Societal Reactions and Engendered Deviation: The Case of Offensive Groups*

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Gesellschaftliche Reaktionen und erzeugte Abweichung: Der Fall der offensiven Gruppen

Inhalt: Der Aufsatz befaßt sich mit drei Aspekten der Abweichung von gesellschaftlichen Normen: 1. kollektive Abweichung als Ergebnis struktureller Zwänge, wie sie von Differenzierungsprozessen in hochkomplexen Gesellschaften notwendig hervorgebracht werden; 2. die Entstehung abweichender Gruppen als Strategie der Anpassung an Anomie und 3. die Frage, ob offensive kollektive Abweichung durch gesellschaftliche Reaktionen auf primäre Abweichung erzeugt wird. Im Anschluß an Merton und Dunphy wird gezeigt, daß Form und Folgen der primären Abweichung von Gruppen von den unterschiedlichen Möglichkeiten, Ressourcen und der Kontrollmacht der Gruppe abhängen. Je nach den positiven oder negativen Rückkopplungsprozessen zwischen individuellen, Gruppen- und sekundären Normensystemen können vier Idealtypen von Gruppen unterschieden werden: konforme, abweichende, produktive und regressive Gruppen. Abweichende Gruppen werden durch „defensive Strukturierung“ gekennzeichnet, wenn sie die herrschenden Werte und Normen nur passiv negieren. Sie werden zu offensiven Gruppen, wenn sie den gesellschaftlichen Normen aktiv zuwiderhandeln und wenn ihre Abweichung funktionale Unentbehrlichkeiten berührt. Meine Hypothese ist, daß das Ausmaß und die Intensität staatlicher Kontrolle bei der Entstehung offensiver Gruppen eine wichtige Rolle spielt.

Abstract: This paper focuses attention on three aspects of deviation from societal norms: 1. collective deviance as a result of structural constraints which are necessarily involved in differentiation processes of highly complex societies; 2. the emergence of deviant groups as a strategy of adaptation to anomie; and 3. the question whether offensive collective deviance is engendered by societal reactions to primary deviation. Following Merton and Dunphy, the form and consequences of primary deviation of groups are shown to be contingent upon differential opportunities, assets and control power of the group. Depending upon positive or negative feedback-processes between individual, group, and secondary normative systems four ideal types of groups can be distinguished: conform, deviant, generative and regressive groups. Deviant groups are characterized by „defensive structuring“ if they passively negate the dominant values and norms. They become offensive groups if they actively defy societal norms and if their deviance touches functional indispensabilities. My hypothesis is that extensiveness and intensity of state control plays an important part in creating offensive groups.

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3. the question whether offensive collective deviance is engendered by societal reactions to primary deviation.

The purpose of this paper is to develop some

hypotheses about the theoretically as well as practically relevant case of deviant groups which become offensive. Beyond the (psychological and social-psychological) aspect of individual deviance this approach might be valuable in increasing our knowledge and understanding of the development of counter-cultures and counter-system-models. Offensive groups may be revolutionary political, religious or scientific groups as well as organized crime or separatist movements.

1. System-differentiation and primary deviation

The functional and structural differentiation of complex social systems has well-known and well-treated effects: division of labor, social stratification, differential societal assets and accessibility of resources. To be more specific, the emergence of relatively autonomous groups, organizations, institutions or other subsystems with a specialized rationality of their own involves considerable steering problems (e.g. integration) and gui-

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dance costs (e.g. bureaucratic overlayer). On the other hand, of course, functional differentiation and relative autonomy of the parts bring about the advantages of an ultrastable system: increased potential of coping with its environment, of adaptation to new problems, of evolutionary progress by trying out and generating innovations.

It is the very capacity of inducing and generating innovations which poses the problem of deviation or, in a moral code, deviance. A fundamental requirement of the persistence of open, adaptive social systems in an unstable environment is their capability to modify their structure according to changing exigencies. Particularly, the perspective of the cybernetic systems theory points to the crucial role of deviation of subsystems from the overall system. As BUCKLEY puts it, this perspective „brings out the absolute necessity of deviation – or, more generally, ‚variety‘ – in providing a pool of potential new transformations of process or structure that the adaptive systems might adopt in responding to goal-mismatch“. (BUCKLEY 1969: 495). The role of deviance is crucial, because it may lead to extremely different outcomes: adaptive innovation or regressive destruction. What factors affect the outcome?

BUCKLEY tries to answer this question partly by introducing the term of „non-pathological deviance“. But, then, what is pathological and what is non-pathological deviance? In order to begin to clarify this strategic point, we have to recur to the cybernetic concept of negative and positive feed-back processes. Differentiation and relative autonomy of parts or subsystems implies the possibility of the deviation of the subsystems from the overall system or, changing the level or reference, of a system from its environment. The outcome of deviation is contingent on the quality of the relations between a system and its environment. Negative (compensatory) feed-back-processes incorporate innovations and reintegrate the system at a new level of relative equilibrium. These processes depend on structurally controlled deviations which do not endanger the system's essential variables, e.g. its central values and basic norms. Positive (cumulative) feed-back-processes, on the other hand, lead to the breakdown of the deviating subsystem, the entire system or both or to the establishment of an entirely new system: e.g. increasing activities of revolutionary religious

(early Reformation) or political (French or Russian revolution) groups or growing polarization through ingroup-outgroup-mechanisms.

The social costs of functional and structural differentiation of complex social systems have been treated in terms of class struggle, alienation (MARX), anomie (DURKHEIM), oligarchization (MICHELS) or bureaucratization (WEBER). It seems that various forms of primary deviation are essentials of that basic evolutionary process as well, because the diversity or even antagonism of values, goals and functions, which are synchronically pursued by the various parts of the system, surpass its consensus-building capacity. Modern democratic societies, therefore, are to a very high degree „loose systems“, bound together by a minimum of consensus and integrating mechanisms. As stated before, this has its advantages and its costs. The costs include an ever present danger of mismanagement of deviance: either proclivity to disorganization or overreaction to primary deviance and thus engendering of organized, secondary deviation.

To be sure, this is a normal state of affairs. Complex social systems are characterized by the dynamics of countervailing and contradicting processes: differentiation and integration, conflict and consensus-building, deviation and adaptation, regression and evolution. A crucial point is reached only when differentiation, conflict or deviation are no longer held in balance by controlling mechanisms, when they become dominant and escalate to spirales or vicious circles which disrupt the overall system. It is an empirical question, which conditions hinder or favour such a development. Theoretical analysis is restricted to suggesting a sensitizing frame of reference which allows the relevant empirical questions to be asked.

2. Group-scale adaptation to differential opportunities

MERTON's classic study on „Social Structure and Anomie“ still is a very influential concept of deviance production. His central hypothesis states, „that aberrant behavior may be regarded sociologically as a symptom of dissociation between culturally prescribed aspirations and socially structured avenues for realizing these aspi-

rations“ (MERTON 1965: 134). The question is, which mechanisms account for that dissociation. MERTON assumes that „regulatory norms“ – which define and control the legitimate modes of reaching the cultural goals – provide a differential distribution of means for realizing the common aspirations. For example, members of the lower class often do not even have a chance to reach societal goals – e.g. monetary success – legitimately, because they lack such resources as education or capital, resources which are presupposed by the given regulatory norms. Cognizance of this disadvantage leads to pressure to reach the goals by other than the prescribed means: to dissociate norms and goals. As this process of attenuation continues, the society becomes unstable and there develops what MERTON, following DURKHEIM, calls „anomie“ (MERTON 1965: 135).

MERTON then develops his well-known typology of modes of individual (!) adaptation to anomie:

Modes of Adaptation	Culture Goals	Institutionalized Means
I Conformity	+	+
II Innovation	+	–
III Ritualism	–	+
IV Retreatism	–	–
V Rebellion	±	±

(+ signifies „acceptance“, – signifies „rejection“, and ± signifies „rejection of prevailing values and substitution of new values“, MERTON 1965: 140).

The point is, that these modes of adaptation to anomie are not just logical possibilities. MERTON notices that the various classes of a society command different assets and resources. This does not only apply to resources like education or capital but also, as he ingeniously points out, to resources in form of regulatory norms, which determine the legitimate ways of goal-attainment.

The differences in opportunities follow a certain pattern: „It is a primary assumption of our typology that these responses occur with different frequency within various sub-groups in our society precisely because members of these groups or strata are differentially subject to cultural stimulation and social restraints“ (MERTON 1965:

140, n. 12). The social structure of differentiated societies thus creates tensions and pressure upon certain persons or groups and this in turn leads to specific modes of individual deviation.

It is a peculiarity of MERTON's theory of anomie that he connects certain structural constraints with certain forms of adaptation to anomie; the modes of adaptation, however, are restricted to individual reactions. As COHEN puts it:

„The emphasis, in short, is on certain aspects of the culture (goal and norms) and of the social structure (opportunities, or access to means). The theory *is*, then, radically sociological. And yet, as far as the formal and explicit structure of MERTON's first formulation is concerned, it is, in certain respects, atomistic and individualistic. Within the framework of goals, norms, and opportunities, the process of deviance was conceptualized as though each individual – or better, role incumbent – were in a box by himself“ (COHEN 1965: 6).

To some degree this is surprising because MERTON himself has repeatedly stressed the anchorage of individuals in groups and the importance of reference groups. Whether or not an individual perceives a situation as anomic, not only depends on societal conditions and constraints but also heavily on the group-relations in which the individual acts. FEAGIN summarizes findings which show that social systems usually considered as prone to anomie (slums, migration-communities, disaster-struck communities) actually exhibit but little disorganization and desintegration:

„Tilly found that black migrants had lower delinquency rates and imprisonment rates than native residents of the area studied... In general, disaster victims react immediately to their plight. Individuals first seek help from family and friends, then from larger groups such as churches... More recently, in his study of a complex Chicago slum area, Suttles rejected the labels of ‚disorganization‘ and ‚value rejection‘, concluding that the area studied was ‚intricately organized‘ and that the overwhelming majority of the residents were ‚quite conventional people‘. While Suttles' analysis is limited by its focus on street life and adolescent males, it provides additional evidence of the integrative importance of peer groups and social networks among the urban poor“ (FEAGIN 1973: 128, 130, 132f.).

These findings suggest a more complex approach to the problem of dissociation between cultural goals and institutionalized means: societally induced dissociations do not hit the individual actor directly; they are deflected by the intermediary level of (primary) groups. Situations which

in a societal perspective seem to be anomic, can be cushioned, compensated, aggravated or deflected in other ways by primary groups. Intervening variable of this prismatic quality of primary social systems is the normative system of the group, or, in MERTON's language: the group's own resources of regulatory norms which permit the realization of group goals.

Particularly D.C. DUNPHY has elaborated the vantage point of the primary group's role in mediating deviance production. He poses the question, „where in the social system primary groups will support or deviate from the norms of the larger system“ and „what form deviance will take if it occurs“ (DUNPHY 1972: 62). His theory follows the lead of SAYLES and CLOWARD/OHLIN and stresses the relationship of the primary group to its environment. (DUNPHY defines „primary group“ more broadly than COOLEY.) Individuals form primary groups because of their need for emotional relations with others and – an aspect which the psychological and social-psychological tradition of group theory has neglected – because of their need to cope with and control the secondary environment as effective

The identity of groups is constituted by their basic values and norms. The normative system of a group structures input-conversion- and output-processes and controls group-relevant actions of the members. Insofar as group goals differ from societal or secondary goals the respective normative systems differ as well. In the context of a secondary system these „differences“ necessarily involve control-problems because the overall system is bound to provide for some minimal compatibility of the various goals. One conspicuous mode of control consists in labelling certain kinds of differences as deviations, thus moralizing a structural problem. The emergence of group identities crystallized around specific normative systems and based on differential allocations of resources and control power is continuously influenced by transactions between the group and its environment. The reactions of the group to external conditions and contingencies in turn elicit controlling reactions of the secondary or societal system. Thus the processual construction of differentiated group identities, their normative systems and definitions of group goals can be viewed as a multidimensional, multi-loop feedback process. Schematically:

tively as possible. And his theory follows MERTON by assuming that the effectiveness of primary groups in coping with its environment „varies with different levels of the hierarchies which control the secondary system“ (DUNPHY 1972: 63). Consequently DUNPHY develops a scheme of six types of groups which is designed „to predict primary group characteristics given environmental constraints, or to predict environmental constraints given primary group characteristics“ (DUNPHY 1962: 64). Groups and their specific tendencies of deviation from the secondary system are differentiated according to their control power over the means by which secondary goals are implemented and according to their control power over the formulation of the secondary goals themselves.

The transactions between members (inner environment), primary group and secondary system (outer environment) may lead to four distinct orientations of the group towards the secondary system:

1. Negative (compensating or deviation-counteracting) feedback between secondary and primary control and group-conform actions of the members integrate the group into the secondary system. This is the unproblematic case of the *conform group*.
2. Negative feedback between secondary and primary control along with deviations of members from the normative system of the group may have two outcomes: the deviation is „normali-

zed“ by the group and thus rendered irrelevant because the group norms are backed up by the secondary norms. On the other hand the security of congruent primary and secondary norms enables the group to permit limited conflict within the group and thus increase the variety of feasible actions and its adaptive capacity:

„Some (unknown) degree of deviation from current norms is probably functional for the basic goals of all groups. A certain degree of ‚innovation‘, for example, may result in the formation of new institutionalized patterns of behavior which are more adaptive than the old in making for realization of primary goals“ (MERTON 1965: 182).

An increased „variety pool“ augments the chances to develop innovative procedures and goals which – in an evolutionary perspective – may be advantageous for the group.

If these evolutionary advantages are accepted and taken over by the secondary system, the innovative group grows and initiates innovations of the overall system: this is the model of the *generative group* (e.g.: early Christianity, reformistic political groups, innovative scientific schools, „dynamic“ economic groups).

stable, cohesive group which as a whole deviates from the secondary or societal system. This type of primary group creates a counter-culture or a counter-system-model (SJOBERG/CAIN 1971: 212 ff.). This phenomenon has been treated in terms of ingroup-outgroup-mechanisms, polarization, „defensive structuring“ (SIEGEL 1970: 11 ff.), secondary deviation or „deviation-amplifying mutual causal processes“ (MARUYAMA 1974: 304 ff.). Whereas the generative group is characterized by its acceptance of basic societal norms, a counter-culture may develop, where

„the normative system of a group contains, as a primary element, a theme of conflict with the values of the total society, where personality variables are directly involved in the development and maintenance of the group’s values, and wherever its norms can be understood only by reference to the relationships of the group to a surrounding dominant culture“ (YINGER 1960: 629).

This type of group will be called *deviant group*, because the group as a social subsystem in toto deviates from the secondary system.

The following table summarizes the findings:

individual norms and group-norms	the normative system of the primary group and the secondary system	
	are conform (negative feedback)	deviate (positive feedback)
are conform	conform group	deviant group
deviate	generative group	regressive group

3. If there is positive (cumulative or deviation-amplifying) feedback between secondary and primary control and in addition to this the members deviate from the group-norms, then the group risks losing its structuredness and it desintegrates. The group fails to provide orientation and cohesiveness and so the members drift apart. This type may be called *regressive group* (e.g.: anarchic political groups, certain types of communes, drug addicts, hobos, etc.).

4. If there is positive feedback between secondary and primary control but strict conformity of the members to the group’s normative system, then we would predict the emergence of a

The fundamental differentiation between the normative systems of primary groups and secondary systems (or societies) not only reflects the mediating function of the primary group. It permits a theoretically grounded distinction of types and consequences of deviation and possibly a fuller understanding of the emergence of specific kinds of groups.

Following DUNPHY, we have stressed the primary group’s role in mediating deviance production. If, in addition to this, we take into account that group characteristics and the form group-deviance will take are contingent upon the differential resources of groups in commanding

means of goal attainment and in participating in the definition of societal goals, it seems suggestive to relate MERTON's classification of modes of individual adaptation to anomie and the reactions of groups to conflicting normative systems.

The following table sums up the relationship:

individual norms and group-norms	the normative system of the primary group and the secondary system	
	are conform	deviate
are conform	1 conform group „conformity“	2 deviant group „rebellion/ritualism“
deviate	3 generative group „innovation“	4 regressive group „retreatism“

The relations in sections 1 and 4 seem unproblematic. Section 3 should be discussed thoroughly but for the purpose of this paper section 2 is crucial and will be treated shortly.

Section 2 is remarkable because ritualism and rebellion show up as related but different strategies of adaptation. They are related insofar as rebellious as well as ritualistic groups perceive their environment as anomic and negate the dominant cultural goals. At the same time their members strictly conform to the group norms.

What is the difference then? PARSONS and BALES suggest an explanation:

„Deviance was shown to involve four basic directions, according to whether the need to express alienation from the normative pattern – including the repudiation of attachment to alter as an object – or to maintain compulsive conformity with the normative pattern and attachment to alter, and according to whether the mode of action was actively or passively inclined. This yielded four directional types, those of aggressiveness and withdrawal on the alienative side, and of compulsive performance and compulsive acceptance, on the side of compulsive conformity“ (PARSONS et al. 1953: 68).

Most important is the distinction between active and passive modes of action: „ritualism“ can be seen as a passive strategy of adaptation to a situation of conflicting normative systems, whereas „rebellion“ is the active strategy in the same situa-

tion. Some empirical evidence for the passive mode of deviant adaptation can be drawn from SIEGEL's discussion of defensively structured groups. Those groups (e.g.: Taos and Picuris Indian pueblos, Hutterites, Amish, Mormons, some Jewish villages, etc.) among other things punctiliously observe particular rituals in order to sur-

vive as a group and to maintain a specific identity. They negate the dominant cultural values and norms of their environment but do not challenge them openly or aggressively because they have limited resources and live in the face of what they perceive as external threats to their identity. (SIEGEL 1970: 13, 25).

SIEGEL seems to feel the necessity to distinguish between active and passive modes of adaptation. Having stated that defensive structuring is a strategy of threatened groups with limited resources for direct and possibly violent confrontations with their environment, he goes on to say:

„Nevertheless, there are many instances of aggressive collective confrontation in the face of limited resources. Activist and so-called militant groups in America today are cases in point. This suggests that it is necessary to take into account something more than either threat or limited resources in order to predict a defensive outcome“ (SIEGEL 1970: 29).

The question is, what this „something more“ could be. And our answer is: a defensive outcome will occur when a particular group passively endures the threat and retreats in order to ascertain its mere existence; an aggressive or offensive outcome is likely to occur when the group actively defies the societal goals and propagates its own values with the intention to initiate a transvaluation of the dominant values.

3. The creation of the offensive group

Complex differentiated societies include groups which deviate from societal goals on quite different levels, dimensions and concerns. Deviations may be central or peripheral, ephemeral or chronic, irrelevant or pernicious, hidden or conspicuous.

Societies may establish areas of indifference where deviations do not matter: e.g. sects or other forms of religious deviation in societies which adhere to the principle of religious tolerance; varieties of fine arts, recreational activities, dress styles, voluntary associations, interest groups, etc. in societies which declare these areas as private concerns. Groups may rebel against the dominant norms in any of these „privatized“ areas and the society will hardly take notice: it does not react. A rebellion which is fundamental for the group's self-conception or identity may still remain a petty rebellion in reference to the level of society.

On the other hand it is obvious that societies interpret deviations as more threatening the more they touch functional indispensabilities.

Differentiation processes in complex societies produce differences in status, power and various other assets among groups. These primary differences are ideologically consolidated by a differential distribution of legitimacy: the powerful or ruling groups restrict legitimacy to their goals and values and thus automatically proclaim the pursuit of different group goals to be acts of deviation. This process of converting differences in deviations very aptly is described by GOULDNER as „normalized repression“ (GOULDNER, 1971, 297). The structural inequalities of differentiated societies are preserved and justified by the powerful. The suppression of competing groups, goals and interests is „normalized“ as long as the ideological justification of the existing inequalities works. Once the normative system of a group rejects the societal norms and defies the dominant ideology a radical change takes place: „normalized repression“ becomes real repression, control agencies become enemies, policemen, defending state interests, are „pigs“ or „murderers“, judges are „fascists“, the suppressed group's causes are ultimately legitimate and the ruling groups and their society are deviant.

The existence of offensive groups – radical political groups, organized crime, separatist movements, ethnic militants, etc. – indicates that the societal reaction approach to deviance cannot be confined to a passive mode of adaptation, to passive, stigmatized, and labelled individuals and groups. There are those who actively defy or violate the ruling ideological or normative codes. They are not the helpless victims of society but they militantly pursue their own individual or group goals; and they do so because they believe in the superior legitimacy of their own goals and because they make a purposeful and conscious choice against the rationality of their society.

It seems that traditional deviancy theory is unable to cope with offensive groups. Any clinical or psychological approach necessarily falls short of the political dimension of the case. Even labelling and social reaction approach have difficulties accounting for the active and militant orientation of these groups. Therefore PAUL WALTON seems right, saying: „Modern deviancy theory should not reject the labelling perspective out of hand; it needs, however, to be incorporated into a political sociology of the state“ (WALTON 1973: 165). Offensive groups often emerge out of a differentiation and radicalization process of social movements: Black Power from the Civil Rights Movements, radical Women's Liberation groups from the general Equal Rights Movement, the Weathermen from the Student Protest Movement and the American SDS, the Baader-Meinhof-group from the Student-Revolt and the German SDS (WEHR 1968; WALTON 1973: 166ff.).

In order to explain this radicalization process we have to take into account changes of the normative system of groups which are induced by a coalescence of internal (e.g. group discussion, see SAUER 1974) and external factors. Since in modern societies a crucial external factor is the reaction of the state and its agencies, a sociological theory of deviant groups indeed has to be incorporated into a political sociology of the state.

In modern societies there seem to exist at least three vital functional indispensabilities, i.e. areas where rebellion is perceived as a serious problem: the organization and guidance of production, territorial integrity, and the basic political ideology. Groups which defy these normative arrangements are not only deviant groups but also of-

fensive groups by definition of those in power. As soon as these areas are in question a society will react – it probably must react if it is not to jeopardize its identity. The societal reaction aggravates the conflict between the offensive group and the overall system and engenders further, „secondary“ deviation by pushing the conflict into an official status where ready routines of state agencies take over.

Extensiveness and intensity of state controls seem to play an important part in creating offensive groups. „Dissidents“ in Russia, free labor unions in Spain, „radicals“ in West-Germany, some Irish Catholic groups in Great Britain, etc., are channeled into a status of offensive groups. According to the various definitions of state interests or societal goals certain groups are handled or man-handled as „social dynamite“ and therefore „processed through the legal system with its capacity for active intervention“ (SPITZER 1975: 645 f.).

State and law are man-made and far from representing a prestabilized or self-evident order. Nobody will deny that one function of the legal system is to settle or preclude conflicts and that in some instances law helps to secure a just social order. On the other hand, though, law must be seen as a differentially distributed societal resource, or, as A. TURK points out, as power. This perspective permits to highlight the dysfunctions of law, its disruptive and exploitive aspects: „instead of asking *how* law regulates conflict, the investigator is encouraged to ask *whether* law regulates or generates conflict, or in what ways and in what degree the use of legal power does both“ (TURK 1976: 282). Predominantly law is visualized as an outstanding integrating mechanism of modern societies. In highly complex, functionally differentiated societies, however, integration is not a problem of maximization but of balancing contradictory functional requirements (SJOBERG 1967). The rigid enforcement of traditional public and criminal law thus too often has repressive outcomes instead of providing restitution, let alone prevention or the initiation of learning processes on both sides.

So far, the existing legal systems seem to be quite helpless and insufficient when confronted with offensive or „radical“ challenges. Traditional public and criminal law exploits deviation

and particularly offensive group action to maintain and reinforce the existing norms and to stabilize system and sub-system boundaries even more punctiliously (SJOBERG/CAIN 1971: 216). Its cognitive capacities are underdeveloped and so hinder flexible responses to offensive deviations. Offensive groups as well as the overall system – represented by its legal system – seem to stumble into a vicious circle not because this is necessarily so but because it is structurally and processually stipulated.

For example, S. PALMER states that the „control apparatus frequently has the latent function of inducing the deviance it is manifestly designed to prevent“ and that the police „may precipitate a riot simply by playing out their roles“ (PALMER 1973: 98).

At this point sociological inquiry is necessary in order to find lines of argumentation which transverse the fronts of the conflicting parties. It is a political rather than scientific question whether some given societal values or the counter-values of an offensive group are „right“. The business of science is to point out the costs and consequences of the creation of offensive groups by rigid legal handling.

For example SJOBERG and CAIN state:

„Emergent negative values are an essential precondition for undermining faith in traditional action patterns or more generally in the legitimacy of the existing structure. Negative values are thus the mechanism by which doubts about the normative order and the supportive value system are raised and resocialization initiated. Reformers, therefore, even in democratic societies, often seek to initiate change through an ‚antisystem‘ orientation – by negating various aspects of the social structure and of the values that support them“ (SJOBERG/CAIN 1971: 219).

A society which is instantly alarmed by the emergence of countervalues and therefore over-reacts to deviant groups is in danger of (1) creating more serious problems in form of offensive groups, (2) destroying reformatory potential and innovative capacities, and (3) breeding discontent and frustration which may explode in a violent overthrow of the system (Portugal is a recent case in point).

This is not to say that societies should or could deliberately alter their identity by adapting to

new movements. But it suggests a closer calculation of the consequences of rigidity in preserving established vested interests, inequalities and differential opportunities; it calls for efforts to create new and flexible control mechanisms (COWAN 1971: 638ff.) and to heighten the „responsiveness“ and „authenticity“ of the societal system (ETZIONI 1971: 7ff., 51ff., 617ff.; ETZIONI 1972: 112f.). And, finally, it reminds the social scientist of his responsibility to continue to scrutinize the diversity of processes which so conveniently and misleadingly are done away with by calling them „deviation“.

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