
Mass Resistance: Formation Of Hate Groups And Their Impact On Society

A hate group is best defined as a group of individuals that practice hate & hostility towards a targeted segmentation of people within a society. The operation and existence of these hate groups have nearly always been prevalent and in 2018, The Southern Poverty Law Center reported to have tracked 1020 hate groups operating within the United States alone. As the wide acceptance of LGBT individuals and their culture in a community rise, so does Anti-LGBT hate groups. This paper however focuses on one Anti-LGBT hate group in particular, Mass Resistance and why hate groups such as these come into formation.

Founded in 1995 by Brian Camenker, main director and reporter, Mass Resistance was originally known as "Parents' Rights Coalition," but adapted the name "Mass Resistance" when their alleged role as "the true resistance to tyrannical government" became distinct. Although not explicitly stated on their website, Mass Resistance makes it their mission to "provide the information and guidance people need to confront assaults on the traditional family, school, children and the moral foundation of society". In their history, Mass Resistance also lists several achievements they have acquired in past years.

An example include informing the country about the Gender Clinic at Boston Children's Hospital in 2007 which was the "first in nation" to medically assist gender transitioning and provide hormone changing drugs. Moreover, Mass Resistance is currently still in operation and is reported to be affiliated with activists in several states in the United States as well as in numerous foreign countries.

So why do hate groups form? Why do people join them? And what is the intended purpose of these hate groups? One might say "simply to hate" but when analyzed sociologically, the answer to these questions are much more complex. Hate groups emerge when one or more individuals with the same interests, in this case hatred towards a certain group of people, come together to form an alliance and recruit other members that are in accordance with the group's values as well. In an extensive 17 years research by Sociologist Pete Simi, Simi discusses the several leading factors that causes individuals to join hate groups. Although there are a variety of different reasons, Simi notes that a common factor is "some kind of family disruption," such as divorce, substance abuse or parental neglect.

Simi also addresses a general misconception of people that join these hate groups; People from a "wide cross section of socioeconomic" backgrounds also get involved and not just lower

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economical backgrounds. Moreover, the FBI also reported that people that are “trying to fill a deep personal need” are more likely to join hate groups because they may feel isolated or frustrated with their personal lives. In addition to that, several other reasons why people may join hate groups include disagreement with the government and/or their policies, hatred towards certain types of people and feel undervalued or unappreciated by society.

Once like-minded people come together to form a hate-group, what is the purpose of this said hate group? On Mass Resistance’s website, their purpose is implicitly stated “to cover issues and events other conservative groups are afraid to touch”. Although a hate group’s purpose differ with its ideologies, the general purpose stays the same according to the FBI; “promote animosity, hostility and malice” against targeted groups of people.

A hate group’s general impact on society includes the promotion of hate and hostility towards the targeted group of people but more specifically it can have negative impacts on the targeted group. According to The American Psychological Association, victims of hate crimes and hate groups are “more likely to experience more psychological distress” than victims of other violent crimes (American Psychological Association). Since hate groups send personalized messages towards the targeted group of people being victimized of how they are “unwelcome and unsafe” in the community, these groups of people may feel less safety and secure in the community.

Although the elimination of hate groups is not entirely possible just yet, The Southern Poverty Law Center provides 10 ways to fight hate; Act, join forces by reaching out and forming alliances with organizations, schools, clubs etc., support the victims, speak up, educate oneself, create alternatives, pressure leaders, stay engaged, teach acceptance and dig deeper. Out of these ten listed ways to fight hate, two potential social solutions to dealing with hate groups would be to teach acceptance and digging deeper. People are not born with bias, bias is learned at a young age, often at homes or in learning environments. The Southern Poverty Law Center suggests that schools can reach out to children who are more vulnerable to hate group advocacy and prejudice. Moreover, schools are also “ideal environments to counter bias” because children from all social and economic backgrounds are mixed and given the chance for one-on-one interactions. For the second solution, digging deeper, “acceptance ... is a personal decision” which means that we grew up around bias and prejudices but looking into yourself and acknowledging them as well as fighting through is “one of the most important steps towards breaking down the walls of silence that allow intolerance to grow”.

Unless schools and homes, teach children acceptance and to counter bias at a young age, hate groups will continue to grow and people will continue to join hate groups for several different reasons. This means that the negative societal impacts of hate groups will still be constant in today’s society and in the future. It’s not entirely possible to eliminate hate groups, but it’s not entirely impossible to prevent the future formation of hate groups or the disassociation of current

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hate groups either which means that communities need to come together to educate not only others but also themselves on hate groups, and teach acceptance and to counter bias so the operations of hate groups like Mass Resistance cease to exist or the operations of new groups fail to form.

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