeded in permanently removing the individuals from their respective groups.[14] In all of these cases, various laws likely were broken (including assault, kidnapping, and forcible detention), but the deprogrammers justified their actions (and called for tolerance of them) because they committed their actions for the "higher

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13. Actually several counter-Mormon organizations exist, all of which claim that Mormonism is a cult. Some of these counter-organizations are Christian-based, but at least one, the International Headquarters for Victims of the Mormon Cult in North Carolina, is secular. In Saskatchewan there existed a group entitled "Ex-Mormons for Jesus" (Hexham, Currie, and Townsend, 1988: 1481).

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cause" of returning "personal freedom" and "rational thought" to people. As one former "deprogrammer" explained to me when I raised the issue of forcible "deprogramming's" illegality, "You can't say that the means justify the end, but in a way . . . you're just reversing something that the groups have already done. They have already taken those kids at a moment of weakness and changed their whole lives and have made them prisoners and slaves. And so all we are doing is enslaving them for a moment to free them again, if that makes sense. It's just doing in reverse what has already been done. I mean, the greatest crime to me is what the cults have done" (Kent, Mytrash, and Schmidt, 1989).

Debates over intolerably legitimate deviance labels (Category 5)
While only a small segment of the counter-movement actively is involved with forcible removal or forcible confinement, all segments of it attempt to get their opponents labelled as intolerable. This attempt involves particular *strategies that represent ideological group activities or beliefs as being injurious to members or to society itself.* Obviously the documented or alleged criminal activities of various groups receive much attention in these strategic efforts, but even legitimately deviant behaviours and non-criminally deviant behaviours also enter the debate. Assertions about intolerably illegal activities are likely to be directed to law enforcement authorities, but intolerable charges made to the public at large (often through various media sources) potentially can deny labelled groups a wide range of resources (such as donations from businesses and potential recruits).

Although the right to hold religious beliefs is protected by Canadian law, Christian-based counter organizations often represent these beliefs as demonic or satanic in nature (referring to Revelations 13.5: 7-8), and hence, as fundamental challenges to the social fabric of Canadian (Christian) life. These Christian groups, therefore, challenge the tolerable legitimacy of (other) religiously

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14. Among the "successful," documented, and high-profile Canadian "deprogrammings" are: Alan North from a brief involvement in ISKCON (Nemeth and Weatherbe, 1985); Benji Carroll (Freed, 1980), Martin Faiers (Dampier, 1980a; *Hamilton Spectator,* 1980; Horgan, 1980), Tom Gillespie (Jager, 1980), Art Tassie (McCarthy, 1982), and Dilys Hankins (Dampier, 1980c; Harvey, 1980) from the Unification Church; and Cheryl Prokosh from Jesus Christ Lightning Amen/The Christ Family (*Chronicle Journal,* 1980). "Unsuccessful deprogrammings" include: Debbie Dudgeon from a schismatic Catholic commune (*Kitchener-Waterloo Record,* 1975; O'Toole, 1975); Linda Epstein, who returned to ISKCON ten months after her "deprogramming" (Colomby, 1975; *Globe and Mail,* 1976; Harpur, 1976; *Toronto Star,* 1980; Epstein, 1976); and Elizabeth Wyckoff (Fralic, 1980), John Biermans (Biermans, 1986) and John Abelseth of the Unification Church — the latter underwent two "deprogramming" attempts but returned to the Moonies both times after periods of separation from it (see the affidavits by Abelseth, his wife, Helen Abelseth, and fellow Unification Church member Gary Hilier about the attempted "deprogrammings" in Kent Col./ Cults/ Pro/ Deprogramming/ Counter/ Abelseth, John).

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ideological groups by insisting that those groups are part of Satan's plan to conquer the world (Hunt, 1980: 219-37; Matrisciana, 1985: 213-14).

Debates over tolerable and intolerable non-criminality (Categories 3 and 6)
While attacks against the tolerable legitimacy of legally protected groups occur most prominently among Christian fundamentalist writers, attacks against the tolerability of what usually are non-criminal behaviours are much more wide-spread among "countercultists." Many religious practices involve specific behaviours and beliefs that are not covered in criminal laws or legal codes, and therefore are outside of legal scrutiny. Dietary restrictions, dress codes, times of worship, sleeping habits, and peculiarities of language are examples of non-criminally tolerable religious deviance, which, under normal circumstances, are of no concern to law enforcement officials. Strategically, however, counter organizations are able to highlight some of these behaviours within ideological groups in such a way as *to make them appear to be repugnant, disgusting, dangerous, or otherwise offensive.* For example, a syndicated article on the Christ Family (sometimes known as Jesus Christ Lightning Amen) in 1980 ran in Toronto's *Sunday Star* under the heading, "Ate Garbage, Cultist Says." A "deprogrammed" resident of Thunder Bay, Ontario, Cheryl Prokosh, allegedly reported that "she ate out of garbage cans and walked in the snow in her bare feet while in a hypnotic state as a member of a religious cult" (*Sunday Star*, 1980). While these alleged activities almost certainly were not illegal, they nonetheless were repugnant and intolerably deviant to those persons who read about them.

Debates over intolerable criminality (Category 7)
By far the most heated debates between religiously ideological organizations and their opponents take place regarding *attempts to have each other labelled as criminally, intolerably deviant.* As a strategic achievement, the successful labelling of an organization as criminal potentially denies it considerable re-sources, and also makes it a target for public scorn and government scrutiny. Groups, therefore, will expend a great deal of energy and effort in attempts both to deflect criminally intolerable labels, *and* get these labels directed at their enemies. Much of the opponents' efforts involve attempts to capture "key symbols" in the minds of authorities and the public (see Zald, 1980: 67; Zald and McCarthy, 1980: 4).

The ideological groups focus primarily on the illegal aspects of "deprogram-ming," and attempt to link the major counter organizations with this activity. Most fundamentally, the religiously ideological groups reject language (i.e., symbols) that portrays them in a manipulative or coercive manner and that might be used against them by persons who forcibly try to remove their members (see Richardson, van der Lans, and Derks, 1986). Not only do they reject the term, "cults," and instead call themselves "new religions," but also they reject the term, "deprogramming" (since it implies that they in fact "program" or "brainwash"

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their members), and instead call the process pejorative terms such as "kidnapping," "faithbreaking" (see Biermans, 1986: 55-80), "vigilanteism" (Shupe and Bromley, 1980), and "depersonalization."

The most dramatic example of a religiously ideological group attempting to get "deprogramming" viewed by the public as intolerably criminal occurred in 1976, when several Torontonians announced the formation of a "countercult" organization that advocated particularly forceful techniques of "deprogramming" as outlined in "a recently published British manual." The British manual, it turned out, was phoney, and the local Torontonians appear to have been Scientologists who were attempting to discredit "deprogramming" by portraying it as a violent, degrading, and abusive process (Marshall, 1976).

When critics persisted in their negative labelling of particular groups as "cults" or other pejorative designations, then at least two groups apparently developed "litigation strategies" (Zald and McCarthy, 1980: 6; Zald and Useem, 1987: 263) involving the use of lawsuits in attempts to silence them. These lawsuits claimed some form of aspersion against the groups' reputations, but considerable doubt exists that the groups ever intended the cases to go to trial. In all likelihood the groups hoped that the threat of costly litigation would silence their opponents. One probable example of this tactic is the libel and slander suit filed by est ([Werner] Erhard Seminars Training) against COMA, its president (Ian Haworth), plus several other parties on 23 December 1982 (Ontario [Supreme Court of], 1982). Seven years later the plaintiffs still had not brought the case to trial. Similarly, Scientology launched over fifty lawsuits between 1968 and late 1980 without any of them going to trial during that period (Swanson, 1980: B3; cases summarized in Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, 1980a: 124-175.2).[15]

In one instance, however, the presumed litigation tactic backfired. In September 1976, three Alberta Scientology missions sued over a half-dozen Alberta opponents for reputedly slanderous comments that they had made both to public officials and on several media shows. The case dragged on until late 1980, never reaching an actual trial, and finally the presiding judge found that "the proceedings and the action of the Plaintiffs amounted to a clear abuse of process," and accordingly awarded the defendants their solicitor costs of $51,857.15 (Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, 1980b: 2, see Alberta Court of Queen's Bench, 1980c: 2). While certain organizations, therefore, seem to have developed litigation strategies of "harassment suits" or lengthy delays in an effort both to inflict time-losses and high costs on their opponents and to prevent critics from further representing them as intolerable "cults," the success of these

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15. Worth mentioning are instructions that Scientology's founder L. Ron Hubbard, gave to followers concerning "the placement of a [law]suit" against anyone found "using materials of Scientology without authority." Hubbard indicated that "[t]he placement of the suit is to harass and discourage rather than to win. The law can be used very easily to harass, and enough harassment on somebody who is simply on the thin edge anyway, well knowing that he is not authorized, will generally be sufficient to cause his professional decease. If possible, ruin him utterly" (Hubbard, 1955: 157).

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strategies partly depended upon the "countercult" defendants themselves not reaching the public forum of courtroom trials.

An additional tactic used by some of the religiously ideological organizations about the alleged "intolerable criminality" of their opponents is to insist that the counter organizations foster religious intolerance and hatred toward minority religions and their members. By fostering such attitudes (the ideological groups claim), their opponents deny minority religious members their civil rights to worship freely and at the same time bring upon them hostility and violence from citizens who become "agitated" as a result of the intolerant teachings. ISKCON in Toronto, for example, complained to the Ontario Human Rights Commission in 1985 that a lecture delivered about it by COMA's president, Ian Haworth, described its members' conversions "as psychological coercion, brainwashing, and mind control." ISKCON's local president, Visvakarma, concluded by insisting that "[w]e, the members of the Hare Kr[i]shna movement, both of Canadian and East Indian origin, are being severely persecuted by Mr. Hayworth [sic]" (Kent Col. Hare Krishna/ ISKCON/ Publications/ ISKCON Toronto's Response to a COMA Talk).[16] In Montreal, the Church of Scientology compiled a booklet against the Cult Project, alleging that it "has been involved in the spreading of hate propaganda and misleading information about non-profit, charitable and religious groups, and especially against minority religions" (Scientology [Montreal?], n.d.: 1; see Shepherd, 1986).[17] In response, therefore, to the counter charges of improprieties and "brainwashing" among the religiously ideological groups, the groups themselves attempt to discredit their critics with accusations of bigotry and minority religious hatred. If these charges were convincing, especially to persons who are in positions of social influence or political power, then they could have damaging and legally restricting effects upon the "offending" groups (see Zald and McCarthy, 1980: 7).

Opposition groups, in turn, insist that their negative positions towards the ideological groups rest partly on actual instances of intolerable criminal activity. They cite in support of their opposition some of the conclusions reached by Daniel Hill, a sociologist who conducted an extensive examination of mind development groups, sects, and "cults" in Ontario. Hill determined that "some groups do indulge in questionable financial practices" (1980: 572) that involve "deceptive recruitment and fraudulent financial dealings" (1980: 571). Without naming groups, he concluded about some of them that:

They dupe people into joining their ranks, using gimmicky come-ons and extravagant claims. They bilk members of their money and possessions, sometimes reducing them to penury. They lie to the public, financial institutions, and even governments to enrich their treasuries. (Hill, 1980: 572)

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16. As far as I know, the Ontario Human Rights Commission did not take action against COMA regarding the complaint.
17. I am unaware of any government action being taken against the Cult Project in response to these charges or the others that appeared in the publication.

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Counter groups further cite the convictions of two Scientology/ Toronto members for possessing lock-picking tools in an unauthorized area of a law office that was representing a Scientology opponent in a pending legal matter (Marshall, 1975), plus the conviction of a (then-former) Scientologist for possession of stolen goods from the Ontario Medical Association in 1985 (Campbell, 1985). Similarly, critics of the Hare Krishna movement point out members' convictions for false representation of artwork in Montreal (*Montreal Gazette*, 1985) and Yellowknife (*Alaska Highway News*, 1981), solicitiation fraud (*Express*, 1978), plus the apparent assistance that various Canadian and American ISKCON temples gave to a devotee who had kidnapped his daughter from her mother (Flint, 1984). The Children of God (COG) was well-known internationally for its requirement that members, especially women, engage in prostitution (called "flirty fishing" or "FF-ing" by members) as a recruitment technique and a fundraising enterprise (Berg, 1977), and it was practiced in Canada (*W5*, 1982: 18, see 14-15). By late 1981, "[a] Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission officer . . . described the arrivals of American Moonies in Canada as 'carefully, systematically, planned violations of Canada's immigration laws,'" with an unidentified Calgary police detective claiming that at least ten American Moonies had been deported from Canada for immigration violations (Silberman, 1981). These and other examples of real or alleged criminal violations become the ammunition that counter organizations use against their ideological opponents in attempts to have them labeled as criminally, intolerably deviant. This very damaging label remains on several groups long after members claim that they have corrected the earlier, illegal "excesses" of previous years.

Conclusion
Religiously ideological groups should serve as important foci of study for Canadian sociologists examining either deviance or social problems, since the intense debates over tolerability and intolerability have implications for multiple institutions in society. Sociologists of deviance must realize that the dynamic debates between religiously ideological groups and their (at times equally ideological) opponents involve numerous charges and countercharges that represent attempts by both sides simultaneously to enhance their own images to authorities and the public and diminish the images of their enemies. Appreciation of this intense debate requires an expansion of traditional labelling discussion in the sociology of deviance, which usually neglects to analyze contentious organizations that reject deviance designations by hurling them back at their accusers. Furthermore, the model presented in this article suggests the important role that positive and negative labelling play in the resource acquisition process of competing groups, thereby indicating a new area in which resource mobilization theory can assimilate basic concepts from the deviance labelling literature.

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Emphasis upon the dynamics of the "new religions/countercult" debate in Canada moves beyond a large body of American sociological literature that has focused almost exclusively upon the construction of "atrocity tales" by members and organizations in the "countercult" movement. The American literature has concentrated on the "countercultists'" efforts to socially construct an evil image of the religiously ideological groups that justifies "deprogramming" of their members and "repression" against them (e.g., Bromley, Shupe, and Ventimiglia, 1983; Bromley, Shupe, and Busching, 1981; Shupe and Bromley, 1980). Almost wholly neglected, however, are sociological examinations of attempts by the religiously ideological organizations to portray their opponents as intolerable deviants. This neglect is unfortunate, since these same American researchers have realized that when opposing parties "are both able to contend that their actions are legitimized by cultural values, a war of accusations ensues" (Bromley, Shupe, and Ventimiglia, 1979: 43; see Shupe and Bromley, 1981). In that war, atrocity tales are thrown back and forth by all parties in the fray. While the new model that I have presented acknowledges contributions from the American scholarship, it encourages researchers to present a balanced and realistic account of atrocity tales as strategies that both sides use in attempts to paint their detractors in an intolerable light.

Already a few British studies have presented examples of ideological groups utilizing atrocity tales as strategies of intolerability against their opponents, and by doing so these studies demonstrate the ubiquity of this technique. For example, a sociological discussion of the campaign undertaken by Illinois Mormons during the 1840s mentions their (apparently successful) attempt to negatively portray their enemies in an effort to protect their own public image and ruin the legitimacy of their opponents (Hampshire and Beckford, 1983: 216). Likewise, Roy Wallis mentioned Scientology's efforts to protect its public image by investigating its critics and exposing their past "crimes" "with 'wide lurid publicity'" (quoted in Wallis, 1976: 194). Finally, James Beckford (1985: 230-31) devoted a short section to the "new religious movements'" "self-defence" in Britain, which in part involved support groups that (among other positions) propounded the "evils" of "deprogramming." All of these discussions, however, are descriptive, and none are located within a comprehensive model that facilitates the analysis of the strategic efforts of defense and attack in which the groups engage. The model, therefore, of normative and tolerable/ intolerable deviance provided in this article will help to clarify a number of "cult and countercult" strategies that a few researchers have observed in several countries in different eras, but which has remained relatively neglected in resource mobilization theory. Furthermore, it will encourage sociologists to broaden their perspectives on a contentious debate between two deeply entrenched and committed camps whose battles are being played out in countries around the world (Beckford, 1985).

When discussing these debates, sociologists may benefit from utilizing the

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concept of "demanded (deviance) designations," since this newly introduced labelling term complements a "master status" designation whose implications for the study of deviance are well understood. This new concept draws attention to attempts by ideological groups to eliminate anything but unidimensional and favourable public evaluations of themselves, and it invites further examination of the specific claims and counterclaims that emerge when organizations attempt to impose them on the public despite the persistent resistance of their opponents.

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