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Can Resource Mobilization Predict the Level of Success Among Social Movement
Organizations?

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Abstract: This paper is a series of case studies of social movement organizations within the AIDS Awareness Movement of the 1980s. By examining ACT UP, the Names Project, and Gay Men's Health Crisis, we see that resource mobilization theory can help explain varying levels of success among SMOs that worked in the same context and within the same subculture. Internal organization, networking, innovation and the use of violence are all strategies which are found to be significant in explaining the success of each SMO. This paper shows the predictive ability of resource mobilization theory. It closes with suggestions for future work, including a new measure of success of SMOs.

Introduction

Social movements are deliberate patterns of contentious actions committed by groups whose members are working toward the same broadly defined goal. Actors use contentious action when other options (i.e. voting, petition signing, etc.) are not open to them or have failed. Multiple uses of contentious actions for an express purpose constitute a social movement: “We have social movement dynamics going on when single episodes of collective action are perceived as components of a longer-lasting action, rather than discrete events; and when those who are engaged in them feel linked by ties of solidarity and of ideal communion with protagonists of other analogous mobilizations” (Diani and Della Porta 2006, 23).

Social movements emerge when a conflict occurs which a certain group wants to have solved outside of the institution. “For a protest to emerge, activists must believe that an opportunity exists, that they have the power to bring about change; and they must blame the system for the problem” (Diani and Della Porta 2006, 18). Once movements emerge, they are dynamic; they change over time to meet challenges of an uncontrollable political context. Movements are also cyclical, making it difficult to determine when they have begun and when (or if) they have ended. The dynamic, cyclical nature of protest makes analysis of a movement’s success difficult.

There are two prominent theories to explain the success of social movements. The first, new movement theory explains social movement organizations (SMOs) based on subcultures that form out of the movement. “Activists in the community develop a shared vocabulary that extends well beyond particular political issues; it includes ways of socializing, styles of dress and presentation of self, and often unarticulated, but shared, beliefs in a range of issues (Meyer and Whittier 1994; Taylor and Whittier 1992; Whittier

1995)” (Meyer 2007, 52). This subculture keeps participants connected to the movement and encourages them to stay active. Also, the subculture spreads through society to others who become interested in the movement. In this way, the subculture draws in new members who bring donations or other resources to support the cause. New movement theory says that the development of a subculture, which keeps participants connected, while drawing in new supporters, is crucial to the success of a movement (see McAdam et al. 2001, Tilly 2004).

The second main theory in social movement literature is resource mobilization theory, first introduced by John D. McCarthy. This theory states that the political context in which a group acts, the resources available to the group, and how the group uses its resources all affect the success of the group. “In this view, social movements have no distinct inner logic and are not fundamentally different from institutionalized behavior. Organizations, institutions, pre-existing communication networks, and rational actors are all seen as important resources playing crucial roles in the emergence and outcome of collective action...organizational and institutional structures are argued to be central throughout the entire process of collective action” (Morris 1997, 91). If a group is able to act during a window of political opportunity, or perhaps create a favorable political environment; is able to obtain needed resources; and is able to use those resources in a positive way, that group will have the highest chance of success.

Out of these two prominent theories, this paper will use resource mobilization theory. This paper will test resource mobilization theory to determine if this model is useful in explaining varying success levels. Also, resource mobilization focuses more on the role of political behaviors. “Resource mobilization theory is based in a strategic

approach to the study of social movements; it emphasizes the mobilization and allocation of resources by social movement actors in the context of opportunities and constraints imposed by the social and political environment. Particular attention focuses on the role of formal social movement organizations as the key social actors planning strategies and mobilizing resources” (Mueller 1994, 158). New movement theory has been critiqued for its lack of attention to institutionalized aspects of social movements: “Critics of new movement theory contend that this approach does not adequately explain the formalized dimensions of movement organizations or their internal structures. New movement theorists have also been criticized for overstating the cultural aspects of new movements while underestimating the linkages between movements and more institutionally oriented political behavior” (Halcli 1999, 137).

The use of resource mobilization theory will be beneficial in this paper because it explains success levels of groups acting within the same subculture. Both subculture and context are controlled for here to determine if the use of resources is able to explain success levels. Also, the theory’s focus on interactions between SMOs and government institutions is important for the study of politics. By selecting this theory to explain social movement success, this paper will also take into consideration the critiques of resource mobilization theory. The most common criticism is as follows: “This theory has been criticized for overlooking the informal and noninstitutional or even anti-institutional dimensions of social movement activity. It does not adequately address the cultural, expressive, and identity-building elements central to many social movement organizations” (Halcli 1999, 136). However, because these SMOs were working within the sane subcultures and contexts, this critique is partially taken into account.

Using resource mobilization theory, this paper will work to explain the success of three social movement organizations within the AIDS awareness movement. Each organization's resources will be compared to show why some of these organizations were successful while others failed while working for the same general goals in the same political context and within the same subculture. These SMOs will be used in a series of case studies to show that resource mobilization theory can be used to explain varying degrees of success of different groups. The goal here is to explain how and why social movement organizations differ and what impact those differences have on the degree of success the SMO experiences.

Literature Review

New movement theory proposes that a social movement organization (SMO) can be successful if it builds a subculture, allowing its members to create new identities based on the movement's ideals. Resource mobilization theory focuses instead on the resources which a group has and the political context which a group is acting in as variables which explain an SMO's success. This view of social movement success will be used because of its focus on political institutions and their importance in social movements. It is also useful because these groups shared a similar subculture.

Resource mobilization theory says that "characteristics, resources, and strategies of social movement organizations" along with outside political context, determine the success of the SMO (Jasper and Poulsen 1993, 397). Charles Tilly advances the notion that resources and the tactics that groups utilize are significant; this "significance of tactics to social movements derives from the unenviable position in which excluded or

challenging groups find themselves” (McAdam 1997, 340). Although groups are excluded from traditional avenues of protest, they still organize institutionally. This shows the relationship between SMOs and political organizations. Ultimately, although outside context is an important variable to explain success, “organizational and institutional structures are argued to be central throughout the entire process of collective action” (Morris 1997, 91).

This theory, along which has been updated since it was originally presented by McCarthy and Zald, shows that groups can be successful when they have many resources available and when political opportunities that exist are more powerful than potential threats to the SMO. But what if an SMO plans to act and wishes to know its chance of success? It certainly cannot control the political environment or context in which it wants to act. The group could wait for a time when political opportunities seem to exist, but groups may feel the need to act without delay. The question this paper seeks to examine is can an SMO control its ability to succeed in its movement? This paper will control for political context while variables related to resources will be the main focus. By using the best resources available to them, SMOs will be moderately successful in meeting their goals. They will have more success when they use these resources in a positive political context, though some success is still possible in a negative context. Now I will examine resources and their uses based on past literature.

Leadership

The type and quality of leadership plays a role in the success of an SMO. According to Staggenborg, there are three types of leaders: professional managers who are paid for their work, nonprofessional staff leaders who are sometimes paid for their

work, and nonprofessional volunteers who are not paid at all. A professional leader is best because this type of leader typically will set up formal internal organization structures, which ultimately benefit the group. The ability of a group to pay workers has allows them to attract these professional organizers. They may or may not be as dedicated to the cause, but “professionalization and formalization importantly affect the structure and maintenance of social movement organizations, their strategies and tactics, and their participation in coalition work” (Staggenborg 1997, 421).

Piven and Cloward are skeptical of the benefits of professional leaders: “far from inspiring people to action, organizational leaders can deprive them of their major power—the power to disrupt” (quoted in Tarrow 1998, 123). However, McCarthy and Zald (1977) focused on the importance of professionalization in their resource mobilization theory, which cemented the positive view of professional leaders. While professional leaders may stifle some spontaneous disruptive action, they are beneficial because they know how to gain support: “They are able to do so because they have organizational structures and professional staff that facilitate the mobilization of resources” (Staggenborg 1997, 431). While there are costs of professionalization, the benefits (the ability to organize and mobilize support) seem to outweigh them to show that ultimately professional leaders benefit SMOs.

Internal Organization

Staggenborg divides SMOs into two categories of internal organization: formal/structured organization and informal organization. These distinctions are important because “[f]ormalization does affect the strategic and tactical choices of SMOs. First, formalized SMOs tend to engage in institutionalized tactics and typically do not

initiate disruptive tactics. Second, formalized SMOs are more likely than informal SMOs to engage in activities that help to achieve organizational maintenance and expansion as well as influence on external targets” (Staggenborg 1997, 423). Formalized SMOs are usually set up by professional leaders. They have set procedures for action which is a benefit because they are “prepared to take advantage of opportunities for mobilization when the environment changes” (Staggenborg 1997, 431). Formally organized SMOs are beneficial because “a strong, stable, and well-resourced organization is in a better position to bargain with people in the government” (Meyer 2007, 36). Throughout the protest cycle, as public opinion changes, formally organized SMOs are more likely to use the environment to their favor because they are more prepared to do so; these groups are “geared toward organizational maintenance and expansion” activities such as fundraising and lobbying (Staggenborg 1997, 433). Formalized groups are better apt to organize activities and to maintain themselves during all periods of the movement. This makes them more likely to bring success than informally organized groups, which are successful only during peaks of protest cycles.

In modern social movements, a “pattern of social movement organization seems to be appearing: a combination of small professional leaderships; large but mainly passive support; and impersonal networklike connective structures” (Tarrow et al. 1998, 133). Though movements have this tendency, they must be careful to maintain both professional leadership and active members; “The problem for movement organizers is to create organizational models that are sufficiently robust to structure sustained relations with opponents, but are flexible enough to permit the informal connections that link people and networks to one another to aggregate and coordinate contention” (Tarrow et

al. 1998, 124). If professional leaders are still able to be somewhat flexible, they will benefit from a strong organization which can better maintain the organization without stifling the movement, as Piven and Cloward feared.

Networking

Groups within SMOs need to communicate and work together when possible. By coordinating activity, groups can involve more people in acts of contention, thus generating more interest and publicity. According to Tarrow, modern organizations have been experiencing a problem mobilizing. “The problem is for movement organizers to create organizational models that are sufficiently robust to structure sustained relations with opponents, but are flexible enough to permit the informal connections that link people and networks to one another to aggregate and coordinate contention” (Tarrow et al. 1998, 124). Organizations (formal or informal) that are flexible allow members to stay connected throughout the protest cycle. If SMOs could “draw on existing social networks, they could mobilize supporters rapidly and put pressure on the state through established institutions” (Tarrow et al. 1998, 129). This is similar to the idea in new movement theory that creating a large, well-connected group allows the SMO to organize more rapidly. Flexibility in organizational structure allows for networking, which can bring multiple groups’ resources together for a large-scale act of contention.

If groups are able to network, not only can they work with like-minded groups; they can also share ideas with people outside of the movement. “Pre-existing social structures provide the resources and organizations that are crucial to the initiation and spread of collective action” (Morris 1997, 91). Networks allow groups to spread their collective identity and culture, encouraging outsiders to “experiment with alternative

lifestyles” which movement supporters often adopt (Diani and Della Porta 2006, 131). SMOs which engage in networking are more likely to be successful because they can draw on networks for mobilization and can use them to spread their ideas in society.

Innovation

If an SMO is able to create a new type of protest or new tactics to use in contentious action, they can be more successful. According to Tilly, the “actual range of tactics that social movements in America have embraced remains relatively narrow”, confined to sit-ins, marches, and other common tactics (Meyer 2007, 100). But some tactics can be innovative and new, either for the movement or for social movements in total. “A tactic sends a message to authorities about a group’s commitment, size, claims, and potential to disrupt. A tactic also sends a message to activists about the same things. And a tactic sends a message to bystanders about a group’s concerns, intentions, and worthiness. In every case, activists hope and plan for responses; concessions or repressions from authorities; intensified commitment from activists; and support from bystanders, either by joining in the struggle directly or by pressuring authorities to respond to activists” (Meyer 2007, 87).

“The significance of tactics to social movements derives from the unenviable position in which excluded or challenging groups find themselves. According to Gamson (1975: 140): ‘the central difference among political actors is captured by the idea of being inside or outside of the polity... Those who are outside are challengers. They lack the basic prerogative of members- routine access to decisions that affect them.’ The key challenge confronting insurgents, then, is to devise some way to overcome the basic powerlessness that has confined them to a position of institutionalized political

impotence. The solution to this problem is preeminently tactical” (McAdam 1997, 340). The movement can use “negative inducements or disruptive tactics” but then “must be able to sustain the leverage it has achieved through the use of such tactics” (McAdam 1997, 340). Organizations must be ready to use new tactics when political opportunity arises. Once a new tactic is used, movement activity will peak. In his study of the civil rights movement, McAdam shows that the “number of actions is highest immediately following the introduction of a new technique” (McAdam 1997, 343). This shows that pace is a function of innovation. Innovation adds to potential for success by creating peaks in movement activity.

Use of Violence

Social movement liter, protest; some scholars say violence hurts the movement, while others see a benefit. Violence in this case includes illegal actions, arrests, and violence on the part of either protesters or outsiders such as police. More than 25% of SMOs have used violence (Gamson 1997). A commonly held view is that violence is “self-defeating. Evaluating the validity of this belief is made elusive by a tendency that we all have, social scientists and laymen alike, to allow our moral judgments to influence our strategic judgments and vice versa” (Gamson 1997, 357). This opinion stems from “both moral views of violence and the vision of a pluralist American society in which violence is not necessary for success” (Gamson 1997, 357). Putting aside these views, though, Gamson shows that violence users are more successful. His empirical findings (discussed below) support the ideas advanced by Piven and Cloward.

Groups who are considered violence users must be active participants “in the violent interactions in which it is involved” (Gamson 1997, 359). They can be either initiators or recipients who then participate in violence. Violence users who were arrested gained new advantages after the violent incident. Groups with limited goals who used violence had an advantage over non-violent groups with similar goals. Also, groups who used social constraints or “unruly” behavior experienced gains; these gains were less significant than violence users but more significant than non-violent groups. Based on these findings, violence will be viewed as “an instrumental act, aimed at furthering the purposes of the groups that uses it” (Gamson 1997, 361). The use of violence or unruly behavior will be an independent variable explaining success.

Political Context

Throughout a movement, the political context in which a group acts can change; “a conflict is likely to change profoundly as it becomes political” (Schattschneider 1975, 36). Groups hope to use their resources to improve the context and the public perception of their movement; context can also change the other way, making it more difficult for the movement to succeed. In either case, context, like the social movement, is dynamic; “Private conflicts are taken into the public arena precisely because someone wants to make certain that the power ratio among the private interests most immediately involved shall not prevail” (Schattschneider 1975, 37). The political atmosphere when a group first forms is based on public support. This can be measured by public opinion, monetary donations received, and the number of active participants a group has. Change in the initial context can be seen best in the reaction of the targets which the SMOs protest. “[T]he outcomes of protest campaigns are often influenced by the actions of the

organizations under attack: their preexisting vulnerabilities (Walsh, 1986), their strategic responses to protest, especially damaging ‘blunders,’ and their ability to mobilize a countermovement” (Jasper and Poulsen 1993, 397). The way targets react and their ability to mobilize a countermovement shows the strength of the opposition to the movement. Public opinion and the reactions of targets that form countermovements demonstrate the relationship between protestors and outside groups. These outside groups affect the political context in which a SMO can act, in turn affecting how the SMO acts and the success level of those actions.

Together each of these resources will be used to explain the success of the SMOs to be studied. The theory draws on research mobilization theory and some improvements or additions of variables made to it. However, this paper will control for context by examining the same movement and group action in the same period of time; in this way this paper will focus on variables within a group’s control can affect success. Also, subculture is controlled for because each of the SMOs studied shared a similar subculture that existed among gay men. Variables solely within a groups’ control are not yet discussed in the literature but could provide an interesting insight for group members and leaders who wish to begin or participate in social movements. If these people wish to act, must they wait for a window of opportunity in the political world? If they do not, can they still be successful?

Hypothesis

This paper will examine three prominent groups within the AIDS Awareness movement to show that resource mobilization theory is useful in explaining the success

of each group. Three groups which represent a wide range of tactics utilized in the movement will be compared in this case study. This does leave out many other groups who were involved in the AIDS Awareness movement, but it will allow multiple groups and tactics to be presented rather than just one due to the time consuming nature of the research. Also, each group in this study shares a similar subculture because each group consisted of primarily gay men who had interacted previously in the gay rights movement.

This case study will differ slightly from resource mobilization theory in that it will put less of an emphasis on the context in which groups act. This is an important variable in the theory but it will be controlled for to focus more on the resources a group has and the ways they use these resources. Context will be controlled for by studying the same social movement (the AIDS Awareness movement) in the same time period (1982-1995). While acknowledging the political context in which each SMO worked during the AIDS Awareness movement, this paper will look to see if the use of resources has an impact on the level of success a group can experience or if success is predetermined by context. Future groups can then use this knowledge to either wait to act until the political context is favorable or to act no matter what political context exists at the group's inception. Groups usually act regardless of political context; although the context can have a significant impact on their actions and strategic planning, a negative context will not stop groups from acting. This paper will show future groups what level of success they can expect based on the way they use their resources.

The data will show that while controlling for context and subculture, resources and how they are used have an impact on success. Furthermore, if a group has resources

and uses them in a positive way they will achieve a higher level of success than other groups in the same movement who do not utilize their resources efficiently. Finally, the data will show a need for future research in measuring SMO success.

Data and Methods

The data for this paper will be taken from various sources, both first-person accounts, as well as viewpoints of outside observers and scholars. Each movement was researched extensively. Each movement has a website with first-person sources as well as some original documents.

Besides website information, journal articles on the groups and the movements as a whole will be used. These will give some first person accounts of being involved in movement activities. Mostly, though, they will be outside analyses of the group in the context of the larger movement. These will help to analyze specific contentious actions and their relation to the movement as a whole. They will also be helpful to gain information about how the group functions and uses its resources. These journal articles will be most helpful in assessing how the group works and what it was able to do in the context of the movement.

Where available, data from newspapers and magazines was used as sources. This was beneficial because it gives an outside perspective of the movement and the group in question. This data can be used to show popular opinion and confirm first person accounts.

Unfortunately, there is no source or set of sources from which I can gather the same type of information for each movement to be studied here. Some SMOs have

information about themselves readily available; other groups are less open. Variable information sources also exist because some SMOs (such as ACT UP) have been studied more frequently than others. The lack of a conventional way to gather information about the three SMOs to be studied here creates the potential for a generalizability problem. To address this issue, information has been gathered from multiple sources to ensure reliability and to allow the results here to be applied in other cases. By gathering data from first person sources, third person analyses, and factual sources this paper will be able to proceed with the following method.

The dependent variable in this case study is success. There is no agreed upon way to measure the success of social movement organizations in the literature. The most commonly used method is to ask if the group is still in existence presently. Some literature also looks to see if the SMO has declined; if it has this would be a sign that they are not successful. While this is a good measure of success, I do not believe that it captures different levels of success among SMOs within the same movement or even from different movements. It also doesn't take into account the changing degrees of importance that causes may have; if a social movement solves a problem there is no need for the groups to continue growing and acting. Because of this, I have proposed some other variables that can be used to determine the level of success of different groups.

Other proposed criteria for success are listed below. 1) Did the group meet all of its stated goals? This question will look at stated goals at the time of the group's formation and see if, at present, they have all been met. 2) Were there any Supreme Court decisions or other federal or local court cases which positively affected the movement's cause? There is a chance that no cases have been tried for some of the

groups in question so this is not a strong determinant of success on its own. However, for groups who do get cases heard in court, especially if they are decided in the group's favor, this is an important determinant of success. 3) Was any legislation passed which positively affected the movement's cause? This will focus on national legislation but will look for possible local legislative action when there was none discussed nationally. Again, there is a chance that some groups were unable to pass legislation related to their movement at all. But for those who were able to do so, this is a huge factor in success. It should not be discounted even though it may not apply to everyone. 4) Do any outside sources attribute positive change to the success of the group? This is an important question because it takes into consideration public perceptions of the movement. These four elements take into consideration some of the key elements of success which an SMO can experience and allows the variable to be operationalized. It is important to consider these factors as well as longevity because these can aid in creating a measurement that can be data driven and include multiple variables.

This case study will use six independent variables to explain the dependent variable, success. The first independent variable is political context. Context will be controlled for by studying only one movement in a limited time period. The paper will study groups within the AIDS Awareness movement and their actions from 1982 to 1995. These dates were chosen because 1982 marks the recognition of the AIDS virus and 1995, according to prominent papers and magazines, marks the "end" of AIDS as an epidemic (see Appendix). Controlling for context will allow this paper to focus on how resources and their use determine the success or lack thereof in a group.

The second independent variable in this study is leadership. Quality of leadership will be based on the level of professionalism a leader uses. Professional leaders will be most likely to be successful, nonprofessional leaders will be somewhat likely to be successful and volunteer leaders will be unlikely to be successful. Professional leaders have an advantage because they have past experience coordinating action

Organization is the third independent variable. Groups with a formal structure will be considered most likely to succeed whereas groups with an informal structure will not be expected to succeed. Formally organized groups have an easier time making decisions because they have established procedures to do so. Groups will also be more likely to succeed if they have open communications with chapters, which is related to organization. The combination of the structure of the group and communication with separate parts of the group will demonstrate how successful the group is expected to be based on its organizational structure. Groups that communicate with other members are able to draw on them for support during periods of action.

The next independent variable is networking. Groups who communicate and work with other similar groups are more likely to be successful. This is similar to communication within the group, as both encourage involvement during group action, which is crucial for the group to be noticed by the media, raise funds, and meet other goals. In terms of joint efforts in contentious actions if the group never works with similar groups, it will not be likely to succeed. If the group works with like-minded groups occasionally (at most monthly) or if the group works with these groups more than once a month, it will be highly likely to succeed.

The fifth independent variable in this paper is innovation of new tactics. Groups that are able to use new tactics in contentious action increase their activity level and thus the chance of success. Innovation also encourages outsiders to pay attention because the action taking place is interesting; this helps spread awareness about the issues, in this case, rights for people with AIDS. If a group does not innovate at all, it will not be as successful as groups that are able to use new forms of contentious action.

The final independent variable here is the use of violence. Groups that participate in violence, no matter who first used violence, are most likely to succeed. Those groups which did not use violence but did experience arrests will be likely to succeed as well, although slightly less so than violent groups. Finally, groups who were not necessarily violent but were in some way unruly or broke the law but did not use violence or have any arrests will have a slightly higher success rate. Violence, like innovation, can benefit groups because it brings attention to them. Groups who have not participated in violent acts have not had a positive impact on their likelihood of success.

The AIDS Awareness Movement

In the Center for Disease Control's 1981 Weekly Mortality Reports, doctors began noticing an increasing number of deaths from PCP, a type of pneumonia found only in people with very weak immune systems. At the time, the reports received little attention. Within a year, PCP and other diseases that attack those with weak immune systems were becoming more common, especially in coastal cities and among gay men. The CDC called this the Gay-Related Immune Deficiency (GRID). By May 1982, GRID

becomes known as Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). With the recognition of this new disease came the start of the AIDS Awareness Movement.

The movement emerged during a time of fear, when knowledge about AIDS and its spread was severely lacking. People feared the AIDS 4-H Club (gays, hemophiliacs, Haitians, and IV drug users) because in 1983 the CDC said this group had the highest risk of contracting AIDS. Even though the CDC knew in May 1982 that AIDS was spread through bodily fluids, people were largely unaware of this and were afraid to even touch a member of the 4-H Club. People were afraid of being infected, especially since the disease had no known cure or even treatment. Even by 1984, when more was known about the disease “[p]olls show 72% of Americans favor mandatory testing; 51% favor quarantine; and 15% favor tattoos for those infected with HIV” (gmhc.org).

Social movement organizations immediately began to form to address the AIDS crisis. Formation for many was easy because the disease was “disproportionately prevalent within specific groups, subcultures, and communities” (Epstein 1996, 11). The main effected group that was able to organize was the gay community. Though at first many were “sensitive to what seemed like a sardonically homophobic disease” the community joined together (Jones 2001, 91); they “rejected the traditional approach of blame, isolation of the sick, and moralism” and chose to focus their efforts on changing the “lack of accessible information, bigotry, and poverty” (Siplon 2002, 5). The gay community was able to use social movement spillover and past experiences working together to form groups to address the AIDS crisis.

Social movement organizations that formed during this time wanted to address the public’s fear of contracting AIDS. They wanted to educate the public both to stop the

spread of AIDS and to stop discrimination that was brought on by ignorance. SMOs also were interested in helping people with AIDS to get medical treatment. Another key goal was to encourage research for both treatments and a cure for the disease. This response to AIDS was different than that of the government, which focused on tracking, identifying, and treating PWAs (Siplon 2002). The government and SMOs debated about the benefits of focusing on causes rather than treatment (Epstein 1995, 1996) as well as the various prevention strategies (Siplon 2002). Each SMO responded differently to these key questions, creating different types of groups with different short-term goals, all focused on the long-term goal of curing AIDS.

I want to pause here to briefly discuss the successes of the AIDS Awareness movement as a whole. The movement was able to empower patients to become educated and aware of their options¹. This was a first in the field of health and influenced later health-related movements. The movement was able to change public perceptions about people with AIDS (PWAs) by educating them. In 1985 15% of Americans favored tattoos for PWAs (gmhc.org); only a few years later, conservative politicians such as Ronald Reagan and George H.W. Bush were discussing AIDS in public and using government funding to find a cure. By 1991, most Americans said that the government was not doing enough to fight AIDS (gmhc.org). Another significant opinion change occurred in May 1993 when “the Social Services Administration change[d] the disability regulations for people with HIV, including the addition of a wide range of women-specific opportunistic infections” (actupny.org). This showed an increasing governmental understanding of problems facing PWAs as well as an acceptance of women PWAs.

¹ This began with the creation of the Denver Principles in 1983 (see Appendix).

The movement also had legislative and judicial victories at a national level. A key legislative victory was the Ryan White CARE (Comprehensive AIDS Research Emergency) Act in 1990 which appropriated \$350 million in the first year for disaster relief to AIDS groups. Overall, the AIDS Awareness movement was very successful in raising awareness, changing opinions, and getting governmental support for their cause. The question here is not so much if the groups were successful or not, but what degree of success they experienced.

ACT UP

During the AIDS Awareness Movement various groups formed to increase awareness and encourage the government to help AIDS patients by lowering drug costs. During this time, the only available drug AZT was too expensive for many of the people who needed it. This was due to “profiteering of pharmaceutical companies, especially Burroughs Wellcome, manufacturer of AZT” (actupny.org). Frustrated with the lack of progress in the AIDS awareness movement, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT UP) formed in 1987. The group formed in New York and later chapters sprung up across the country. “ACT UP...emerged as a reaction to what the founders perceived as the government’s mismanagement of the AIDS epidemic and the inadequacy of the response mounted by service-oriented groups” (Halcli 1999, 139). ACT UP activists “do demonstrations, and act in such a way that the authorities (and in this case we mean government officials, researchers, politicians, the church and the law) feel is inappropriate but...[brings] into focus the problems which they are unwilling or afraid to address” (Greenberg 1992).

ACT UP faced a relatively negative context. The public was uninformed about AIDS; oftentimes their lack of support stemmed from fear and a lack of facts. Other groups in the movement had had no success in changing public opinion. The other major negative factor that ACT UP had to face was one of its targets, drug companies. Drug companies had high prices for AZT. They also were slow to put new drugs on the market, including drugs available in other countries. The government, specifically the Food and Drug Administration, did not help with this. They had a lot of strict rules on how and when drugs could be released; they were not sympathetic to the argument that people were dying while waiting for new drugs to be approved. ACT UP targeted more than just visible targets; it also “is fighting [an] abstract, disembodied, invisible” target: power for PWAs (Gamson 1989, 352).

When ACT UP formed, it wrote the group’s original goals in its Original Working Document (see Appendix). The groups had relatively moderate goals in comparison to other social movement organizations and to its more radical tactics even though the “media portrayed ACT UP as ‘radical,’ ‘militant,’ and even as ‘the gay community’s shock troops in the war against AIDS’ (Newsweek 1990)” (Halcli 1999, 145). The top goal of members was to educate the public about the AIDS virus. Specifically, they wanted to inform people about the high drug prices for AZT, the only drug on the market to fight AIDS. They also wanted to educate people on the possibility to test other drugs that were available elsewhere. Finally, ACT UP wanted to end insurance discrimination for people living with AIDS (PWAs). Many PWAs were dropped from their insurance when they first got a positive diagnosis. Because of this, they were alone to pay the high costs of drug treatment.

Despite its negative context, ACT UP was able to keep a consistent number of active members. About 150 people attended the weekly meetings in New York City (actupny.org, Epstein 1996). There were also a few thousand activists who regularly attended protests. Also, many chapters formed around the country, spreading support for the movement. Membership donations kept the budget high, about \$300,000 a year in the New York chapter by the end of 1988 (actupny.org, Epstein 1996). The one problem that ACT UP had with support from members was the fluid membership. Many active members died from AIDS during the movement, making it critical to have lots of supporters, including many people who could take leadership positions.

To help give every member leadership experience, leadership positions were elected yearly and were only volunteer positions. There were many different leadership positions available so that many people could gain experience. “The founders of ACT UP were firmly committed to creating a nonbureaucratic and participatory SMO” (Halcli 1999, 136). This was beneficial when members began dying because the group would still have others who could lead the movement.

Although the group had volunteer leaders, it was structured formally and had a fair amount of communication with chapters. By 1991, there were 113 chapters worldwide (Halcli 1999, 141). The formal structure of meetings, leadership positions, and other parts of the organization were outlined in the Original Working Document (see Appendix). The document, made when the group was first created, structured every action the group could take. It also discussed the formation of ACT UP chapters. Chapters did work together on protests but did not communicate frequently because the Original Working Document said that chapters were to be autonomous. Also, members

in all chapters were to remain anonymous unless they themselves chose to publicize their involvement. This, along with frequently changing leaders, made communication with chapters of the group less frequent.

When ACT UP did form a large event, however, it did work with chapters as well as similar groups. Not only did ACT UP work with other groups in the AIDS awareness movement; it also worked with governmental agencies and health organizations. Frequent communication between groups with similar interests and between ACT UP and its targets was helpful for the movement to be successful.

To meet its goals, ACT UP used many innovative tactics. “ACT UP mixes strategic action and material targets with expressive action and cultural targets: their cultural activity takes the form of boundary-crossing and the contesting of images” (Gamson 1989, 351). ACT UP is known for its innovative, often controversial, direct action tactics. As activist Maxine Wolfe said, “Our job is not to be invited to coffee or to schmooze at a cocktail party. Our job is to make change happen as fast as possible and direct action works for that” (1997). They used speak outs to inform people about the suffering of PWAs. In speak outs, anyone affected by AIDS was able to speak in public (usually on the streets) about the disease. ACT UP was not the first group to use speak outs, but it did have the first ever woman with AIDS speak on October 2, 1990 (actupny.org). This was important because at the time, AIDS was thought of as a disease infecting only men.

ACT UP also put its own spin on traditional protest marches, making them like theatrical performances; the group “became famous for its imaginative street theater, its skill attracting news cameras, and its well-communicated sense of urgency” (Epstein

1995, 220). It turned the marches into a festive occasion (similar to pride parades today) mixed with strong showings of emotion and anger. The group also used die-ins at these protests to symbolize the number of PWAs dying while the government did nothing to help. The die-ins also “give death another meaning by shifting responsibility: these deaths are likened to murders, victims not of their own ‘deviance’, but shot down by the people controlling the definition and enforcement of normality” (Gamson 1989, 361). ACT UP even sent some of its members to protest in the New York Stock Exchange on September 14, 1989. The protesters chained themselves to the balcony of the building to protest high profits that drug companies made off of AIDS victims.

Another new tactic that ACT UP invented was the zap. The group would pick one target (the church, a specific politician, etc) and “zap” it by protesting where the target was located. Sometimes, the protest would be in person, such as the Stop the Church zaps, whereas others would involve flooding the phone line of a particular group or person.

Then in 1992, ACT UP created yet another tactic to remind people of the devastating effects of AIDS. They began to hold political funerals for members who requested them. In a political funeral, the recently deceased member would be carried in the form of ashes or in an open coffin through the streets. The parade-like event would stop at either a park or the steps of a government building. There, the funeral would begin. Members would talk about the recently deceased member and how the government, the public and drug companies failed to act to help this person live. These political funerals drew huge media attention and sent a very powerful message about the importance of rapid action to solve the AIDS crisis. One PWA and ACT UP activist

Mark Lowe Fischer wrote “I want my own political funeral to be fierce and defiant to make the public statement that my death from AIDS is a form of political assassination” (actupny.org). Fischer got his wish; he had the first open casket political funeral on November 2, 1992.

The final new tactic which ACT UP created was DIVA TV. This was a TV show on the local public television channel. The show was put together to educate people about the AIDS crisis. In January 1994 the group expanded its use of public television to include a weekly call in show called ACT UP LIVE! (ACT UP).

Many of the tactics ACT UP used were new and original to their group. They often involved radical actions, violence and arrests. ACT UP members were even trained on how to handle being arrested and to understand why arrest was an important part of their group’s strategy.

Social movement literature would consider this group to be moderately successful because it is still in existence today. ACT UP NY, the original chapter, still meets weekly. They collect money and participate in demonstrations. However, while ACT UP still exists, it has declined. There are fewer chapters in the group and they participate in demonstrations less often. Even though ACT UP still exists, since it has declined over time it would be considered less successful than I believe it was during the critical time period of the AIDS Awareness movement. Despite its decline, ACT UP experienced a great deal of success from its inception until 1995. This seems equally important, if not more important than the long term success of the group; ACT UP was successful during the key part of the movement when most decisions were made.

To examine the success of ACT UP during the height of the AIDS Awareness movement, I will turn to a few other characteristics of the group that show the group was successful. In terms of meeting its goals, ACT UP was able to inform the public and change public opinion about PWAs. Activists “found ways of presenting themselves as credible...transforming the very definition of what counts as credibility in scientific research such that their particular assets would prove efficacious” (Epstein 1995, 409). It is widely recognized as the first SMO to have this type of impact on the medical community.

ACT UP was able to get many local legislative changes in New York such as the New York City Board of Education condom distribution plan. This plan allowed public school students to receive free condoms in an attempt to stop the spread of AIDS. They also were responsible for starting a program to distribute clean needles to drug users so they would not continue to use dirty ones and get infected. Another legislative change that ACT UP claims responsibility for occurred in May 1993 when “the Social Services Administration change[d] the disability regulations for people with HIV, including the addition of a wide range of women-specific opportunistic infections” (actupny.org). This showed an increasing governmental understanding of problems facing PWAs as well as an acceptance of women PWAs.

A key factor that shows the group was successful in many areas is the number of credible outside sources who attribute success of certain programs to ACT UP. Group members such as Jon Greenberg considered ACT UP to be successful in changing public opinion in support of PWAs and the AIDS awareness movement. “[B]ecause of ACT UP, AIDS and the public perceptions of the disease...have been radically transformed”

(1992). More importantly, though outside sources, including news anchors, agreed with the group and cited them on several occasions for being the key reason for positive change. For example, after protesting high prices of AZT at the New York Stock Exchange in 1990, Newsweek credited ACT UP for getting the drug price lowered: “when Burroughs Wellcome lowered the price from \$8,000 to \$6,400 a year, ACT UP’s pressure tactics were...credited” (Halcli 1999, 143). ACT UP was credited for another success after a protest on Wall Street: “when Young [commissioner of the FDA] announced the establishment of a speedier drug approval process, CBS’s Dan Rather credited ACT UP’s pressure tactics for this success” (Halcli 1999, 143). This shows that people outside of the group credited ACT UP with various victories in the movement and recognized them as successful. Because ACT UP was credited by outsiders as causing positive change, was able to show several characteristics of success during the time period studied, and continues to exist today, it is considered here to be a successful movement. However, since it has experienced significant decline, ACT UP is not a completely successful social movement organization.

The Names Project

The Names Project, best known for creating the AIDS Quilt, began on November 27, 1985 when Cleve Jones first got the idea for making a Quilt to commemorate AIDS victims. According to his book Stitching a Revolution, Jones was inspired by a newspaper article discussing the number of people killed by AIDS. Later that night, at a march to commemorate the murder of Harvey Milk, a gay rights activist and the first openly gay politician, Jones had participants write the names of dead friends on

cardboard squares. Jones and the activists then hung the squares on the Department of Health and Human Services Office in San Francisco. In February 1987 Jones along with Joseph Durant, made the first two quilt squares; this marked the beginning of the AIDS Quilt and, eventually, the social movement organization associated with it, the Names Project.

Each quilt square was 3x6, about the size of a grave, and made to represent a person killed by AIDS. Seven quilt squares would be sewn together into a 12x12 square. Each large square was connected by canvass strips so people could walk around each larger piece of the quilt. According to Jones, this arrangement made the Quilt “large enough to be efficient and small enough that people could reach out and touch the fabric as they walked around them” (Jones 2001, 123). The quilt itself was chosen as a symbol because “HIV was seen as the product of aggressive gay male sexuality, and it seemed that the homey image and familial associations of a warm quilt would counter that” (Jones 2001, 108).

Like ACT UP, the Names Project faced a negative context. In fact the context they worked in was almost identical, as they started at the same time, working against the same public and political perceptions. Since both groups were working against the same negative public perceptions and lack of political action, context can be controlled for.

Unlike ACT UP, the Names Project had very conservative goals and thus conservative tactics. The goal of the group was to send “messages of remembrance, awareness and hope” (aidsquilt.org). Jones and the founder of ACT UP, Larry Kramer, had very different ideas about the goals and power of the Quilt: according to Jones, the quilt “symbolizes the power of community- something I’ve always fought for, something

stitched into every panel. Larry Kramer stands publicly for separatism, a self-defeating stance. I've had my share of leading angry crowds against police barricades and throwing myself against the hard blue line. And it was effective and necessary. But today's conflicts are not those of fifteen, ten, or even five years ago...If given a choice, I choose the strategies less likely to end in blood on the streets" (Jones 2001, xiii).

Because of conflicting ideas about the conservative goals and tactics, the leaders of the group had to work to keep the original message in tact: "To maintain this...conservative stance was a constant struggle those first years as we learned over and over that we must protect the central message" of remembrance and awareness (Jones 2001, 148).

The leadership of the Names Project consisted of volunteers, most of whom had been active in the earlier gay right's movement. Because of this, they had past experience in organizing protests. The group was a non-profit organization as of 1988, according to the IRS. Volunteers helped to sew the smaller quilt pieces together, traveled with the quilt to various communities, raised money, and made quilts for the exhibit. Since the quilt's inception, more than 44,000 panels have been made, over \$4,000,000 has been raised in the US alone, and over 18,000,000 people have visited the quilt. Many countries have contributed panels to the quilt and have gotten involved by starting their own chapters (aidsquilt.org).

Chapters of the Names Project formed as the quilt traveled around the country. After the first display of the quilt on the mall in Washington DC on October 11, 1988, people from other cities expressed interest in having the quilt displayed locally. "None of the organizations had much money, and so we [the leaders of the Names Project] offered the Quilt as the centerpiece for a fund-raiser. In order to finesse the inevitable jockeying

between groups, we asked that the host committees be made up of a representative from each local organization. As it turned out, those committees were the embryos of what became the backbone of the organization: the Quilt chapters” (Jones 2001, 147). The chapters in each city organized the viewing of the quilt. They were not allowed to charge for entry to see the quilt, but took donations to raise money for their local groups. They also accepted more quilt panels to add to the larger quilt. At each display, the leaders of the group worked to keep the message and keep things simple, although sometimes this proved to be difficult.

By forming the chapters in this way, the leaders of the Names Project facilitated communication with similar groups in the AIDS movement and expanded their own organization and message. This communication connected all different communities and formed a large voice to speak out and remember AIDS victims. “There was a deep yearning not only to find a way to give individually and together but also to find a voice that could be heard beyond our own community, beyond our town” (Jones 2001, 107). Chapter organization and communication helped to facilitate this goal of creating a single voice to speak for the AIDS victims.

The desire to give individuals a forum to remember their lost friends and to also create a unified voice sometimes caused conflict within the group. Individuals who had made squares felt a sense of ownership which “fought against the Quilt’s overreaching goal, which was to connect all people, regardless of age, race, and sexual orientation, in the fight against AIDS” (Jones 2001, 126). However, the tactic of making more individuals a part of and connected to the SMO was beneficial in terms of donations and support.

The main tactic used by the Names Project was the creation and presentation of the quilt. Making a quilt as a memorial to begin with was an innovative tactic; the way the entire quilt was displayed was perhaps more innovative. The quilt was unfolded by volunteers dressed in white to symbolize nurses and doctors who helped AIDS patients. People were allowed to walk around the quilts and touch them, giving them the ability to interact and be a part of the display. People were also encouraged to participate by reading names of some of the victims. During the display of the quilt, the names on each panel were read over a loudspeaker. The people who read names were volunteers, family or friends who lost loved ones, and celebrities who came to support the cause. Often the reading was followed by marches or speeches in the evening.

The quilt, being such a new type of tactic for a social movement organization, attracted a lot of attention. “The response to the first display was overwhelming, something I [Jones] had not imagined or planned for. I’m convinced that every single person who saw the Quilt with their own eyes became an evangelist, telling a few friends who told others, really turning the tide of grassroots support. We were on the front page of newspapers around the world” (Jones 2001, 136-7). The quilt even was featured in a documentary *Common Threads*, which won an Oscar in 1989 for best feature-length documentary. Books about AIDS, activism, and art have featured the quilt as well. The use of a quilt in a social movement interested many people, thus bringing media coverage and attention. The quilt was even nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.

Current social movement literature, analyzing the status of the Names Project today, would say that this SMO has continued to exist and expand. Today, the Names Project still exists and displays portions of the quilt in communities around the world.

The quilt has also been a part of World AIDS Day since 1988. People from around the world continue to send in panels for the quilt, which can be viewed in its entirety online (aidsquilt.org). Also, Cleve Jones tours college campuses and communities speaking about his experience with the quilt and as a PWA. Now the quilt has a broader message “to emphasize education as a means of dealing with the ongoing epidemic” (Jones 2001, 169). The quilt has retained its status as “the largest ongoing community arts project in the world” (aidsquilt.org). It has not only remained in existence, but continued to grow, making it a very successful movement.

In terms of the other factors to consider, the Names Project was also successful. It met its goals of raising awareness and creating a memorial of those who died. It did not spark legislative or judicial changes, but it did raise awareness among politicians in Washington DC, including President Clinton, the first president to view the quilt. It also was able to spread its message to a large public because so many cities were interested in hosting the quilt as part of a fundraiser for AIDS.

The Names Project was also cited by other people as a success. It was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize in 1989 to recognize the humanitarian work done to fight AIDS. It also was featured in an academy award winning documentary in 1989, one of many appearances of the quilt in the artistic world. Because Project Names was viewed as successful by outsiders, created positive change during the time period being studied, exists today, and has continued to grow, it is considered here to be a very successful social movement organization.

Gay Men's Health Crisis

In 1981, after the Center for Disease Control began reporting on a rare cancer seen in homosexual men, “[e]ighty men gather in New York writer Larry Kramer’s apartment to address the ‘gay cancer’ and to raise money for research. This informal meeting provides the foundation for what will soon become Gay Men’s Health Crisis (GMHC)” (gmhc.org). The organization was officially established in 1982. They were one of the first SMOs established in response to the AIDS crisis.

The context that GMHC acted in was similar to that of ACT UP and the Names Project as they were all focusing on AIDS. However, GMHC began before AIDS was even named (it was called Gay-Related Immune Deficiency until the end of 1982). It was also formed before the creation of the Denver Principles (see Appendix) which served as the foundation for AIDS awareness SMOs by focusing on patient empowerment; GMHC worked to empower patients before this time. Perhaps because it formed a bit earlier it received the brunt of negativity from the public. However, the public continued to be unsupportive and suspicious of PWAs later when ACT UP and the Names Project formed. Ultimately, the context is quite similar because of lack of information, public fear, and little government action.

The main goal of GMHC was to inform and empower AIDS patients. They chose to publish all available information so that people could make individual choices; early on they even opposed direct warnings about the link between sex and AIDS² so that no individual would be influenced by the group (Siplon 2002). GMHC used an AIDS

² It is important to note that early on this link was suspected but not confirmed. It was not until May 1982 that the CDC discovered that AIDS was spread through bodily fluids.

hotline and publications to keep people informed about AIDS. They also raised money for research and to support PWAs in their day to day needs.

GMHC “had little or no government backing. In spite of this, they’d developed a support network of over three hundred volunteers to feed, house, and inform New York’s burgeoning AIDS population” (Jones 2001, 97). They were able to raise \$50,000 in 1982 at their first successful fundraiser and continued to raise a large amount of money (gmhc.org). While relying on volunteers, especially gay men who had connections from past social movement involvement, the group also had professional leaders. The organization started with only volunteers, but later hired volunteers to become paid directors. For the most part though, GMHC relied on volunteers as it was (and still is) a non-profit organization.

GMHC did not have any chapters because of its focus on caring for PWAs in New York. The organization had only one office located in the city. However, it helped PWAs throughout the US by funding research and disseminating important information. GMHC worked alone rather than working with other groups in the movement or with chapters across the country. This is because the group was focused more on its own local movement constituency: “Not all social movement organizations are directly concerned with external challenges, oriented on political powerholders. Organizations may also act mainly with reference to the needs of social movement constituencies, and/or to support cultural and symbolic challenges or the practice of a new lifestyle” (Diani and Della Porta 2006, 143). GMHC fits this description, as it focused mainly on providing for the local community of PWAs. This tactic was a huge benefit for PWAs in the local community, but did not help those outside of New York, potentially isolating new volunteers.

The main tactic used by GMHC was the dissemination of information through its newsletter, its AIDS hotline (the first ever in the world), public conferences, and special publications. These tactics helped the group in its main goal of informing PWAs and the general public. These tactics also were able to reach a broader base than just the GMHC clients in New York. GMHC also had special programs to assist PWAs who lived in New York. These programs not only informed people, but also helped them with day to day needs. A good example of this is the Buddy Program, established in 1982 to allow volunteers to assist PWAs.

The other tactics GMHC used were principally to raise funds for the organization to help local PWAs and to fund research. These included art auctions³, AIDS walks⁴, and dance-a-thons⁵. The dance-a-thons were probably the most innovative technique used by GMHC and remained popular, even today. The key difference between GMHC's tactics and those used by other SMOs is that GMHC has a more local focus whereas the groups studied here are broader, but focus less on helping PWAs locally.

GMHC would be considered a successful group in current social movement literature because it continues to exist and even grow. Today GMHC still works to help PWAs in New York as well as to support research. They also keep PWAs informed through their website and new online AIDS hotline, along with the phone hotline, making it easy to access. GMHC continues to have annual AIDS walks in New York to raise money. In 2005, they were able to raise \$5.8 million (gmhc.org). They have also expanded, recently establishing the Institute for Gay Men's Health and the Women's

³ The first GMHC art auction, held in 1984, raised one million dollars. It was the first AIDS fundraiser in the world to raise over one million dollars (gmhc.org).

⁴ The first AIDS Walk in New York in 1986 had over 4,500 participants and raised \$710,000 (gmhc.org).

⁵ The first dance-a-thon, held in 1990, raised over \$1 million (gmhc.org).

Institute; they also are focusing on people of color, who are more likely to test positive for AIDS.

However, during the height of the AIDS Awareness movement (1982-1995), GMHC was less successful than the above test would show. They were successful in being the first of many groups to educate and thus empower patients. They were also successful at fundraising and using money to benefit New York City. Despite this, GMHC never worked for larger changes such as legal reforms or government spending programs. They did not participate in the major AIDS programs implemented in the state of New York or in the country as a whole. Also, they were never directly credited or acknowledged by the media or other outsiders as directly contributing to the success of any particular program. Because of this, although GMHC has been successful and continued to grow, it could have been more successful during the height of the AIDS Awareness movement.

Conclusion

This paper shows that when controlling for context and subculture, resource mobilization theory can explain varying degrees of success of social movement organizations. Based on the current social movement literature, ACT UP and the Names Project did the best job at using the resources available to them, meaning they were the most successful SMOs (see Table 1). This current success measure seems less useful though, because it does not account for changes in the movement. For example, ACT UP has declined but it was very successful during the height of the movement. Success at

this time seems to be more significant than long-term success. Because this measure does not seem to be entirely useful for this study, I have combined it with other factors to address success within a specific time period. Current means of measuring success (current status of the group, decline of the group) combined with variables I deemed important (leadership, internal organization, networking, innovation, use of violence, and attribution of success by outside sources) shows that the Names Project was the most successful, followed by ACT UP, and GMHC. This measurement is a good way to explain success of SMOs because it takes into account both current literature and variables relating to a specific time period of contentious action. This measure takes into account both the success of the SMO at the height of movement activity as well as the long-term success of the group, allowing the measurement to be both dynamic and also narrow in the sense that it is focused on success during a key time in the movement.

Table 1: Measures of Success

	ACT UP	Names Project	GMHC
Current Status	Exists+	Exists+	Exists+
Decay	Yes	No+	Growth+
Other Characteristics of Success	Yes+	Yes+	Some
Outside Sources	Yes+	Yes+	No
Overall Success	+++	++++	++

+ Sign of success for the movement

Using resource mobilization theory allowed close examination of the characteristics of each group and how each affected success (see Table 2). The results of using resource mobilization theory demonstrated why some groups are more successful

than others even when they are working towards the same general goals in the same movement; these groups had the same context and subculture but experienced different levels of success. Resource mobilization theory is a useful model to explain varying success levels when subculture is the same. This model gave insight into which characteristics mattered more to the level of success of each group, which can show which variables are more important in the study of success of SMOs.

In terms of leadership, it was expected that professional leaders would have an edge over volunteers because of their experience organizing. However, this variable did not seem to have a significant impact on success. Both ACT UP and the Names Project had volunteer leaders but were still able to be successful. On the other hand, GMHC had some professional leaders but failed to achieve the same level of success. Also, even though not all of the groups had professional leaders, they all had some organizing experience because of the gay rights movement. This demonstrates that perhaps organizing experience is more important than the type of leadership an SMO has, but both seem less significant than other factors.

Informal internal organization was also expected to benefit the SMO because they would be able to be flexible and adapt more easily to change. This turned out to be a significant advantage for the Names Project. Unlike GMHC and ACT UP, they were able to adapt their tactics over time. The Names Project changed the way they displayed the quilt based on feedback from past displays as well as discussion among members. The flexibility of the organization allowed ideas to be shared openly, tactics to evolve, and the group to survive and grow in changing environments.

The use of networking was a tactic that proved to be a great benefit for both ACT UP and the Names Project. Both groups used their relationships with other SMOs to their benefit when it came time to rally support for a particular contentious action. The Names Project was especially successful at networking, using their communication with AIDS Awareness groups around the country to form their own chapters and to organize events. This would have greatly benefited GMHC by getting them more support within the movement. The use of networking was clearly a significant variable in measuring success.

Like networking, the use of innovative tactics had a significant impact on the level of success these groups experienced. GMHC was not innovative during its contentious actions and thus received less attention by the media and the public, diminishing their ability to raise awareness and to fundraise. ACT UP and the Names Project, on the other hand, were both recognized for innovative actions. ACT UP was best known for its innovative and theatrical protests; these got the public, the government and corporations like Burroughs Wellcome to listen to the message of the group. The Names Project was also recognized for the creativity of choosing a quilt as a memorial. This interested many people, including once again, the media, who featured the quilt in many news stories. Being innovative got people's attention, which is critical when trying to inform the public about a problem and to ask for their help in fixing it.

The use of violence was also significant for ACT UP because like the use of innovative tactics, it allowed them to get a great deal of attention and media coverage for their cause. Groups can be successful without using violence (ie. the Names Project) but it is a good strategic move to use violence, especially if the group or movement is in need

of media coverage. ACT UP received a great deal of coverage because of their radical, violent tactics, allowing them to spread their message and ensure that their voices were being heard. The use of violence also coincided with times when ACT UP was credited by outside sources for success. While the use of violence may not fit the image that all SMOs are trying to present (i.e. quilts and violence), it can be a useful tactic if the group is trying to gain attention for their cause.

Examining individual characteristics of groups shows which strategies were more important in explaining success among SMOs. This is important for future SMOs so that they can understand specific tactics which are likely to bring them a higher level of success during the highpoint of contentious action. Groups that are able to be flexible, network with similar groups, use innovative tactics, and use violence when appropriate are especially likely to have a high level of success.

Table 2: Group Characteristics and Success

	ACT UP	Names Project	GMHC
Leadership	Volunteer	Volunteer	Volunteers and Professional+
Internal Organization	Formal	Informal+	Formal
Networking	Yes+	Yes+	No
Innovation	Yes+	Yes+	No
Use of Violence	Yes+	No	No
Current Status	Exists	Exists	Exists
Decay	Yes	No	No
Other Characteristics of Success	Yes	Yes	Some
Outside Sources	Yes	Yes	No

+ Beneficial tactic according to social movement literature

However, the level of success the group experienced varied based on the measure used (see Table 3). This demonstrates that changing the way success is measured can change the outcome of studies of SMOs. This is important to keep in mind for future research for selecting an appropriate measure of success based on the time period being studied. Despite outcomes varying slightly based on the choice of a measurement of success, this paper still shows that resource mobilization theory is able to explain the success of SMOs both during the height of contentious action and looking at groups long term success. Ultimately, SMOs can control their level of success by using their resources strategically.

Table 3: Comparison of Measures of Success

	ACT UP	Names Project	GMHC
Current Status, Decay (measure currently used in the literature)	+	++	++
Other Characteristics, Outside Sources (my measure)	++	++	

+ Sign of Success for the movement

Although this paper is not intended to be a comparison between resource mobilization theory and new movement theory, the results do give some insight into the benefits of using resource mobilization theory to determine what level of success social movement organizations experienced. Within the AIDS Awareness movement, activists, though part of different SMOs with different goals, shared a subculture. Most of the activists were gay men who were tied together by past actions for gay rights. The existence of a subculture, in new movement theory, is expected to benefit the SMO and cause it to be successful. However, this theory does not account for varying degrees of

success experienced by each group. Despite a shared subculture to draw in participants and create a sense of solidarity, success among SMOs within the movement varied. This demonstrates that, while new movement theory may be helpful in explaining success, it does not explain varying levels of success that can occur within the same movement, sharing the same subculture.

Some aspects of this paper are limited by a lack of evidence. There is little concrete information about membership, participation in contentious action, and fundraising within each group. It seems that this information was only given when a particular protest was deemed successful; information was not given for failed protest attempts. This type of evidence could be beneficial, especially in empirical studies of the SMOs. It could also be helpful in tracking the growth/decline in each SMO.

Another key area where evidence seemed to be less than satisfactory was newspaper reports on protests and other activities. News media did not cover the AIDS epidemic much in the beginning; they focused only on what medical evidence was known, not contentious actions and group formation. They also focused on only the largest and most innovative protests. For example, ACT UP received a great deal of coverage for their protests because they were theatrical and entertaining. It would have been beneficial to have more media reports or accounts from other outside observers about each contentious action. This would have helped to confirm reports made by the groups themselves, which could have been biased.

The cases selected here gave insight into comparing success levels within a movement while controlling for context. The cases represented three prominent groups in the movement. Cases were all groups made up primarily of gay people; focusing on

only one member of the 4-H Club⁶ allowed me to further control for context because the groups were similar in their past experiences with the gay rights movement and shared similar subcultures. The cases included a radical group (ACT UP) a moderate group (GMHC) and a more conservative group (Names Project). The range of group types gives leverage because it shows that resource mobilization theory can be applied to different types of groups. The selection of cases was limited, however, by a lack of information about other smaller groups within the AIDS movement, including groups dominated by minorities. Many other SMOs existed, but have not been studied or written about much because of their size and lack of long-term success. Despite a limited number of cases to choose from, the available cases represented a range of SMO types. Even with a small case number, the range of cases allows this paper to be applied to future social movement studies.

Future research in this area should work to find an appropriate measure of success that can be transferred into an empirical study. When considering measures of success, it would be important to determine the salience of the issue; this would determine if the current status or decay of the group are useful indicators to include. It would also be important to consider other measures of success, such as legislative changes, which are important in political science. These also show that the group had a lasting and significant impact, at least for the time that the legislation was in use. A concrete measurement of success would also aid in future studies testing the reliability of resource mobilization theory and comparing it to new movement theory. This is another important step in the social movement literature.

⁶ Recall that the 4-H Club is made up of gay men, Haitians, hemophiliacs and IV drug users.

Appendix AIDS Timeline

- 1981: CDC's Mortality and Morbidity Weekly Report mentions deaths from PCP which occurs in people with weak immune systems. They also notice Kaposi's sarcoma, a rare cancer, occurring in many gay men. The cancer is also reported in *The New York Times* story "Rare Cancer Seen in 41 Homosexuals"
- 1982: The new disease called Gay-Related Immune Deficiency. It is declared to be an epidemic by the CDC.
- 1982: Nathan Fain, Larry Kramer, Larry Mass, Paul Popham, Paul Rapoport and Edmund White establish GMHC.
- May 1982: The disease is now called AIDS. The CDC knows that it is spread through fluids but does not know the cause.
- 1983: CDC says homosexual men, IV drug users, Haitian immigrants and hemophiliacs had an increased risk of disease (AIDS 4-H Club)
- 1983: At the AIDS forum in Denver the Denver Principles are created, which are a basis for the movement, "articulating the self-empowerment and rights of PWAs" (GMHC)
- 1984: Time magazine calls San Francisco "Ground Zero of the Plague" (Jones 99)
- 1984: Dr. Luc Montagnier in France and Dr. Robert Gallow in the US isolate HIV and discover that it is the cause of AIDS
- 1985: Phase I of AZT trial testing begins.
- 1985: "Polls show that 72% of Americans favor mandatory testing; 51% favor quarantine; and 15% favor tattoos for those infected with HIV" (GMHC)
- 1985: The death of Rock Hudson brings more media coverage to the epidemic.
- 1986: Phase II of AZT trials begin.
- 1986: The Department of Justice rules that PWAs or people who may have the virus can be fired legally. Some states pass bills banning PWAs from working in education or food services. Other states make it a crime to transmit HIV.
- 1986: HIV is officially named as virus causing AIDS.
- 1987: ACT UP is created (see Working Document in Appendix)
- 3/19/87: AZT appears on the market for \$10,000 for a year's supply. ACT UP protests the high price on Wall Street.
- 10/11/87: National March for Gay and Lesbian Rights has the first display of the AIDS Quilt, hanging in San Francisco city hall. Later that year it is displayed on the national mall.
- 10/14/87: Jesse Helms starts debate in the Senate supporting HIV prevention via abstinence in response to a comic book by GMHC.
- 1987: Ronald Regan uses the word "AIDS" in public for the first time.
- 1988: ACT UP and other groups close the FDA during their demonstrations to advocate for changes in testing and approval of treatment for AIDS. "The event receives international press coverage" (ACT UP).
- 1988: More media coverage on AIDS such as a *Newsweek* cover featuring PWAs
- 1988: Surgeon General Koop mails a brochure "Understanding AIDS" to every American household.

- 1989: ACT UP protests on Wall Street again in response to high costs of AZT. Burroughs Wellcome (the pharmaceutical company) responds by lowering the price to \$6,400 per year, a 20% decrease.
- 1990: The Ryan White CARE (Comprehensive AIDS Resource Emergency) Act, a bill sending disaster relief to AIDS groups, is passed after Ryan White, a 19 year old AIDS activist, dies. \$350 million out of the total \$881 million is appropriated.
- 1990: President Bush signs the Americans with Disabilities Act to protect people with disabilities, including people with AIDS, from discrimination.
- 1990: Common Threads, a documentary about the AIDS Quilt and 5 PWAs, wins an Oscar.
- July 1990: “*Women, AIDS & Activism*, developed originally by ACT UP’s Women’s Caucus in 1989, is published. It is the first book to chart the natural history of AIDS in women” (ACT UP). Later in the year the first National Women and HIV Conference is held.
- 1991: Magic Johnson is the first major celebrity to announce that he is HIV-positive.
- 1991: “A Roper poll commissioned by GMHC finds that a majority of Americans believe that the federal government is not doing enough to fight AIDS and that explicit AIDS education is needed” (GMHC).
- 1992: “After five years of litigation, led by GMHC, the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), and others, a federal court strikes down ‘offensiveness’ restrictions on AIDS education materials proposed by Senator Jesse Helms” (GMHC).
- 1992: The final display of the entire AIDS Quilt takes place on the mall. President Clinton becomes the first President to visit the Quilt. At the same time, ACT UP held its first political funeral, scattering ashes of PWAs on the White House lawn.
- 1993: European Concorde study shows doubts about functionality of AZT in fighting AIDS.
- April 24 and 25, 1993: March on Washington for gay and lesbian rights.
- 1995: Drug cocktails, a mix of multiple drugs begin to be used to treat AIDS.
- 1996: “Cover stories hailing AIDS breakthroughs and the ‘end’ of the epidemic appear in *The New York Times Magazine*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Newsweek*” (GMHC).

THE DENVER PRINCIPLES

Source: ACT UP NY

We condemn attempts to label us as "victims," a term which implies defeat, and we are only occasionally "patients," a term which implies passivity, helplessness, and dependence upon the care of others. We are "People With AIDS."

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ALL PEOPLE

1. Support us in our struggle against those who would fire us from our jobs, evict us from our homes, refuse to touch us or separate us from our loved ones, our community or our peers, since available evidence does not support the view that AIDS can be spread by casual, social contact.
2. Not scapegoat people with AIDS, blame us for the epidemic or generalize about our lifestyles.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PEOPLE WITH AIDS

1. Form caucuses to choose their own representatives, to deal with the media, to choose their own agenda and to plan their own strategies.
2. Be involved at every level of decision-making and specifically serve on the boards of directors of provider organizations.
3. Be included in all AIDS forums with equal credibility as other participants, to share their own experiences and knowledge.
4. Substitute low-risk sexual behaviors for those which could endanger themselves or their partners; we feel people with AIDS have an ethical responsibility to inform their potential sexual partners of their health status.

RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WITH AIDS

1. To as full and satisfying sexual and emotional lives as anyone else.
2. To quality medical treatment and quality social service provision without discrimination of any form including sexual orientation, gender, diagnosis, economic status or race.
3. To full explanations of all medical procedures and risks, to choose or refuse their treatment modalities, to refuse to participate in research without jeopardizing their treatment and to make informed decisions about their lives.
4. To privacy, to confidentiality of medical records, to human respect and to choose who their significant others are.
5. To die--and to LIVE--in dignity.

ACT UP Original Working Document (1987)

Source: actupny.org

Proposal to Create a Coordinating Committee

Purpose

To create a coordinating committee which would streamline the administrative functioning of ACT UP without usurping the power and energy residing in the body as a whole.

Why we Need a Coordinating Committee?

In the weeks since its creation, ACT UP has had considerable victories. We have focused the media's attention on the drug development bottleneck which exists within our government and on the greed of Burroughs Wellcome. We have shown governmental agencies that we are watching: they will be held accountable. And we have brought new energy and hope to the lesbian/gay community.

We can do much, much more. With planning, we'll have 600 angry people at our next demonstration, not 300. and the demonstration after that will have 1200 people. As our numbers grow, our power will grow. We can continue to shed light on the drug situation and bring new insight to AIDS education, insurance discrimination, and other aspects of the AIDS crisis.

But to accomplish these goals - to continue to grow - we need more structure. We need to know who is authorized to make decisions in a crisis, who can spend money between meetings. And we need to ensure, on a day to day basis, that fundraising, outreach, publicity and other increasingly important tasks are handled consistently.

Each of us became involved with ACT UP because of frustration and anger with the U.S. government and its lack of interest and leadership in the AIDS crisis. We can't afford to squander the energy we've developed. But we will if we allow ourselves to become bogged down by details at weekly meetings. We need to trust ourselves enough to give up some administrative authority to permanent standing committees which will be better equipped to handle these details.

Let's spend our valuable meeting time on the most crucial items: our issues and the demonstrations through which we present them.

Who will be on the coordinating committee?

The committee will consist of the following people:

A. One representative of the following five committees. Each committee will select its own representative to the coordinating committee. Alternates should also be selected to attend coordinating committee meetings if the regular representative can't attend.

Outreach: committee works on increasing the diversity of our organization involving people of color, women, and others affected by AIDS. Ensures that these groups' concerns are discussed at meetings.

Logistics: committee publicize demos, interacts with police and works with outreach committee to ensure that demos are attended by all interested parties. Activates the phone tree.

Issues: committee researches and reviews our demands. keeps in contact with health care providers and policy makers to keep abreast of new developments.

Media: committee ensures consistent and accurate coverage of our events.

Fundraising: committee coordinates all fundraising activities.

B. The following four people would be selected by the group as a whole:

Secretary: keeps the minutes. makes sure our phone and mailing lists are up to date.

Serves as historian.

Treasurer: Keeps all financial information. Signs checks.

At-Large members: two others selected by the group. These two should be people we want involved in the decision making, but who are not representatives of any committee.

How will the committee work?

The committee would meet as frequently as need to ensure that all necessary work is being completed. Meetings would probably happen on a weekly basis. the coordinating committee would work by consensus. Issues that the committee can't come to consensus on would be decided by ACT UP as a whole. Of course, all coordinating committee meetings would be open to all.

What are some of the specific things the committee would do?

Examples of what the committee might do are:

A. Expense authorization. Okays expenses between meetings.

B. Review Literature: Flyers, posters, and other publicity items would be read by the committee to ensure that our message is presented strongly and clearly.

C. Coordinate committees: Ensure that committees are not repeating each other's work. Acts as a resource if a committee needs additional input. Ensures that committees are functioning and helps to recruit new members if a committee needs more.

D. Plan agendas: Plans the agendas for general meetings, ensuring that all our business is given time to be discussed. Also ensures that there is time for new business.

Terms of office

Representatives of the five committees stay on the coordinating committee for as long as the committee they represent wishes. It is suggested that responsibility be shared, however, to involve as many people as possible and to avoid burnout.

The two At-Large members, secretary and treasurer are elected for six month terms. If a vacancy arises in one of these four spots, the body as a whole shall elect a new member.

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