

Part IV

Defiance in Groups



Reactions to Defiant Deviants

Deliverance or Defensiveness?

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In this chapter, we propose a social psychological analysis of reactions to defiance. Deviants are often presented in social sciences as the passive victims of oppressive social orders for which they may play a crucial function. We distinguish various classes of deviance, singling out the special case of *defiance*, where individuals are fully aware of the normative demands of an authority figure, group, society or culture, yet choose to flaunt them openly as inappropriate, and are often disliked as a result. Next, we review classic work in social psychology, where defiant confederates offer deliverance from conformity or obedience, and are often liked as a result. Finally, we propose to solve this apparent inconsistency by suggesting that defensiveness moderates whether defiant rebels elicit positive or negative reactions, and we present our own data supporting this claim.

When Deviance becomes Defiance

The social construction of deviance

One recurrent claim of 20th-century social sciences has been that deviance says more about a society than about the deviants themselves. When cultural anthropologist G. Bateson writes that 'a character structure which is normal among us may be deviant among the Kwakiutl' (1944), he is using the term in its most common use, to describe a statistical relationship to a norm, a position in a distribution. Social scientists have studied at length the social construction of deviance (see Kelly & Clarke, 2003), and cast light on the potential group benefits of defining some individuals as deviants, to

understand why groups would sacrifice resources to identify, label, stigmatise, harass, reject, medicate or incarcerate deviants. One great value of this work has been to expose that categories reified as intrinsically worthy of stigma (e.g., mentally ill, see Jodelet, 1989; Szasz, 1974; criminal, see Foucault, 1975/1995; drug addict, see Lidz & Walker, 1980) are socially constructed, and that their treatment therefore merits re-examination. This subversive social criticism goes beyond pointing out the arbitrariness of deviance, by showing that the act of stigmatising a group plays a functional role (Erikson, 1966, 2003), reinforcing the cohesion of the ingroup, clarifying norms and group boundaries, or exorcising a threat by projecting it on a deviant that can then be cast out or eliminated.

This approach often takes a humanistic tone, depicting deviants as passive victims typecast by others in a role they did not choose, sacrificial lambs who serve the greater need of the group. When not given such a noble role, deviants are presented as mere inconveniences that individuals or groups in power are able to dominate to further their own self-serving agendas. Marxist models suggest that groups dominating society define deviance to cement the legitimacy of their own power, and wield the tools of oppression against those individuals who would otherwise question their authority or the distribution of labour and wealth.

Somewhere between these societal approaches and the psychological approach described below, the microsociological work of Erving Goffman on stigma (1963) shifts the perspective of enquiry from explaining the construction of deviance in society to understanding the predicament of those labelled deviants. The subtitle of the book, *Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*, makes clear that the focus is on the actor's perspective of the social world, and the strategies deployed to navigate it. But as in much classic deviance work, the emphasis is on the impact of stigmatisation on the person (the 'spoiling'), with less attention to the impact of these deviants on the rest of society.

Psychological analyses of the deviant predicament

This shift to the individual perspective was completed by psychologists focusing on the deviant predicament, while still portraying deviants as the victims of an oppressive majority. Schachter (1951) created 'deviates' by instructing confederates to take positions at odds with the small group they participated in, and studied interpersonal reactions, focusing particularly

on patterns of communication addressed to deviants. Deviants were the targets of much initial communication, most likely persuasion attempts, but with time the groups gave up and reduced communication. Eventually, deviants were relegated to the worst position in what participants thought were real student organisations. Social exclusion, though seemingly innocuous compared to more violent repression, is extremely aversive for individuals (Williams, Cheung & Choi, 2000) and therefore often used to bring deviants back into the fold. Thus, unfortunate deviants often find themselves rejected by groups, relegated to outskirts and low status positions, with lasting impact on their well-being and self-esteem (Leary, 2004). Moscovici (1985) writes of the 'social death' that befalls deviants when the group gives up on bringing them back into the fold. This work suggests that the external costs endured by deviants may be accompanied by more hidden psychological costs. Surprisingly, investigators have only recently started to document systematically the discomfort associated with being at odds with one's group: when participants in Matz and Wood (2005) received false feedback that their opinion drastically differed from the rest of their group, they reported experiencing the type of psychological discomfort typically denoting cognitive dissonance. This discomfort was reduced when deviants conformed with the majority, persuaded others to agree with them, or joined a more congenial group.

This psychological approach departs from the sociological approach described above by focusing on the deviant's predicament, and showing that the benefits afforded to the group by pressures towards uniformity have significant costs at the individual level, both external (e.g., Schachter, 1951) and internal (e.g., Matz & Wood, 2005). However, both approaches depict deviance as a predicament with little attention to the deviant's motivations.

*A topological descriptor, but a psychological
question mark*

The two perspectives evoked so far share their description of deviance as victimhood, as a situation relative to a group or norm, and look at its social and psychological consequences. These perspectives, however, do not address the diversity of psychological motivations and biographical narratives which can lead to this predicament, and which is being ignored by the blanket 'deviance' label. In this sense, the concept is really a *topological* one,

denoting the position of an individual in a field of forces (Lewin, 1936), but remains a psychological question mark. Less work documents why deviants end up in this situation in the first place. For sociologists, deviance is a social fact resulting from forces outside the individual, and the upstream psychological make-up of the deviant is of little import. For psychologists, the emphasis on engineering deviance, by instructing for example confederates to act as deviants (e.g., Schachter, 1951), or by manipulating feedback so that naive participants believe that their opinions are at odds with their group's (e.g., Matz and Wood, 2005), has left little room for studying the upstream characteristics and motivations of real individuals cast in the role of deviants.

And yet it only takes bringing to mind a few cases of real-life deviance to realise the rich heterogeneity of the categories that are lumped under this heading. Just as Chekhov famously claimed that all happy families resemble each other, but that each unhappy family is unhappy in its own unique way, conformists may all have similar motivations, but deviants come in all kinds and sizes. Labelling someone a deviant thus raises more psychological questions than it answers. Table 14.1 illustrates how ambiguous deviance can be. A woman deemed eccentric by society might suffer pressures against her deviant style of dress – but that does not tell us whether she dresses that way because she is oblivious to fashion (ignorance), because she has a desire to stand out (desire for originality), because she is a fashion designer who is rewarded for cultivating this image (self-interest), because she knows it is inappropriate dress but cannot help herself (compulsion), because she cannot afford to wear anything else due to meagre finances (inability), or (this last type being the focus of this chapter) because she finds current fashion styles deeply objectionable to her sense of style or offensive to her sense of modesty (principled disagreement). The deviant label is a psychological question mark.

A noteworthy feature of the example narratives in Table 14.1 is that some psychological explanations for deviance imply more intention than others. The ignorant deviant is simply unaware of the norm. Others know the norm but lack the means or the ability to conform. In that sense, unintentional deviants are very much like those presented in the sociological literature, victims of a social order that they may not even fully comprehend. The psychological motivation of the second group of deviants, which we call intentional deviants in the bottom half of Table 14.1, is quite different, because they are fully aware of the norm but decide to flaunt it anyway.

Table 14.1 A (non-exhaustive) sampler of deviances

Unintentional	
Tail of the distribution	Random variation placing one just beyond the threshold of what is acceptable (e.g., a co-worker is 'weird' for liking a popular TV show just a little too much)
Norm shifting	Not realising that norms have changed, making one a deviant for abiding to obsolete norms, or joining a new group where one's old norm-abiding behaviour no longer has currency
Ignorance	Not perceiving or understanding the norm
Inability	Not having the resources or ability to follow the norm (e.g., mental illness, low financial resources)
Duress	Being forced by external circumstances to break the norm (e.g., losing one's job)
Compulsion	Not being able to help oneself, feeling compelled to break the norm
Intentional	
Principled disagreement	Refusing to follow a norm that one deems wrong
Disdain	Feeling that one is above the norm, not beholden to it
Spite	Wanting to upset the mainstream, or a powerful minority
Desire for originality	Wanting to be at odds with a norm, non-conformist
Self-interest	Breaking the norm is rewarded so it is considered worth it despite potential social costs (e.g., crime)

Deviance versus defiance

This chapter focuses on reactions to intentional deviants, with a special emphasis on reactions to principled disagreement. These rebels have a special significance to observers because their choices can be taken as a statement and therefore influence others. Furthermore, social observers give particular significance to gestures performed in the face of strong countervailing pressures (Jones, 1972), thus intentional resistance to known social pressures should appear especially meaningful. We propose to use the term *defiance* to refer to knowingly and overtly flaunting a norm when one had the means and ability to conform, as opposed to the more general case of simply finding oneself at odds with a group's norm or demands. In contrast to deviance, which connotes a plight befalling an actor, defiance is a psychological descriptor; whereas deviance captures status, defiance

captures a stance. Defiance is thus a special case of deviance, but one worth circumscribing because we propose that defiant deviants (whether they are truly defiant or construed as such by observers) play a special part in social psychology. In contrast to the passive victim model of deviance reviewed above, the study of defiance in social psychology has put more emphasis on the impact of defiant individuals on others. Whereas deviants are studied as victims, defiers are studied in much classic social psychology for their ability to deliver others from the pressures of conformity or obedience. In contrast to the negative treatment of deviants reviewed in this section, the next section thus reviews the liberating impact of defiant rebels, and the positive reactions that they elicit.

Defiance and Deliverance from Social Pressures

We propose to focus in the rest of this chapter on the special case of deviance which we have called defiance, the knowing and willing refusal of an authority's, a group's or society's demands. We now turn to examples in classic social psychology where defiance promises to deliver individuals from powerful group pressures. In a field that often depicts the evils of conformity and obedience, defiance offers the hope that a handful of rebels can stand up for decency and sway an otherwise sheepishly obedient majority.

Defiance delivers from conformity

A classic demonstration of the liberating power of defiance is the 'partner effect' demonstrated in Asch's conformity paradigm, in which naive participants indicated which of three lines matched a template. Participants famously went from fewer than 1 per cent errors when tested alone to over 36 per cent when misled by a majority instructed by the experimenter to give a wrong answer (Asch, 1955, 1956). When provided with a partner who gave the truthful answer in the face of a misleading majority, participants conformed much less (Asch, 1955), in some reports as rarely as 5.5 per cent of the time (Asch, 1951). Did this liberating effect come from the deviant giving the right answer, or simply from disturbing the group's apparent unanimity? The latter possibility brings up the intriguing prediction that a deviant should liberate participants even if they know he is wrong. Indeed, Asch (1955) reports that even when an 'extreme dissenter' was instructed to

choose a response that was further from the truth than the misleading majority's, conformity by naive participants dropped to 9 per cent. Even when a deviant chose the right visual stimulus while wearing thick eyeglasses and pretending to have poor eyesight (Allen & Levine, 1971), this significantly reduced conformity. In other words, defiance *per se*, the explicit flaunting of a majority's claim for truth, significantly reduces the grip of conformity on observers, even when the form of defiance appears misguided.

These misguided 'extreme dissenters' seem most effective when there is an objectively correct answer to be provided, as with perceptual questions such as the length of a line in Asch's paradigm, or with informational questions, such as providing the capital of Tanzania. In these cases what matters to reduce conformity is reducing the pressure of unanimity, and the dissenter, even wrong, helps to do this. With more subjective opinions, when there is no objective, ascertainable correct response, and no physical reality other than the social reality created by the responses of other individuals (Festinger, 1954), variance of opinions is to be expected. This makes the misguided extreme dissenter less surprising, and less effective at dispelling the power of the majority. When Allen and Levine (1968, 1969) tested the partner effect varying the type of information that they asked about, extreme dissenters reduced conformity only on perceptual (e.g., number of dots on a slide) and informational items (e.g., distance from LA to New York), but did not significantly affect responses to opinion items (e.g., most young people receive too much education). In the case of opinions, breaking the group's consensus without supporting the participant directly was not enough to significantly reduce conformity to group norms. On the other hand, a supportive partner who gave a defiant response in agreement with the naive participant's was effective in liberating individuals to reject the group's majority, even for opinion items. So with opinion items, principled deviants can only liberate likeminded individuals from the shackles of conformity, whereas with perceptual and informative items, they can even liberate those whose minority view differs from their own.

Do principled deviants weaken the grip of the majority because naive participants know of their defiance, or because naive participants know that *the majority knows* of the rebel's defiance, making naive participants feel less conspicuous in their own dissent? Both possibilities make sense, but at least one study suggests that the effect is of the more private kind: in Bragg and Allen (1972), when participants were supported by an agreeing partner

without the majority knowing it (by simulating the malfunction of the experimental apparatus), they resisted the majority just as much (if anything, slightly more) as when everyone knew about the partner's dissent. This suggests that defiance weakens unanimity in the eyes of the prospective dissenter, rather than changing the meaning of the dissent in the eyes of the majority.

At a broader level, principled deviants have been shown to influence the majority even when a consensus is already established, provided that the deviants act consistently and appear autonomous and objective: indeed, Moscovici (1985) even suggests that this type of minority influence can in some regards be more powerful than conformity to the majority, because the latter encourages surface compliance, whereas minority influence, when it works, brings about deeper conversion and lasting attitude change.

Defiance delivers from obedience

Principled deviants are also given the most flattering role in another canonical demonstration of the pressures on individual integrity, Milgram's studies of destructive obedience (1963). Milgram looked directly at the power of authority figures, and famously reported that 65 per cent of his teacher-participants agreed to shock a learner-confederate to the full 450 volts. Less often cited is the finding (Milgram, 1965) that when working with two confederates who refused to go all the way, only 10 per cent of participants showed the full destructive obedience. Just as in the case of group pressure, principled deviants are thus suggested as a potential antidote to the perverting power that authorities hold over individuals. Rosenhan (1969) showed a similar liberating effect of defiers in a Milgram-type obedience paradigm. Whereas 85 per cent of base-rate participants fully obeyed, and 88 per cent did so when they first witnessed an obedient model, rates dropped to 58 per cent after seeing a 'humane' model (who courteously refused to go beyond 210 volts), and to 53 per cent after seeing a 'de-legitimising' model (who questioned the credentials of the experimenter 'with indignation', and finally stomped out of the room 'in evident outrage'). Note that whereas the rebels in Milgram (1965) were partnered with the naive participants to inflict the shocks together, Rosenhan's participants waited their turn while they watched the model perform their whole scripted sequence, which may explain the difference in liberation between the two studies.

Meeus and Raaijmakers (1986) showed similar liberating effect of principled deviants in an administrative obedience paradigm, where participants were instructed to utter 15 negative remarks to upset a confederate while he was taking an oral test that would allegedly determine if he was selected for a job. For example, some of the statements read 'Up to now, your test score is totally insufficient' and 'This job is much too difficult for you according to the test' (p. 13). Participants could see the applicant-confederate getting upset through physiological readings reportedly coming from electrodes on his skin, and they were told that he could be rejected for the job if he made too many errors as a result of stress. Yet 92 per cent of control participants uttered all 15 stress-inducing remarks nonetheless. Principled deviants, however, once more saved the day: when two confederates posing as participants refused to continue after the eighth of the 15 stress remarks, only 16 per cent of naive participants went all the way.

One explanation for the liberating power of principled deviance is that they demonstrate the absence of negative external consequences following rebellion. Another is that they demonstrate positive internal consequences for the rebel. In an ingenious experiment, Powers and Geen (1972) once more tested aggressive obedience in a shock-giving paradigm after witnessing obedient or rebellious models, but they varied (through non-verbal behaviour and bogus oscilloscope readings) the apparent arousal of the model before and after the rebellion. They found that the most liberating models were the rebels who appeared calm after the rebellion, whether or not they appeared nervous beforehand. Rebels who appeared nervous throughout or became nervous after rebellion did reduce obedience, but to a lesser extent than rebels who appeared relieved from having done the right thing.

Ironic effects of liberation

The liberating power of defiance can backfire in unexpected ways. When participants were paired in a new task with their fellow dissenter from a previous conformity paradigm, who now made systematic mistakes, they were more likely to conform to his erroneous pronouncements than they were with a member of the previous majority or with a novel participant (Darley *et al.*, 1974). Thus the partnership established in the 'partner effect' initiates bonds of its own, and the liberator became, so to speak, the new master.

Another counterintuitive finding is that principled deviants can spare others from the need to express their own rebellion, and thus lead to more conformity than if they had not rebelled. In Worchel and Brehm (1971), naive participants were instructed to choose to work on one of two similar tasks, which were equally attractive to control participants. When a bully confederate snapped that it was obvious which task they should work on and that there was 'really no question about it', participants in one study reacted by choosing the opposite task 83 per cent of the time. But when a second confederate stood up to the bully by asserting that he had not made up his mind yet, now paradoxically 83 per cent of participants went along with the bully, as if the rebel, by restoring his own freedom, vicariously restored the participant's, making it then acceptable to follow the bully's suggestion. Defiance can thus in some cases indirectly facilitate conformity.

Despite these occasional ironic effects, the research reviewed so far suggests that principled deviants have the power to free individuals from the pressure of groups and authority figures. Instead of the passive victims that we encountered in the first section, these deviants are therefore proactive liberators with noble roles to play. In our effort to document the reactions to principled deviants more generally, we turn now from the effect they have on other actors to the way they are perceived by observers.

Perception of defiance

The research so far suggests that defiant rebels can liberate other actors from the pressure of conformity or obedience. This says much about their power, but little yet about how they are perceived by others. In contrast to the rejection of deviants documented in the first section, we find that they are often liked, and ascribed positive attributes. A frequent ancillary finding in the studies reviewed above is that rebels did not just liberate others, they were also liked more. In Asch (1955), they inspired warmth, closeness and confidence; in Darley *et al.* (1974), participants reported liking them more and feeling closer to them than to members of the majority; in Worchel and Brehm (1971), they were liked and chosen as future work partners, rated as more capable and as better leaders; in Allen and Levine (1969), socially supportive dissenters were seen as highly likeable, intelligent, sincere and well-adjusted.

Morris, Miller and Spangenberg (1977) varied the placement of a supporting dissenter in an array of four otherwise conforming confederates

preceding the naive participant. Deviants in the fourth position, who clearly dissented in the face of a majority of three, were rated the most confident, dynamic and accurate, illustrating the distinction between defiance and deviance introduced in the first section. A dissenter who responds first is merely a deviant, perhaps even an unintentional one, who does not yet realise that a group norm counter to his own position will emerge after he responds. In contrast, dissenters who speak after the majority, especially if it is known that the majority will hear them (Morris & Miller, 1975), are seen as more dynamic and confident because their 'dissenting response could plausibly be seen as being made in defiance of group pressure' (p.335).

The link between liking principled deviants and their liberating power is ambiguous. Participants flatly deny that rebels had any effect on their own decisions even if they report liking them (e.g., Asch, 1955), and some researchers are inclined to believe that liking deviants and being liberated by them are indeed separate processes (e.g., Darley *et al.*, 1974). Furthermore, 'extreme dissenters' (Asch, 1955) manage to liberate others while being extremely disliked for giving a response at odds with the participant's (Allen & Levine, 1969). Other researchers, however, report that liking for the partner predicts rates of non-conformity (Morris, Miller & Spangenberg, 1977), suggesting a possible link between these two processes.

In contrast to the model of deviants as passive victims sketched out in the first section, in this section we reviewed how defiance offers individuals some deliverance from the pressures of majorities and authorities. The greatest point of contrast may be in the interpersonal reactions to defiance. Whereas we initially documented rejection responses ranging from ostracism to hostility, we closed the present section by describing how rebels can also be embraced and ascribed numerous positive qualities.

Heroes or Heretics? The Role of Defensiveness

When is defiance revered, and when is it reviled? We saw first that deviants tend to be rejected, disliked and ostracised, and because we defined defiance as a type of deviance, it should elicit the same repressive treatment. Yet we also saw that defiant rebels can have liberating effects on their peers, who therefore tend to like and admire them. How can the same rebels sometimes be despised and sometimes be embraced? We propose that the major difference between the studies presented in the first part of the chapter (where defiance is rejected) and the ones in the second part (where defiance

is appreciated) lies not in the behaviour of the rebels, but instead in the involvement of the perceivers, and therefore in the defensiveness triggered in them.

Moderation by personal involvement

A common feature of studies where participants liked the rebel was that the participant had not acted yet (e.g., Allen & Levine, 1971). In the typical partner effect paradigm, a majority opinion is expressed, the deviant opines, and only then does the experimenter turn to the naive participant for his response. The rebel here defies the majority, but this gesture says nothing about the participant, as he has not responded yet. It is therefore unlikely to trigger defensiveness, and defiance can be admired. In contrast, studies that look at the rejection of deviants occur in the context of an ongoing interaction (e.g., Schachter, 1951), or in social contexts with a long history, in other words in situations in which the deviant is judged by individuals who are already committed to the choice or opinion questioned by the deviant. No one considers one's attitude towards vegetarians *a priori*, but instead one does so in the context of a lifetime of meat eating. When participants have already made their own choice, the rebel's gesture not only questions the validity of the majority/authority claim, it questions the validity of the participants' own choice – and thus is likely to trigger defensiveness.

Thus a crucial moderator of reactions to defiance appears to be personal involvement, or how much one is already committed by one's actions to the claim of an authority or majority. The more one has supported this claim by going along with it, thus legitimising an authority or perpetuating a group norm, the more one has to lose from the deviant's challenge to the claim. It is of course somewhat obvious that concrete investment in a norm would make one reluctant to see it overturned, as when members of a corrupt company fear that a whistle-blower would make them lose their livelihood. The more interesting hypothesis is that it takes very little to be implicated, and that even passivity in the face of a problematic authority figure, or consenting silence in the face of a misguided majority, can make individuals feel retrospectively uneasy when confronted with a vocal deviant.

A straightforward operationalisation of involvement is whether individuals are actors or observers in the problematic situations. Upon reading about the Milgram (1963) experiments, it is easy to side with the minority

who rebelled, and to appreciate their resistance as a token of human decency. One can imagine that this is harder for participants who have been in the experiment, because the defiance directly questions their decision to go along.

Defiance and the threat to bystanders

We propose that defiance elicits resentment instead of admiration when perceivers are *de facto* complicit with the claim being questioned, because rebels represent a threat to them which triggers defensiveness. What is the nature of this threat? Three candidates arise: imagined reproach; doubting one's choices; and being reminded of one's freedom.

Imagined reproach In this version the threat is simply that someone is in a position to morally reproach you, whether they actually do so or not. Their defiance is seen as a claim for moral superiority. When confederates refuse to go along in the Milgram experiment, they are not just questioning the morality of the experimenter; they are also implicitly questioning the morality of anyone who mindlessly obeyed him. This reproach, real or imagined, is a slap in the face to anyone who accepted the authority or the majority's claims. They now have to face the fact that someone else seized the moral high ground and could therefore be looking down on them. Individuals are reluctant to accept moral reproach from others, especially if they don't have any legitimate moral authority – and deviants typically do not. Note that in this interpretation, moral reproach is unpleasant, independent of whether you deem it warranted, that is, whether you agree that your own choice was immoral. Thus, a promiscuous bachelor may resent the condemnation of fornication by religious figures, despite feeling no compunction about premarital sex. An omnivore might be perfectly comfortable eating meat, yet be irked that vegetarians look down on her.

The validity of defiance Defiant rebels may also be resented not just because they implicitly claim the moral high ground (and insult you by doing so) but instead because you come to recognise the validity of their claim. Instead of the interpersonal sting of feeling put down by a peer, this would lead to something more akin to dissonance, whereby their gesture makes you realise that your own choice was problematic, and you now have to deal with it. To go back to our example of premarital sex, a promiscuous bachelor may feel especially threatened by virginity-pledge zealots if they elicit in him misgivings about sex before marriage. Note that this is quite different from the

mere imagined reproach described above. On the one hand, this second process is more powerful, because the threat is no longer experienced as an external, interpersonal one ('I hate it when people take the moral high ground') but instead takes a much more internal, intrapersonal tone ('I guess I'm not such a great person after all'), which is likely to be more threatening to individuals – potentially triggering a much more vicious response. On the other hand, by requiring that the participant agree with the defiant rebel's condemnation, this interpretation significantly narrows the scope of the effect, making defiant rebels unthreatening in the vast majority of cases. This does not account for the many cases where we do not agree with the defiant rebel's stance, yet still resent what we perceive as ethical grandstanding. A more reasonable model most likely includes both components, with imagined moral reproach the active ingredient when we do not subscribe to the principled deviant's principles, and dissonance when we do.

A reminder of freedom A third possibility builds on the existential notion of denial of freedom (Fromm, 1941; Sartre, 1956). In this view, individuals recognise that going along has negative consequences, but they tell themselves that they did not have any other choice, perhaps because an authority figure wields considerable constraining power, or because they did not even realise that there existed an alternative to the mainstream path advocated by the majority. In this interpretation defiant rebels, by exercising their freedom, remind us of our own. By showing us that authorities can only constrain our behaviour so much, and by revealing alternative paths that we did not even consider or realise existed, defiant rebels remind us that we were free all along, and we now have to live with our choices.

Summary of the threat of defiant rebels We identified three mechanisms by which defiant rebels can threaten obedient others and elicit resentment. First, because their stance implies reproach of the authority or the majority, and by proxy of anyone who went along; this reproach itself is resented. Second, the defiant rebel elicits dissonance by making conformers question the very validity of their choices, and forcing them to reconcile their positive self-image with their problematic behaviour. Third, when conformers found solace in the perception that they had no other choice but to conform, defiant rebels reveal the flimsiness of that conceit, and by reminding conformers that they were free all along, introduce existential angst as well as the necessity to account for past misdeeds.

Empirical evidence of defensive resentment Experiments on reactions to defiance conducted in our laboratory demonstrate the moderating role of personal involvement and the mediating role of imagined reproach. To establish moderation by involvement, we varied whether participants were first asked to engage in a problematic task (making them ‘actors’) or whether they were not (‘observers’) before being asked to react to a defiant confederate who refused to go along. Actor participants told to record a speech in favour of comprehensive exams (something they did not support) preferred a confederate who also obeyed to a rebel who refused to misrepresent his or her true attitude. However, observer participants who encountered a rebel without having to record the speech beforehand preferred him or her to an obedient counterpart (Monin, Sawyer & Marquez, 2008, Study 1). In a second version of the paradigm, participants role-playing a detective reviewing suspects for a burglary discovered that the most likely culprit was African American. Observers agreed that a defiant confederate who refused to make a choice and called the task ‘offensive’ was more moral than someone who obediently accused the lone black man, and also liked and respected these rebels more. This pattern was reversed when participants had engaged in the task themselves – in which case most participants accused the African American suspect, and then resented the defiant stance of the confederate (Study 2).

Supporting the imagined reproach mechanism, the rejection of these defiant rebels was mediated by the anticipation of rejection – participants seemed to assume that since the rebel defied the experimenter, he would also reject them for going along, and they pre-emptively rejected the rebel (Study 3). This rejection stems from a threat to the self, as demonstrated by two findings: first, self-affirmed participants (who were asked to write about one of their important traits or values prior to the threat) did not resent defiance (Study 4); second, when actor participants were invited to keep their initial choice a secret (thus removing the concern that the rebel’s defiance just made them look bad in the eyes of the experimenter), they still disliked the defiant rebel (O’Connor & Monin, in preparation).

These data support our proposed resolution of the apparent inconsistency identified earlier in this chapter between the rejection and the appreciation of defiance. Mirroring the diverging reactions to defiance documented between published reports, we were able to elicit completely contrasting reactions to the same defiant behaviour in the laboratory, simply by changing the ego involvement of participants. This suggests that

published studies of the rejection of principled deviants might focus on involved actors, whereas studies where participants appreciate defiance and may even be inspired by it focus on uninvolved observers. The typical appreciative participant in partner effect studies is the subject at the end of Table 14.1, who has witnessed the claims of a majority or an authority figure, and then the countervailing defiance of the rebel, all before having to commit to either position. As in our experiments, actors resent defiance, whereas observers appreciate it.

The reactions to defiance described so far were primarily assessed through attraction scales, such as how much participants would like the rebel as a friend, as a roommate, as a collaborator, or how much they respected the target. We also asked participants to rate rebels on a battery of personality traits, which aggregated into a communion dimension (e.g., kind, warm) and an agency dimension (e.g., strong, independent). Observer participants typically rated rebels as significantly more agentic, and in one instance as more communal than obedient targets. In contrast, actor participants did not grant rebels any superiority on these dimensions, sometimes even rating them as less communal than obedient targets (Monin, Sawyer & Marquez, 2008). The positive qualities ascribed to rebels in the work reviewed previously (Asch, 1955, etc.) included both dimensions, with frequent mentions of warmth, closeness, likeability (communion) as well as intelligence, leadership ability and accuracy (agency). The defensive nature of actors' reluctance to grant rebels any positive qualities is demonstrated by the consequences of self-affirmation (Monin, Sawyer & Marquez, 2008, Study 4). When self-affirmed, actor participants no longer put down rebels on the communion dimension, and started even to recognise their superior agency.

The liberating effect of moral rebels Above we reviewed how rebels were not only appreciated by individuals who had yet to pronounce themselves, but also served to liberate these individuals from the shackles of conformity and obedience (e.g., Asch, 1955). Would we observe the same kind of moderation described here on these liberating 'partner' effects? Can we expect participants to stand up to the experimenter after seeing a rebel? In Study 2 of Monin, Sawyer and Marquez (2008), we used an order manipulation so observer participants actually made their own choice in the burglary line-up task after witnessing the confederate's response. Whereas over 85 per cent of participants accused the African American suspect with no prior model, only 33 per cent did so after seeing a rebel, and 50 per cent did not respond.

This suggests that rebels did have a liberating role, freeing observer participants from the demands of a racist task. It is not possible to evaluate the liberating effect of rebels on actor participants in this study, because their choice was already made when they witnessed the rebellion. However, suggestive evidence was collected in Study 4 of Monin, Sawyer and Marquez (2008), where participants reported their happiness with their choice of the African American as the most likely suspect at the end of the procedure. Actor participants who expressed the least happiness with their initial choice (and the least tendency to blame the situation) were the self-affirmed actors who had seen a rebel, perhaps suggesting the 'validity of defiance' mechanism discussed earlier and an admittance of regret about complying with the racist task. Assuming that they would take this regret to heart and be less likely to comply with a similarly problematic task in the future, this suggest that rebels can have a liberating effect even on actors, provided the latter are self-affirmed. In the absence of self-affirmation, participants did not express more regret after seeing a rebel than after seeing an obedient other. Thus it seems that self-defence mechanisms come in the way of learning from the rebel's defiance, unless one is made secure in one's self-worth. It remains to be seen, however, if their newfound wisdom carries over to novel situations, that is, whether affirmed actors who witness a defiant rebel would take the same defiant stand if a similar situation presented itself in the future. It seems important for investigators to pursue these questions as the rebel studies may paint an overly negative picture of reactions to defiance. It is even possible that rebels are disliked but influential (see Rink & Ellemers, this volume); such a pattern is familiar in social comparison research, where superior others may be annoying but push us to excel.

Conclusion: Defiance Revered, Defiance Reviled

This chapter documents diverging reactions to principled deviants. We started the first part with a broad discussion of models of deviance in social science, then narrowed our investigation to the specific case we called defiance. Whereas social scientists often emphasise the negative consequences of deviance for the deviants, in the second part we documented how, in social psychology, rebels have played a special role for those around them, providing deliverance of social pressures to bystanders who witness their defiance, and appreciate them as a result. In the third part we tried to

resolve the apparent inconsistency between rejecting deviance and embracing defiance. We proposed that personal involvement in the claim rejected by the defiant rebel moderates the defensiveness exhibited by bystanders, and presented some of our work showing that the same defiance can be embraced by uninvolved observers and rejected by involved actors, for whom it feels like a personal reproach. At the end of the day, whether defiance is revered or reviled seems to depend on defensiveness. Given the powerful liberating role of rebels in classic social psychology, it seems unfortunate that defensive processes can prevent rebels from getting through to actors who feel too involved in a situation to tolerate criticism. Future research should determine how defiance can be framed so that rebels can stand for their principles, avoid resentment from peers and bypass defensiveness to inspire others to stand for what is right, even if it means admitting they were wrong.

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