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Deviance Advocacy Groups organize the support or defense of a particular cause. Their definition and analysis can be structured by eight analytical dimensions: (1) recognition and acceptance of deviant labels are necessary prerequisites for the organization of advocacy groups; (2) emergence and maintenance of groups as being determined by the form of deviance which is advocated; (3) type of leadership shown in the organization; (4) form of membership and (5) the media used in the communication among members, in the recruitment, and in public relations, which in turn is strongly determined by the location of the organization on the normative--deviant/illegal continuum; (6) targets and motives of an advocacy group; (7) the reciprocal relationship organizations have with the public, and (8) the different degrees to which organizations engage in political participation. These eight analytical dimensions will be described below. Finally, I will conclude with a section comparing popular theories of the field.

1. Steps in the Organization of the Deviant Identity

In order to generate identification with a form of deviance, the identity, behavior or motivation in question has to be accessible by language. This first step in the organization of deviance is generally achieved through labeling (Becker 1963). This primary deviance transforms into secondary deviance if -the label is accepted by the labeled. Commitment in the label can be increased in the public presentation of the deviant identity. This process was called the "coming out" in the homosexual community. In the public presentation of a deviant identity the deviant has to react to repercussions of the social environment. In defense of their deviant identities people will search for social support. This defense and support is defined as tertiary deviance by John Kitsuse (1980) People engaged in the defense might found a deviant advocacy group.

Deviant advocacy groups provide critical information for the identification with the label and for

the process of accepting a label. A person who learns about zoophiles through an Internet newsgroup is able to make an interpretation of her erotic feelings towards animals. Providing an identity, newsgroups enable the process of labeling. In the example of a zoophilia advocacy newsgroup, the erotic relationship to animals is described as a positive experience. In this way the group provides self esteem to people who identify themselves with the interest of the group, who can be members or nonmembers.

An additional source of self esteem is provided by the differentiation between ingroup and outgroup. The group provides labels for outgroups that can be deviant or mainstream. Zoophile advocacy groups differentiate themselves vehemently from sodomists, whose interest lies in the intercourse and other forms of sexual behavior, but not necessarily the erotic relationship with the animal. Just as the mainstream of society, other deviant groups can serve as scapegoats that enhance self esteem for members. Hate groups, such as the KKK or the Black Panthers, are good examples of groups that initiate though the identification of outgroups.

If deviant advocacy groups grow, we might classify them as organizations/associations, or social movements. An example of an organization/association that promotes the interests of pedophiles since 1976 is the North American Men/Boy Love Association (NAMBLA). As in the French case of *Gaie France*, there are two main reasons why pedophile advocacy groups are unlikely to grow into social movements. First, it is the small number of people with a pedophile orientation. Second, the contemporary public opinion that is supported by severe legal sanctions. This extreme social and legal stigmatization of pedophile groups makes it highly unlikely that they receive support from people without pedophile interests, so they cannot increase the number of members and supporters. A much wider institutional support can be found in the increasingly stigmatized 60-80 million gun owners in the U.S. Representing 2.9 million members, the National Rifle Association (NRA) engages in effective political lobbying. The availability of existing concepts is helpful for groups that do not promote new values, but try to conserve traditions.

The U.S. Gay Lesbian Movement (Thomson 1994) is a prominent example of the social movement. Individual advocates (e.g. Harvey Milk), informal (e.g. participants in the Stonewall protest)

and formal gay advocacy groups, and associations (e.g. *The Advocate*) successfully generated the gay movement in the 1960s.

2. The Quality of Deviance

The differentiation of deviant advocacy groups depends on the definition of deviance. It is most helpful to differentiate groups according to three basic dimensions of deviance: (A) the normative-deviant/illegal continuum, (B) acquired or ascribed form of deviance, and (C) Goffman's (1959; 1963) differentiation of discreditable and discredited forms of deviance.

(A) Examples for normative advocacy groups are consumer protection groups, moral, legal or political interest groups. Deviant groups can concern mild forms of deviance, such as legal gun ownership, or more severe violations of the norm (e.g. S&M groups). Illegality is the violation of those norms that are codified as laws. The legal status of the form of deviance has a strong impact on the form of organization of an advocacy group. Pedophiles, terrorists, and drug users face the most severe criminal punishment in the U.S. Their advocacy groups have to deploy specific strategies to ensure their survival.

(B) Today people with acquired forms of deviance, like ethnic minorities or disabilities, receive specific protection by anti-discrimination laws in the U.S. The Civil Rights movement and ethnic advocacy groups are prominent examples of groups of this protected status. Although socially modified, today sexual orientation is widely regarded as innate. This legitimizes the constitutional rights of non-discrimination for homosexuals in the U.S. Since persons with different sexual orientations, like pedophiles, are severely punished, this legitimation cannot be seen as a principle, but as a social construction of political correctness.

(C) Goffman (1963) distinguished between discredited and discreditable forms of deviance. If we know the stigma before we really know the person, we speak of a discredited form of deviance.

Since it is hard to conceal in personal contact, obesity qualifies as a discredited form of deviance. In the case of a discreditable form of deviance, we cannot know her stigma unless it is revealed to us by the person herself or by others. In contrast, genital piercings can be easily concealed in most forms of interaction and therefore qualifies as a discreditable form of deviance. Both forms of deviance define a central distinction for the ability to engage in impression management. An obese person might prefer telephone conversations in order to conceal her stigma, but compared to a person with pierced genitalia, who only has to conceal his genitals, she is much more limited in her impression management.

I argue that it is much easier to motivate persons with a discredited form of deviance to join a deviant advocacy group than persons who can evade confrontation in their daily lives. One of the central slogans of the gay movement was "to come out of the closet". Publicly displaying their sexual orientation turned the discreditable person into a discredited person. Encouraging the coming out, not only made alternative sexual orientations more visible, it also secured the gay movement more need of support.

3. Leadership

The concept of leadership can be investigated with Weber's analytic concepts of charismatic, traditional, and rational bureaucratic forms of leadership. In empirical reality these ideal types are rare, and might not even exist. Empirical cases, generally follow multiple ideal types to different extend.

Weber characterizes charismatic leadership as the weakest form to support an organization. The death of the leader would in most cases extinguish the existence of the organization. Even if the group does not fully extinguish it is likely, as in the case of Bagwhan Shree Rajneesh, that the group's structure becomes destabilized, the group loses influence, and changes its orientation or name.

In founding a deviant advocacy group, the leader is more likely to succeed if she can built upon precedence. This idea is used by symbolic interactionists who stress the importance of established and widely known concepts (labels) as prerequisites for successful group formation. If, for example, people are not familiar with the concept of hermaphroditism, leaders are unlikely to engage followers in their

cause. Phrased in the original context of Max Weber, historical examples can help the legitimation of leadership.

Besides Weber's well-established categorization of leadership, there are many other variables that influence leadership in organizations. Neidhard (1992), for example, demonstrates how differences in education and gender composition of group members influence the type and effectiveness of leadership shown in right wing and left wing terrorist organizations.

4. Membership

Advocacy Internet Newsgroups have an open membership. One of the problems is flaming, the disturbance of the communication with insults from people that are usually not perceived as group members. Combining elements of informal group membership like in Whyte's street corner society with anonymity and a common interest in advocating some form of deviance, the public character of the Newsgroups sets a unique status on membership and group definition. The electronic conversation of regular posters, however, marks the borderlines between ingroup, peripheral members and the outgroup. On the other extreme membership can be very exclusive and clearly marked by initiation rituals. Like in the case of the KKK it might kept anonymous to the outsider, but group members stand in close personal contact.

Signaling commitment to the cause, public statements of membership in deviant advocacy group trigger stigmatization. A professor in a liberal arts college might get away with his known gun ownership. The announcement of his membership in the National Rifle Association (NRA), however, bears the risk to turn him into a social outcast. For that reason most advocacy groups allow anonymous membership, even if their agenda lies more on the normative side of the normative-deviant/illegal continuum.

5. Media of Communication

In order to create cohesion amongst their members, to recruit, and to engage in public relations, successful groups need effective means of communication. The media used for the communication between members, and with the environment depends largely on the normative-deviant/illegal continuum of the deviant advocacy group and the form of membership. Groups typically use pamphlets, newsletters, billboard advertising, group meetings, parades, T.V. ads, or the World Wide Web for the communication of their interests. Illegal forms of deviance are best communicated by media that allows anonymity for members and for the targeted audience, like the Internet.

The Internet currently allows four main media of communication: browsing on the World Wide Web (WWW), e-mail, real time exchange of contributions in chat rooms (IRCs), and the stored exchange of contributions (Newsgroups). Newsgroups and chat rooms also allow the exchange of files with audio/visual material. Audio/visual broadcasting (videoconferencing) is a rapidly developing fifth form of communication.

The Internet revolutionized the communication for deviant advocacy groups. Groups that are persecuted by the law can allow anonymous communication for their audience. Groups that are illegal in one nation can set up servers in other countries. In newsgroups and in e-mail exchange, encryption techniques and anonymous remailers allow a level of anonymity that not even government agencies can breach.

Small advocacy groups with tight budgets can appear just as strong on the WWW as large corporations or government agencies. This can contribute to a particularization of advocacy groups. Of [\[AS1\]](#)the up to 34,000 Newsgroups some relatively uncensored Internet provider offer today, a large proportion deals with some form of deviance. The use of the Internet also contributes to the global perspective of some deviant advocacy groups. This global perspective changes the mode of interaction beyond the changes intrinsic to the use of electronic media per se. Another change in interaction pattern is the anonymity experienced by Internet users. People using the Internet retrieve information about

deviant groups that they were unlikely to contact via another media. Anonymity also supports the play of fantasy roles that is especially common amongst participants in IRCs and Newsgroups. Uncommitted consumption of information and the playful nature of the communication have a yet undetermined effect on the cohesion of groups that rely exclusively on Internet communication.

6. Target/Motives

Member orientation and involvement in public relations, are two basic motives of an advocacy group. Since increasing the public acceptance advocacy groups indirectly support their members, public relation and member orientation are interrelated. Targets of a deviant advocacy group are to a large extent determined by their nature of deviance, which also influences the choice of media.

Advocacy groups can try to make people realize their deviance. In this way advocacy groups create awareness or primary deviance. Individuals with eating disorders will learn that they are labeled anorexic. Groups like the American Anorexia Bulimia Association Inc. support the identity formation of the individual. Once secondary deviance is established, groups can support members by creating self-esteem. With their nearly exclusive focus on members, self-help groups, like the Alcoholics Anonymous, are a special form of advocacy group.

Another target of a group can be destigmatization, decriminalization, or legalization of a deviant activity. Deviant advocacy groups are instrumental in transferring shame into pride (Britt & Heise 1997). Stigmas are associated with shame. Ideological activities of deviant groups transform shame into fear and then transform fear into anger. Anger activates group members to collectively display stigmatized identities, within the group or publicly (e.g. in form of testimonials or parades), creating empathic solidarity and pride. Successful destigmatization of identities goes hand in hand with the emergence of positive emotions (Schneider 1999) and the creation of emotional energy (Collins 1981). Emotional resources provided by the group, increase cohesion within the group.

Groups can be formed to compete against other advocacy groups. Anti abortion groups (later called Pro Life groups in order to avoid the stigmatization as being "nay sayers"), like the Pro Life Alliance in the UK, were formed in response to Pro Choice groups, like the Canadian Pro Choice Action League, that promoted the legalization of abortion.

7. Feedback through a changing Normative Environment

Since the concept of deviance depends on the variables of space and time, deviant advocacy groups exist in an instable environment. Historical events change the normative environment of advocacy groups. This can happen either through the effective work of the deviance advocacy group or through other influences, independent from the group's activity. If local groups grow into national or international dimensions, they will face a different normative environment. The effective normalization of the promoted form of deviance might either change the organization into the normative cultural political process or extinguish the advocacy group. Two examples will show that spatial and historical changes often interact in the determination of environmental influences on the group and the possibilities of group development.

As body modifications and leather and lace fetish were promoted by cultural icons like Madonna, some aspects of the S&M community became fashionable in the late 1990s. Becoming increasingly commercialized in form of advertised services, specialty clothing and accessories, S&M found its way in the U.S. consumer culture. This change in the popular culture is one of the reasons why large traditional national organizations like The Eulenspiegel Society in the U.S. are joined by small local advocacy groups like HEADSPACE in a small U.S. Midwestern city.

A more extreme normalization was initiated by German radical groups in the 1970s. Deviant groups, who sometimes used or promoted illegal means to achieve their goals were increasingly supported by the local general public and emerged in city governments. The resulting ecological movement, supported by local governments, penetrated mainstream society in Germany, and created a

fertile environment for the Green Party. Since the late 1980s the Green party participated in the federal government where, at the turn of the century, a former radical terrorist attorney (Otto Schily) now is the minister of internal affairs (Aussenminister).

8. Possibility of Political Participation

The degree of political participation depends on the political environment. Countries with democratic constitutions provide an especially rich soil for the political participation of advocacy groups. This relative ease of participation does not necessary imply greater freedom for the people or a destigmatization of deviant activities. Moral panics (Goode & Ben-Jehuda 1994) can support moral entrepreneurs (Becker 1963) that found and support special interest groups oppressing deviant parts of the population. Later in history, these normative advocacy groups might be judged as deviant. One example is the Women's Christian Temperance Movement that was instrumental in the legislation of the U.S. Prohibition in the 1920-1933. Even though the activity of these oppressive groups can later be defined as deviant, the normative appropriateness in time and space does not allow them to be defined as deviant advocacy groups.

The relative ease of political participation of special interest groups in the U.S. allows groups to persecute people of minority opinion, taste or behavior. This legal enforcement of the morals (vice) contributes to an incarceration rate that is about six times higher in the U.S. than in France, Germany, Italy, or Switzerland. If later, the harassment and oppression is seen as inappropriate, counter movements can form to protect the victims. In a recent practice, psychologists and psychiatrists started to recover (or produce) memories of childhood sexual abuse. Courts followed the medical model and the current moral panic concerning child abuse. They were hereby supported by numerous children's rights advocacy groups and professional groups that favored the idea of recovered memories. Victims claim that they were targets of a modern witch hunt and organized themselves in groups like the False Memory Syndrome Foundation [\[AS2\]](#).

Micro and Macro Theories in historical Perspective

Early research on collective behavior (LeBon 1895) stated that the individual psychology is subordinated to a collective mentality which dramatically changes individual behavior. The focus on crowd behavior turned into an interest in the mobilization of masses generating structural change. Mass society theory, relative deprivation theory, and collective behavior approaches theory, saw structural strains as reasons for individual grievances, that in turn generated social movements. In these models movements were seen as being sharply distinct and actors as arational.

Resource mobilization theory (McCarthy [\[AS3\]](#) & Zald 1977) had a major impact in the field of social movements. In their structural approach, resource mobilization theorists propose that the organization enables the mobilization of different forms of resources for their cause. Explaining the emergence and development of general social movements, the resource mobilization model emphasizes the interaction between availability of resources, the preexisting organization of individual preference structures, and the entrepreneurial attempts to meet demand. Explaining the birth of a movement, the entrepreneurial model can accommodate structural theories of emotions. Conflicts cause grievances, which are in turn a necessary prerequisite for the rise of social movements. Grievances are seen as being either structurally given or produced by the social movement itself. Social movements are formed by a few very active members, social entrepreneurs (a concept useful in the symbolic interactionist approach) who mobilize institutional resources. The entrepreneurial model is most relevant for the explanation of movements rising from broad disorganized collectives. Another essential proposition for the launch of an organized movement is external sponsorship, the availability of resources from outside. These assumptions contrast the traditional approaches that assumed that noninstitutionalized collective actions fostered social change. Resource mobilization theory focuses on the elements of social structure and/or the reward distribution of the society. Here the theory is rooted the rational choice tradition and the behavioristic economic model.

The analysis of deviant advocacy groups today often combines micro and macro models of social action. In the tradition of Kurt Lewin's group dynamic approach (Borgatta 1981), micro-mobilization theories focus on social networks that turns people into activists (McAdam 1986). Here theories of leadership and power can be integrated to analyze the management of advocacy groups.

The structural symbolic interactionist approach provides a micro-macro link for theories of different focus, like identity theories or theories of emotions. One of the latest groundbreaking theoretical models that combines micro and macro sociological thinking in a symbolic interactionist approach is Heise's and Durig's (1997) "frame for organizational actions and macroactions." Event frames describe an agent, action, object, instrument, alignment, setting, product, and beneficiary. People use these components to generate macroactions, productive routines that can be conducted in deviant advocacy groups. The power of this theory lies in the ability to instigate macroactions, productive collaborative routines that can be conducted in deviant advocacy groups, as well as in normal establishments. The power of this theory lies in the ability to consider people as purposeful agents using advocacy organizations as instruments in their actions. Individuals and institutions can also be analyzed as being objects of individual (micro) or institutional (macro) actions.

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[AS1] The newsgroup, alt.sex.amputees, for example, specialized in the communication between people interested in sexual activities of people with amputations.

[AS2] Paidika. The Journal of Pedophilia. The Netherlands

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The Eulenspiegel Society. P.O. Box 2783 New York, NY 10163-2783.

<http://www.aabainc.org/home.html>

<http://www.prolifealliance.org.uk/About.html>

<http://www.caral.ca/>

<http://www.csicop.org/~fitz/fmsf/>

[AS3] Oberschall, Tilly, Gamson and

[\[AS4\]](#) Oberschall, A. 1973. Social conflict and social movements. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, Prentice-Hall.

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