

SOCIOLOGY 313

FINAL

PAPER

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According to Gamson, it is useful to think of success of a social movement as a set of outcomes, recognizing that a given challenging group may receive different scores on equally valid, different measures of outcome. These outcomes fall into two basic clusters; one concerned with the fate of the challenging group as an organization, and one with the distribution of new advantages to the group's beneficiary. Gamson goes on, assuming that a group has a single antagonist and a single act which they wish this antagonist to perform, to ask: 1) Does the antagonist accept the group as a valid spokesman for the constituency that it is attempting to mobilize, or does it deny such acceptance? and 2) Did the group gain the advantages it sought? There are four possible outcomes, according to Gamson, as possible answers to the above questions.

1) Full response- the challenging group succeeds in gaining acceptance, along with many new advantages.

2) Collapse- the challenging group fails totally to gain any advantages or acceptance.

3) Co-optation- the group gains acceptance, but without any new advantages.

4) Pre-emption- the challenging group gains new advantages, but without acceptance.

It is difficult to use Gamson's model or any other model in ascertaining the success of a movement, especially the gay liberation movement, primarily because "success" is a very elusive term, and because, as is the case with the gay lib movement, there exists more than one issue and more than one antagonist. In applying Gamson's notion of success to the movement, however, one is inclined to believe that it has been pre-empted; that is, concessions and

and changes in the laws have been made for gays so far, but being gay is still very illegitimate in this society. Along with that, one needs to take into account the fact that the movement is not yet over, and therefore it is rather impossible to measure the ultimate success of the movement.

According to Turner, the public is a dispersed group of people interested in and divided about an issue, with a view to registering a collective opinion which is expected to affect the course of actions of some group or individual. According to Olson, for a movement to be successful, it must be seen as legitimate in the eyes of the public. Olson also states that the less politically alienated people in a society are likely to view social protest as legitimate because they are the most tolerant of the rights of others to attempt to change social and political conditions, whereas in contrast to them, those who feel incapable or discontented toward the political system are also intolerant of social protest action. The above are some characteristics of the public. As to features of the movement that lead to sympathy on the part of the public, Turner uses the folk concept of protest to explain a movement's credibility in the eyes of the public. "To be credible as protesters, troublemakers must seem to constitute a major part of a group whose grievances are already well documented, who are believed to be individually or collectively powerless to correct their grievances, and who show some signs of moral virtue that render them deserving." In terms of viewing disturbances as credible, Turner notes that the disturbance itself must be seen either as a spontaneous unplanned and naive outburst, or as an openly organized protest of a more limited nature that got tragically out of hand. Finally, some indications of restraint on the part of the protesters are impor-

tant clues to its interpretation as protest.

The perceptions of the public about the movement, and its relation to the success of that movement is a very crucial variable. According to Turner, a movement should have an optimum combination of threat and appeal for it to be viewed as legitimate in the eyes of the public. Also, the perceptions of the public and their reactions to the movement affects how the state will react to the movement, because theoretically, in a democracy, the state is supposed to at least acknowledge and recognize public opinion as important.

Relating all this to gay liberation, one comes up with some interesting results. First of all, the goals of the movement are not that well defined in terms of concrete variables. This makes it difficult to measure success. This is especially true when one looks at the radical factions of the movement who call for a total change in society regarding socialization of sex roles, people's perceptions of homosexuality, and sexuality in general. Secondly, the public is still rather negative about homosexuality. That is, because it is not very well understood, the public feels threatened by gay people, especially those who openly acknowledge that they are homosexual. The public's perception and the rather broad goals of the movement, has had a very strong effect on the movement. In many states, it is still illegal for people of the same sex to engage in consensual sexual acts. These laws have not been changed primarily because the public and the state views homosexuality as illegitimate, immoral, and un-American.

According to class lecture, violence may generally be defined as intended injury to someone's person or property by an indi-

vidual or group. Generally, in a democracy, the use of violence on the part of protesters is seen as illegitimate, thus in many instances, sanctioning repression by the state. There are generally three kinds of violence which a social movement will employ as tactics.

The first is pro-active violence or offensive violence. This kind of violence is used voluntarily by the protesters and is usually used only when it is the only option available to the protesters. Because offensive violence is costly, it is usually used only as a last resort. This is so because it usually leads to harsh repression by the state. The second type of violence is reactive or defensive violence. Violence of this nature is usually a response by protesters to violence on the part of the state. Thirdly, authorities may use violence as a means of social control. This happens more often than not when violence does occur, but it is very costly to the state in terms of its credibility.

In terms of the consequences of the use of violence for a social movement, differing opinions exist as to whether the consequences are negative or positive. According to Parsons and Arendt, the use of violence by any party is normatively very negative, and it does nothing to change conditions or power in the long run. In contrast to that, Pughes pacification hypothesis states that the use of severe force by social control agents is effective in stopping demonstrations, de-mobilizing demonstrators, and deterring further expressions of dissent. In other words, violence works against the social movement and in favor of the state. According to other theories, violence on the part of social control agents may have positive effects for a social movement. Pugh has an alternative hypothesis called the radicalization hypothesis. This one suggests that when the use of violence or severe force is used a

gainst demonstrators, they will become radicalized in their behavior and norms. That is, their political orientation will move to the left, they will increasingly come to question the legitimacy of existing governmental institutions and processes, and they will be more accepting of the use of violence as a political technique to achieve change. Koser, another theorist, sees that violence employed by the social movement also may have positive consequences. He has two models. The first is called the the danger signal model. Violence used by a social movement here is a signal of severe maladjustment to men in power not otherwise noted for their peculiar sensitivity to social ills.¹⁾ It is, in a sense, a cry for help to the authorities intended to make them do something about the problem. This model, however, doesn't take into account the fact that the state may react with repression to violence. Koser's second model is called the violence as organizer model. Here, the use of violence on the part of participants tends to solidify the group, crystallizing it, and causing a strong sense of identity among the members of the movement. Also, violence gains supporters and sympathizers for the group and its cause in this model.

Trying to formulate a conclusion as to whether violence is beneficial or not for a movement is difficult. Evidence, however, suggests that violence is usually instigated on the part of the authorities, and in such cases, it does correlate with a strong organizer effect. However, one has difficulty in figuring out the cause of such an effect. Is it repression by authorities or the violence on the part of the movement that radicalizes or unifies the movement and public?

Repression deals with a concerted attempt to dis-organize

and eventually destroy a social movement organization. According to Wolfe and Althusser, there are two kinds of repression.

1) Ideological repression- This type includes making the social movement, either its goals, leaders or tactics, seem illegitimate. The outcome of this type of repression is to de-mobilize the movement and to make groups unsympathetic to its cause. It also makes gaining recruits very difficult for the organization. De-legitimization can occur either by removing the legitimacy of the goals of the movement(by offering concessions, for example), removing the legitimacy of the leaders of the movement (raising questions about their morality), or characterizing a movement as violent or violence prone. *(no delegitimizing tactics)*

2) Violent repression- This is viewed as more costly to the state, particularly a democratic one. It is not looked on positively unless it can be shown that a given social movement is violent or attempts to overthrow the government. Violent repression includes deportations, arrests and jailing of members.

A third form of repression involves groups other than the movement members or the state. These third parties may try to destroy a movement by starting counter movements which attempt to turn back already made changes. For example, the anti-gay movement of the seventies headed by Anita Bryant succeeded in some cases instances in repealing ordinances granting equal rights to gay people. To the extent that the third party and the state are similar in their beliefs about a movement, they will be rather effective in repressing a movement.

In the gay liberation movement, violence has been used in the past. The type used was mainly reactive or defensive violence, social against repression from authorities. There are not any factions

of the movement today that advocate offensive violence. The state and the public has been notorious for treating gay people with violence, and people have been killed by them. Such violence tends to cause outrage in the gay population and in the liberal straight population, but it is usually never dealt with seriously. This is an example of how public opinion and repression on the part of the state can work hand in hand to attempt to destroy a movement or the rights of people if they do not agree with those people.

In discussing the relationship between social movements, social change, and historical context, Perrow has formulated several hypotheses as to why there was such an upsurge in social movement activity in the sixties. He cites demographic variables, such as the increase in the adolescent population in the sixties, an increased sense of economic affluence in America, a radical change in values from the fifties to the sixties toward liberalism, and the failure of American capitalism in the world market all as possible explanations. Each of these theories have some element of truth and are all plausible to some degree, but none of them alone can explain the course of history thoroughly. Actually all theories work together in answering the question. Presently, it seems like the U.S.A. is about to become radicalized again. Many factors can be cited. 1) the economy is failing and people are angry about the cuts in the budget, especially those out of work, 2) Reagan is in office, 3) there is an increase in religious fundamentalism that is threatening people's rights, and 4) war is a very real possibility especially in Latin America and the mid-east. No one factor can be attributed to historical change; they all work together.

In relation to the gay liberation movement, if the conservatism

that exists in this country continues to grow, gay people are going to have a very difficult time holding on to the rights they have gained in the recent past. They are already threatened by the Family Protection Act, and more and more are being openly beaten in the streets as of late, especially in San Francisco and New York. These are signs for them to put aside their differences, and begin to reorganize more strongly and mobilize collectively as strongly as they did when the movement was born in 1969.

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