UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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GRADUATE SCHOOL

Attachment, Networks and Discourse in Extremist Political Organizations: A Comparative Case Study

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Dedication

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Part One

Chapter One

Introduction

September 11th 2001 brought suicide terrorism to the forefront of 21st century global politics with the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. Other forms of seemingly incomprehensible violence regularly explode out of the isolated secrecy of totalist organizations. Six years prior to 9/11 the Japanese group Aum ShinriKyo killed twelve people in the politically-motivated Tokyo subway gassings (Kaplan 2002; Lifton 1999). In 1993 77 group members and four Federal officers died at the Branch Davidian compound at Waco (Wright, Gallagher, and Seminare 1999), and in 1978 over 900 adults and children died in the mass murder/suicides of US citizens and of Congressman Ryan at the Jonestown camp in Guyana (Bohm and Laurence 2001). Ideologically totalist, closed groups have threatened the public, law enforcement personnel and their own members, with a type of violence that is often unprecedented and unexpected, frequently occurring in the context of suicidal acts and internal group violence. Although such acts continue to occur, we do not yet adequately understand the structural, emotional, and cognitive means by which people get tied into the institutions which condition these types of violence.

Hannah Arendt (1994), scholar and refugee from Hitler's regime, stated that: "If we want to be at home on this earth, even at the price of being at home in this century, we must try to take part in the interminable dialogue with the essence of totalitarianism" (p. 323). This study attempts to contribute to that dialogue as we embark upon a new century where totalitarianism, and its generic form, totalism, continue to develop in many extra- and cross-national forms that would have anguished, though not surprised, Arendt. The analysis presented here reflects many of her themes: the everyday experience of loneliness; the simultaneous destruction of the public realm and of private life; the "ice-

cold reasoning" and pseudo-science of total ideologies; the "compulsion of total terror" (1948/1979 p. 473); and inner coercion and the resulting surrender of freedom. It further rests on the seminal contributions of Robert Jay Lifton (1961) who analysed and defined totalist thought reform, and on the concepts of attachment theory developed by John Bowlby (1973; 1980; 1982).

The goal of this study is to explore the structure and mechanisms of totalism, a form of social relationship between a charismatic authoritarian leader and his or her followers. A feature of such relationships is the existence of an extreme social control within the totalist system for the purpose of "the domination of each single individual in each and every sphere of life" (Arendt 1948/1979 p. 326). This social control is achieved through the means of a particular type of persuasion and psychological control that Lifton (1961) called thought reform. The same phenomenon has been described by others variously as coercive persuasion (Schein 1961), brainwashing (Hunter 1956; Zablocki 2001a), mind control (Hassan 1988; Singer and Lalich 1995), conversion (Lofland 1977), bounded choice (Lalich 2004) and (in a broader form) resocialization (Berger and Luckmann 1966), and its study goes hand in hand with the study of totalism. This comparative case study will examine the network structure, patterns of attachment, and use of language particular to ideological totalism in order to explore hypothesized linkages among these observable phenomena. The goal is to further understanding of the organization, operation and social-psychological mechanisms of such groups.

In this work I hope to contribute to an understanding of how human beings, often acting under an ideology that promises a personal or group emancipation, may end up so enmeshed in closed groups that they not only take the lives of others, but may also sacrifice their own, or their children's lives at the orders of a charismatic and authoritarian leader (Balch 1998; Layton 1998; Lifton 1999; Mayer 1999). Building on earlier work of the Frankfurt school, I use an innovative analytical approach, applying new theories and methods developed over the last forty years: network theory and methods, attachment theory and methods, and discourse analysis. I will compare an ideologically totalist political group, the Newman Tendency, with an open and loosely structured political group, the Green Party, to create thick descriptions of each group, to explore patterns of ego-centric networks,

attachment and discourse, and to develop more specific propositions for future testing. Although the Newman Tendency is not itself a terrorist group, and operates largely non-violently, it does, as I shall show, fit the criteria for totalism. As a relatively accessible group it thus allows for close observation and serves as a useful example of a totalist system, which facilitates the study of the internal mechanisms of totalism. As a non-totalist organization, the Green Party serves as a counter-example, thus highlighting those organizational attributes that are particularly salient in differentiating a totalist from a non-totalist system. The resulting insights may inform future improvements in public policy and law enforcement responses.

Organization of the Dissertation

There are three parts to this dissertation. Part One consists of five chapters. The first is an introduction. The second chapter defines totalist systems broadly. Chapter Three is a general review of the literature that has addressed various aspects of totalism and coercive persuasion. In Chapter Four I build on existing literature across disciplines to formulate my theoretical framework. I argue that the concept of a totalist system is an ideal type of social organization where network shapes, attachment relationships, and language usage are intertwined in mutually reinforcing ways to create and maintain a charismatic authoritarian leader's hierarchical control and domination over followers. Followers in such systems are likely to become hyper credulous (having an uncritical assumption of, and zealous loyalty to, a set of new beliefs) and deployable (displaying uncritical obedience to the demands of the collectivity without the need for surveillance by the group) (Zablocki 1999; 2001a). Chapter Five describes the multiple research methods used in the study.

In Part Two I provide thick descriptions of each group. First, I describe the overall historical development of each group: Chapter Six is dedicated to the Newman Tendency and Chapter Seven to the Green Party. Chapters Eight through Ten analyse the trajectories of individuals through their respective groups, from entry and recruitment processes, to life in the group, to exit. An analysis of the changes in members' ego-

centric networks through each of these stages is presented within each of these three chapters.

Part Three starts with Chapter 11 where I present a detailed analysis of the results of the Group Attachment Interview and discuss the patterns of group attachment I found. Chapter 12 shows how the patterns of discourse put forward by the group and by group members vary for the two groups, and how they work to support the respective totalism, or lack thereof, of each group. The concluding chapter restates the theoretical assumptions of the study and compares the findings to these assumptions, as well as to the existing literature. It reports on validity and generalizability of the study and suggests future directions for research.

Chapter Two

A Definition of Totalism

The aim of this work is to provide empirical illustrations of causal and reinforcing linkages between three dimensions of life within extremist political groups: structural, emotional, and cognitive/linguistic. The expectation is that a closed, hierarchical organization led by a charismatic, authoritarian leader is associated with the control and restriction of attachment relationships of its members in order to create a primary attachment relationship to the group (Aberbach 1995; Arendt 1948/1979; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Lifton 1961; Zablocki 1999). My conjecture is that this relationship is one of disorganized attachment, an attachment status that has been correlated with disorientation, dissociation, cognitive lapses and confusion (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999; Main and Sroufe 2002). These effects can be observed in an individual's discourse about the attachment relationship (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996). This discourse also illustrates the restricting cognitive effects of totalist language (Arendt 1948/1979; 1955/1968; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Lifton 1961; Mannheim 1936/1985; Mead 1934; Tobias and Lalich 1994; Zablocki 2001b). A disorganized, primary attachment to a group isolates individuals from the outside world, restricts their thought processes, and can result in a state of hyper-credulity[1] and deployability[2]. The purpose of this chapter is to define the concept of a totalist system, which is the social form common to many extremist political groups, and to totalitarian movements and states (Arendt 1948/1979; Coser and Coser 1979; Lifton 1961; Stern 2003).

[1] The uncritical assumption of, and zealous loyalty to, a set of new beliefs: (Zablocki 2001b).

[2] Uncritical obedience to the demands of the collectivity without the need for surveillance by the group (Zablocki 2001b).

Definition of the problem

Although this study focuses on *political* totalist organizations, these are merely a subset of the more general phenomenon of totalist systems. It is critical to understand how to define these phenomena because, as this study will claim, it is the *form* of totalist systems that matters, rather than the particular ideological, religious, political or other dogma overlaying the fundamental relationships at work. Other than in the literature that focuses specifically on totalism (among others see: Arendt 1948/1979; Lalich 2004; Lifton 1961; Zablocki 2001a) a lack of clarity in this definition runs through a good deal of the scholarship that touches upon this social phenomenon. The problem occurs because totalist systems[3] are, in fact, simply a type of social relationship, one which can be seen in many different arenas of social life: from national totalitarian systems, to political or religious cults, to the small-scale domination and control of domestic violence. *Political* totalist systems are differentiated by a political agenda, ambitions, ideology, or activities, but they may often have more in common with other, non-political totalist systems than with other political organizations.

Common structural threads link these charismatic-authoritarian-led systems: closed, dense, hierarchical structures, and the restriction and control of attachment relationships. These totalistic structures are represented and supported by total ideologies that allow for one and only one exclusive truth. As Arendt (1948/1979) says,

> The obvious contradiction between a mass organization and an exclusive society, which alone can be trusted to keep a secret, is of no importance compared with the fact that the very *structure* of secret and conspiratory societies could translate the totalitarian ideological dichotomy […] into an organizational principle. From the viewpoint of an organization which functions according to the principle that whoever is not included is excluded, whoever is not with me is against me, the world at large loses all […] nuances, differentiations, and pluralistic aspects (p. 380, my emphasis).

[3] I use the word *system* rather than organization as totalism occurs in a variety of relationships, not only in formal or informal organizations.

To provide a common empirical starting point to understand the organizational principle to which Arendt refers, consider these following phenomena of modernity and late modernity, all of which, not incidentally, incurred a massive cost in terms of human lives lost. On a national, or multi-national scale: the Holocaust; Stalin's regime in the Soviet Union and associated Eastern European regimes such as Ceaucescu's Romania; Pol Pot's Cambodia; North Korea's years of isolation and famine; Mao's China, in particular the massive famine caused by the Great Leap Forward and the various human costs of the Cultural Revolution. These decimations of human life have been followed in more recent years by smaller, but (so I will argue) similarly structured and deadly systems such as Jim Jones' Peoples Temple in 1978, Aum ShinriKyo, Applewhite's Heaven's Gate in 1994, Order of the Solar Temple in France and Canada, Kibwetere's Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God, and the currently active, and increasingly violent, Lord's Resistance Army – these latter two groups both in Uganda. Al Qaeda[4], a transnational organization, also belongs in this list, along with a wide variety of other religious fundamentalist groups who wield a political agenda.

In the US and Europe, the 1960s set the seeds for the growth of what are known as New Religious Movements (NRMs) – a vast array of groups of which a sizeable percentage are totalist, such as the Unification Church, the Way International and the Boston Movement. During this same period a similar rise in totalist political groups was seen, particularly of small, cell-structured, violent organizations on both the left and right such as the Red Brigades in Italy, the Baader Meinhoff Gang in Germany, and in the United States: the Weathermen, Posse Comitatus, White Aryan Nations, and the Symbionese Liberation Army. Other US totalist groups are both religious and political such as the Nation of Islam, and the many and various branches of the Christian Identity

[4] There are a variety of accounts and descriptions of Al Qaeda, and while a popular view is that this is a very loosely structured network, there is disagreement about this. It may be that in fact there is a very tight inner circle with a highly structured and controlled larger circle and then either loose, temporary alliances with other groups or copy-cat organizations (Sageman 2004). What seems clear is that, at least prior to the post-9/11 drive against Al Qaeda, there was a highly secret and compartmentalized cell structure, with an effective chain of command operating with the classic need-to-know principle.

movement[5]. Finally, we also see one-on-one versions of the totalist relationship (Tobias and Lalich 1994) – a current example being the random sniper killings by Muhammad and Malvo.

In this very partial listing of totalist systems we already see a considerable overlap between the political and the religious. Jim Jones' Peoples Temple does not fit neatly as either a New Religious Movement or a political cult. Although it operated as a church, the ideology of the group was socialist and anti-racist, and the stated goal of Jonestown was to create an egalitarian, socialist colony (Layton 1998; Reiterman and Jacobs 1982). Similarly, while the Unification Church is formally a religious organization, its political ambitions and influence are well documented (Lofland 1977). The Christian Identity movement is rooted in an end-times, apocalyptic theology, but is ultimately political in its goal of a theocratic state – much like Al Qaeda or the Taliban (Tourish and Wohlforth 2000).

Most of the organizations or relationships listed above are set off by the acts of violence in which they have engaged, but there are many other totalist systems that, while they may not have such directly violent histories, qualify as totalist because of the extreme level of control they exert over their members. It is this control, I will argue, which is a predictor of violent behavior either internally to the group or externally towards outsiders. Paradoxically, although these systems are predisposed to violent outcomes, the totalist leader "is distinguished from earlier types of dictators in that he hardly wins through simple violence" (Arendt 1948/1979 p. 373). Herein lies the critical question with which this paper is concerned: What are the social conditions and the mechanisms, the "means of dominating and terrorizing human beings from within" (p. 325) that take place within the totalist system? If it is not "simple violence", but a threat that is more psychological than physical (Lifton 1961; Schein 1961), then how can we explain first, the intense control that results from this type of coercion, and second, why then violence is so often a result?

---

[5] This two-fold development of religious and political totalist groups in the US is well-documented by Lalich (2004).

Arendt characterized these social relationships as totalitarianism – whether totalitarian movements, or state totalitarianism. She described the popular "preliminary understanding" of totalitarian governments as being those which "deny human freedom radically" (Arendt 1994 p. 326). She stated that the term "totalitarianism" that arose in popular language denoted "that something new and decisive has happened," (p. 312) a new event that could only emerge in modernity. Fifty years later we see this radical denial of human freedom – which, in its extreme forms, denies life altogether – no longer as entirely new, but continuing and growing in a variety of ways. Totalist systems are encroaching at all levels of social life: from political organizations to religious groups, from corporate trainings to sports or health-related groups, and from personal growth workshops to get-rich-quick schemes (Lalich and Tobias 2006; Singer and Lalich 1995). In responding to the most extreme of the radically norm-breaking behaviors seen in some of these organizations, the response of most observers (and many scholars) is a two-fold distancing: "How could anyone do that? It's incomprehensible," followed swiftly by "It could never happen to me," an assertion of a personal invulnerability to whatever combination of dispositional and situational conditions might cause such behavior in others (in a classic case of the fundamental attribution error: Ross and Nisbett 1991). But rather than distancing ourselves it is critical to engage with the problem of totalism in order to understand the universal human dimensions of these systems.

Towards a definition of totalism

A totalist system is formed and headed by a charismatic and authoritarian leader who uses methods of coercive persuasion to achieve the total domination of followers – the radical denial of their freedom. This freedom that is denied is first that of the followers, and then the freedom of those who may exist outside the system: the excluded set. The features of a totalist system include its charismatic authoritarian leadership, structure, a total ideology, and the control of attachment relationships. This results in the exploitation of followers, at a minimum, and their deployability—uncritical obedience to the group's demands—in its most developed form.

The structure of the system is hierarchical (though the hierarchy is generally fluid and fluctuating). The inner core is rigidly bounded, and often comprises a further inner layer of lieutenants. In some cases, front organizations may exist as a layer serving as a "transmission belt" between the inside and outside worlds (Arendt 1948/1979; Lofland 1977). A totalist ideology prevails (Arendt 1948/1979; 1955/1968; 1994; Berger and Luckmann 1966; Lifton 1961; Mannheim 1936/1985) claiming to "explain all historical happenings, the total explanation of the past, the total knowledge of the present, and the reliable prediction of the future" (Arendt 1948/1979 p. 470). Deception – or the "monstrous falsehoods of totalitarian movements" (p. 383) – in the form of propaganda, totalitarian ideology, and the simple hiding of the actual goals of the system, has a key role. Totalism's organizational structure "establishes and safeguards the fictitious world through consistent lying" (p. 383). This fictitious world becomes the content of the hyper credulity (Zablocki 1999) experienced by followers, and serves as one of the walls that shore up the isolation and resulting dissociative state of followers, a state where common sense dissolves. The isolation of followers, which is both structurally and ideologically imposed, importantly includes the control of attachment relationships which might otherwise serve as alternate sources of reflection, support, analysis and safety. These features of charismatic, authoritarian leadership – a rigid and bounded structure, isolation, deception, and a totalist ideology – create the conditions for employing coercive persuasion in order to create tightly bonded, deployable followers (Lofland 1977; Zablocki 1999; 2001a).

Once a follower has become a deployable agent through coercive persuasion, their normal self-protective mechanisms (of themselves and those close to them) are breached (Stein 1997; 2001; Zimbardo 1999) and it is this breaching combined with the directives of the leader – who, I shall argue, is predisposed to violence and aggression – that leads to the tendency to internal and external violence in these systems. The totalist system's ideology, and the actions of its members, reflect the structural power relationship between the leader and followers, and also, the internal, psychological life of the leader. And this internal life of the leader is recursively linked to the social conditions (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992) that produced him or her, as shall be discussed further below.

A summary definition is offered here:

> A totalist system is formed and controlled by a charismatic authoritarian leader. It is a rigidly bounded, dense, hierarchical social system supported and represented by a total, exclusive ideology. The leader sets in motion processes of coercive persuasion designed to isolate and control followers. As a result followers are able to be exploited, and potentially become deployable agents, demonstrating uncritical obedience to the group, regardless of their own survival needs.

The social relationship of totalism and charismatic authoritarianism has tended to defeat the categories of social science. Partly because of its chameleon-like quality in its appearance in the social world, and the complex of layers that make up its functioning, totalism winds up being discussed in a wide range of subject areas, among which are: the sociologies of knowledge, religion, social movements, deviance, violence, emotions and philosophy; anthropology; political science; organization; communications; rhetoric; psychology; social psychology and history. In the social sciences the language by which we address totalism is still bound by the categories of thought, that, as Arendt (1994) puts it, totalism itself has destroyed. Bourdieu (1992) echoes this idea in his stand against early specialization in the social sciences. Social facts do not neatly divide themselves up and sociology must "preserve the fundamental unity of human practice across the mutilating scissures of disciplines, empirical domains, and techniques of observation and analysis" (p. 27). Sociology must look at social structures in an undivided way, in all their dimensions simultaneously. This study of totalism, therefore, will attempt to "methodically [connect] realms of social life that are normally treated by separate sciences and with disparate methodologies" (p. 27).

Conclusion

There is a particular relationship created between the totalist leader and his or her followers that bonds the follower tightly to the totalist system, and creates the conditions in which the follower may become a deployable agent of the leader. It is this *relationship* that lies at the center of this study. This relationship can exist in many different social circumstances, upheld by a variety of ideologies (that, is, the content of the ideology

differs, while the form is that of a total, or absolute ideology). The totalist relationship is not just a product of the leader or followers' innate dispositions, nor only a product of particular social situations. Rather it arises through a development and transmission of social situations and structures to individuals' internal dispositions and back again. Whatever theoretical view is used to understand this, the key is to have a *relational* view, to look at individuals living within webs of relationships, and to look at the shifts and changes in those webs of relationships within the social structures (and accompanying ideologies) that condition them.

In the next chapter I review the literature that sets the background for this study.

Chapter Three

Background in the Literature

World War II was a watershed in the development of human society. Hitler's totalitarian regime, and the ideologically opposite, but structurally similar, regimes of Stalin and Mao Zedong (Arendt 1948/1979; 1994; Lifton 1961) provided a tragic excess of experience and data for social scientists who subsequently attempted to understand these phenomena. Scholars sought to comprehend how masses of people became oppressed and controlled by terror-driven hierarchies dominated by charismatic and authoritarian leaders (Adorno 1944/1982; Arendt 1948/1979; Fromm 1941; Lifton 1961). These systems attempted to collapse private life and public life together (Arendt 1958/1998) under the Big Brother gaze of the totalitarian panopticon (Foucault and Gordon 1980). In a statement that goes beyond Foucault's conception, however, Arendt emphasizes that external surveillance is not enough:

> Totalitarianism is never content to rule by external means, namely, through the state and a machinery of violence; thanks to its peculiar ideology and the role assigned to it in this apparatus of coercion, totalitarianism has discovered a means of dominating and terrorizing human beings from within (Arendt 1948/1979 p. 325).

Fragmentation, atomization, and the loss of the public realm

Totalitarianism – this domination from within – had become a defining feature of the twentieth century. Arendt, Fromm, and other scholars of the Frankfurt School found the social origins of the blind loyalty that characterized these systems in the atomization of modernity, in the loneliness and unanchored existence of the mass man (Arendt 1948/1979; Fromm 1941; Reich and Wolfe 1946). Fromm (1941) stressed the loss of community ties and modernity's unmooring of people from medieval and stable social structures:

> What characterizes medieval in contrast to modern society is its lack of individual freedom. Everybody in the earlier period was chained to his

> role in the social order.[…] Personal, economic, and social life was dominated by rules and obligations from which practically no sphere of activity was exempted.
>
> But although a person was not free in the modern sense, neither was he alone and isolated. In having a distinct, unchangeable, and unquestionable place in the social world from the moment of birth, man was rooted in a structuralized whole, and thus life had a meaning which left no place, and no need, for doubt (p. 41).

Habermas (1984) termed these earlier structures "archaic societies", describing them as societies where nature and culture existed on the same plane and where, therefore, a single, totalizing worldview was a reasonably useful reflection of this experience of nature and culture as one. The modern-day totalizing of worldviews, however, loses this benign quality as such total worldviews fly in the face of the actual, fragmented and rapidly changing social reality (Lifton 1993; Mannheim 1936/1985; Pescosolido and Rubin 2000).

In modernity, the rise of capital, the dominance of the market, and the "emergence of the individual in the modern sense" (Fromm 1941) meant that people became thrust centrifugally into the world. Their freedom from stabilizing structures resulted in increased independence, self-reliance and criticalness, along with increased isolation, aloneness and fear (Fromm 1941). In a different, though related, formulation of modernity, Habermas (1984) brings together a Marxist and Weberian view. He describes the decoupling of the "system" (made up of economic and administrative subsystems driven by money and power) from the "lifeworld", the growing colonizing of the lifeworld, and the resulting political impact:

> As the private sphere is undermined and eroded by the economic system, so is the public sphere by the administrative system. The bureaucratic disempowering and desiccation of spontaneous processes of opinion- and will-formation expands the scope for mobilizing mass loyalty and makes it easier to decouple political decisions from concrete, identity-forming contexts of life (p. xxxiv).

In this general movement towards modernity Arendt (1958/1998) sees the loss of the public realm. For her the individual is only *seen* in the public realm – is only revealed to be both unique and connected to others in the moment of acting and speaking to others.

Without action and speech in the public realm there is no *in-between*, which for her is the world, the web of relationships in which humans exist. This general atrophying of the public realm, according to Arendt, creates the condition for its more or less complete destruction under totalitarianism. Thus the single truths of totalitarian ideologies ("isms that pretend to have found the key explanation for all the mysteries of life and world"Arendt 1994 p. 349) eliminate conversation in the public realm, and serve to press men together "so that the very space of free action – and this is the reality of freedom - disappears" (Arendt 1948/1979 p. 342). Totalitarian terror thus establishes "a desert of neighborlessness and loneliness" (p 348).

Savelsberg (2000) proposes a more subtle, varied view based on research into contradictions within state socialism. In particular he reviews the intensity and centralization of policing in both the GDR and the Soviet Union intended to "merge government control with society" (p. 1030) and limit civil liberties. He notes that a side effect of this government control was to create "deep mistrust against outsiders" and "a withdrawal of people from public life into rather constrained, tight, and relatively small networks of intimate social relations" (p. 1030). It was in these friendship and kinship-based networks that people found the trust unavailable in the public realm. While this supports Arendt's idea of the elimination of the public realm in totalitarianism, Savelsberg sees a different outcome than the absolute "desert" that Arendt describes. Rather, he states, this repression of the public realm causes the creation of a *niche society*, "a social sphere completely beyond the state's reach" (p. 1031) which can become a repository of information and resistance ready for mobilization during periods of "diminished threat of force" (p. 1040) from the state.

It is likely that different forms and stages of totalism vary along this dimension; that is: how well does the system control intimate friendship or kinship-based networks? In certain systems, or at certain points in the trajectory of the totalist system this may differ. For instance, in Pol Pot's Cambodia, family relationships appear to have been quite tightly controlled during the period of the killing fields (Robinson 1984). Similarly in China during the Cultural Revolution, children and young people were commonly moved away from their families. At the height of the Nazi, Stalinist or other totalitarian

regimes trust in family and friendship networks may have reached low points as reflected, say, in fictional and non-fictional accounts such as Koestler's (1968a) *Darkness at Noon*, Muller's (1941) *The World That Summer,* or, more recently, Nafisi's (2003) *Reading Lolita in Teheran*. On the other hand, Stein's (2002) account of a small political organization shows how the loosening of such control, which then allowed friendship networks to develop, did indeed contribute to the resistance and eventual rebellion of many in the group. Thus it may be that for a totalist system to maintain control, it must be on the alert for such *niche societies* and attempt to keep its population from forming such intimate bonds which can weaken the system – a task that in the long run may prove extremely challenging. Resistance movements would do well, however, to encourage and build on these micro areas of trust, information-sharing and discussion.

Lifton (1993) suggests that in the "age of fragmentation" of late modernity, where wars, migration, natural disasters and economic upheavals cause massive movements and dislocation of people, two types of social-psychological response are seen: "proteanism [which] presses toward human commonality, as opposed to the fixed and absolute moral and psychological divisions favored by fundamentalism" (p. 11). This idea is reflected in the work of contemporary sociologists and political scientists who address the need for an invigorated public realm and endorse the critical role of conversation. Habermas's (1984; 1989) concept of communicative action oriented to reaching mutual understanding fits here, as does Rorty's (1989) discussion of:

> narratives which connect the present with the past, on the one hand, and with utopian futures, on the other […] and the envisaging of still further utopias, as an endless process – an endless, proliferating realization of Freedom, rather than a convergence toward an already existing Truth (p. xvi).

Embedded in this view of pluralistic conversation as a key to human freedom and an opposite to totalitarianism are the complex paradoxes expressed in discussions of relativism versus universalism, as, for example, in Rawls' (1999) core question as to whether, and how, a tolerant society should tolerate the intolerant.

Scholars of the Frankfurt school, critical theorists (Calhoun 1995), and later communitarians (Bellah 1985; Etzioni 1996; Putnam 2000), among others, share

fundamental concerns about the increasing fragmentation of society, the loss of the public realm, and the atomization of human beings. A further result of the rupture and atrophy of social bonds in modernity and late modernity may be the creation of conditions conducive to the rise of charismatic, authoritarian leaders. This link between the broader social structure and the rise of these leaders will be more fully explored below, and in Chapter Four.

The charismatic authoritarian leader

The totalist system is driven by its leader. It is the leader who creates the totalist system, whose position of power shapes it as a closed and hierarchical system, and who implements its ideology which both reflects and enables its particular social structure. The totalist leader is both charismatic and authoritarian. His or her leadership can be distinguished from charismatic, but *non-authoritarian* leaders by the structure of their organizations and social relationships, and by their use of totalizing ideologies and coercive persuasion. On the other hand, an authoritarian, but *non-charismatic* leader may fail to impose an "inner coercion" on their followers but may instead be forced to rely on simple coercion or force.

C*harisma*

Hannah Arendt stated, "It would be a serious error to interpret totalitarian leaders in terms of Max Weber's category of "charismatic leadership. […] Gerth describes Hitler as the charismatic leader of a bureaucratic party" (1948/1979, p. 361). Arendt describes the totalitarian form of organization as *non-bureaucratic*, rather than as an organization that routinizes charisma, as a Weberian analysis would have it. The totalist organization exists to maintain the undiluted control of the single, totalitarian leader where the will of this leader " – and not his orders, a phrase that might imply a fixed and circumscribed authority – becomes the 'supreme law'" (p. 365). As Baehr (2002) summarizes it:

> A totalitarian regime, Arendt declared, is the antithesis of a bureaucracy because it permits no room for positive law, stability, or predictability, but instead unleashes unceasing, turbulent movement" (p. 813).

Thus I suggest that during the lifetime of the charismatic authoritarian leader any bureaucratic-appearing arrangements are not based on stable sets of rules and laws, but must instead be highly flexible and able to respond to the whim of the leader. But this absence of bureaucratization may change during the trajectory of the totalist system; particularly after the death of the leader, the system may start to bureaucratize with a system of rules and so forth – unless another suitably charismatic and authoritarian leader is positioned for succession, in which case their whims will then become the steering mechanism of the system. Although the totalist organization does not routinize charisma[6] in a bureaucracy most scholars of totalism agree that totalist leaders can, indeed, be described in Weber's terms as charismatic (Lalich 1992; 2000; Lifton 1999; Singer and Lalich 1995; Zablocki 1980; 1999).

Weber saw charisma not as bestowed from on high by God or gods, but as bestowed upon certain people (who may have any of a variety of qualities that make them stand out from their peers) by the freely given[7] "recognition on the part of those subject to authority" (Weber 1968, p. 49). However, despite this endowment of charisma on leader by followers, Weber notes that:

> No prophet has ever regarded his quality as dependent on the attitudes of the masses toward him. No elective king or military leader has ever treated those who have resisted him or tried to ignore him otherwise than as delinquent in duty (p. 49).

In other words, the charismatic internalizes the charisma bestowed upon him/her and claims it as innate and due.

Smith (1998) is puzzled by why followers endow charisma on leaders and suggests that to answer this question we need to study the followers: "To grasp charismatic faith, we must study the faithful" (p. 53), because while it is easy to understand the leader (presumably because of the benefits that accrue to the position), it is more difficult to understand the followers. This is the missing piece that Eisenstadt (Weber, 1968) refers to when he states that Weber "takes for granted the nature of the

[6] I would even argue that at the point that routinization of charisma occurs, the organization transmutes to some other, non-totalist form.
[7] Of course the "freely" given part of this construct is what is in question. However, charisma as a relationship between leader and followers seems to fit the model of totalism.

appeal of the charismatic" (p. 53). It is this appeal that scholars of conversion, brainwashing, and coercive persuasion have tried to understand. There are two aspects to this appeal: first, the initial appeal that draws followers into the charismatic's sphere of influence (and this must be understood not just as a function of the charismatic, but also as the result of social conditions, situational factors and the particular ideological come-on employed) and, second, the issue of retention – why, in some cases, followers remain strongly bound to the charismatic leader. Importantly, charisma does not stand alone as a particular quality, but implies a relationship between leader and follower (Zablocki 1980). This relationship and its part in cementing the bond between leader and follower will be explored in the next chapter.

Charismatic totalist leaders wield total worldviews to form closed organizations as a way to remove both alternate attachments and alternate worldviews available to followers, resulting in the affective and cognitive isolation of followers (Arendt 1948/1979; Lifton 1961; Lofland 1977; Schein 1961; Zablocki 1999). This organizational, affective, and cognitive closure, then, may be what differentiates between, a charismatic *authoritarian* leader such as the Nation of Islam's Farrakhan and a charismatic *non-authoritarian* leader such as the African National Congress's Mandela. Charisma is, therefore, a useful, but not sufficient characterization of the totalist leader, and perhaps the fact that it is only a partial definition of the totalist leader is why Arendt hesitates to apply it.

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is the other element of the leader's makeup that must be explored. Adorno et al. (1944/1982) state that their definition of the authoritarian personality is not an absolute, and includes many variations. However, they describe the basic type as follows:

> A basically hierarchical, authoritarian, exploitative parent-child relationship is apt to carry over into a power-oriented, exploitatively dependent attitude toward one's sex partner and one's God and may well culminate in a political philosophy and social outlook which has no room for anything but a desperate clinging to what appears to be strong

> and a disdainful rejection of whatever is relegated to the bottom. Th[is…] likewise extends from the parent-child dichotomy to the dichotomous conception of sex roles and of moral values, as well as to a dichotomous handling of social relations as manifested especially in the formation of stereotypes and of ingroup-outgroup cleavages. Conventionality, rigidity, repressive denial, and the ensuing break-through of one's weakness, fear and dependency are but other aspects of the same fundamental personality pattern, and they can be observed in personal life as well as in attitudes toward religion and social issues (Adorno 1944/1982, p 971).

Adorno et. al's (1944/1982) study found that prejudiced people were the product of domineering fathers and punitive mothers and an upbringing involving threats, coercion and threats of withdrawal of love as means to induce obedience; the children of this type of environment tended to be insecure, dependent, fearful and hostile. As they mature these characteristics become authoritarian attitudes of submission and obedience towards authority, and hostility and antagonism to groups different than themselves, particularly to minority groups. These features parallel Schein's (1961) description of totalist leaders as anxious and insecure, requiring constant reassurance, lacking flexibility in thinking and perceiving, only able to see their own viewpoint, and lacking in empathy (p. 95). The analysis of the authoritarian personality, while critiqued as being overly Freudian and dispositional in nature (i.e. Zimbardo 2004), does, however, fit well with Bowlby's (1973; 1980; 1982; 1988) descriptions of insecure attachment, and is further explained and delineated within attachment theory. This will be discussed in Chapter Four. Bowlby's attachment analysis supports the empirical findings of Adorno and Schein at the same time avoiding the libidinal, or fantasy-based Freudian analysis predominant in many discussions of authoritarianism (i.e. Deikman 1990; Erikson 1994; Lifton 1961; 1983).

The Totalist Structure

First and foremost, the totalist system has a charismatic authoritarian leader at its center; its structure overlaps, but does not coincide with, Coser's (1974) "greedy institution" nor Goffman's (1962) "total institution" – neither of which require this "leader principle" (Arendt 1948/1979). Control is centralized and concentrated in the hands of, and at the whim of the leader. As Arendt puts it: "the will of the Fuehrer is the Party's law" (p. 374). She describes the structure thusly:

> In the center of the movement, as the motor that swings it into motion, sits the Leader. He is separated from the elite formation by an inner circle of the initiated who spread around him an aura of impenetrable mystery which corresponds to his "intangible preponderance". His position within this intimate circle depends upon his ability to spin intrigues among its members and upon his skill in constantly changing its personnel (p. 373).

Regardless of size, the totalist system will seek to limit and control followers' relationships with those outside the system (unless those relationships have some instrumental benefit to the leader). Former followers will be shunned (again, unless there is instrumental gain). Close attachment relationships, whether within or external to the system, will be rigidly controlled and limited (for the example of Jonestown, see: Coser and Coser 1979). A characteristic of such systems is that followers are highly atomized and isolated *within* the system (Arendt 1948/1979; Schein 1961). There may be an appearance of close, "comradely" relationships, but these will be instrumental and repressive; followers will be "pressed together" so tightly that no difference exists between them, causing, perhaps paradoxically, intense isolation. This control of attachment relationships is part and parcel of the process of creating an affective identification with the leader, or the group as proxy (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Lofland 1977).

In the case of totalist organizations (as opposed to smaller totalist systems), Arendt (1948/1979) proposed a structure of concentric onion-like layers with the leader in the center providing the driving movement. Each layer serves a double function: "as the façade of the totalitarian movement to the nontotalitarian world, and as the façade of this world to the inner hierarchy of the movement" (p. 367). There may be several layers

– from the leader, to the elite inner circle, to other varying levels of membership, down to mere fellow-travelers or sympathizers – each with this two-fold character. The inner circle will be difficult to penetrate, though the broader and more open and porous outer circles may be designed specifically for recruitment or other supportive or strategic functions (Arendt 1948/1979; Berger and Luckmann 1966). Lofland (1977), for instance, describes the various and many front groups (possibly numbering in the hundreds) of the Unification Church, including academic and professional groups, schools, businesses, fund-raising operations, and a variety of cultural, political and educational groups that perform functions from recruitment, to fundraising, to political power-brokering. The Church of Scientology organization, for example, is noted both for its secretive inner organization, the Sea Org, and for its many front organizations such as the Sterling Management corporate training arm, or the Narcanon drug rehabilitation program (Atack 1990; Singer and Lalich 1995) which perform recruitment and money-making functions.

Arendt (1948/1979) explains how the secondary levels of leadership in totalitarianism (the lieutenants) are constantly being promoted, demoted and purged to prevent any possible opposition developing to dilute the absolute and single point of power of the leader – this is readily seen in Stalin's purges and in Mao's regime, particularly during the Cultural Revolution (Chang 1991). Thus we see a fluctuating hierarchy rather than the more stable, rule-bound hierarchies typical of bureaucratic institutions. Similarly, coalitions with other organizations will be infrequent (Lofland, 1977) and when they do exist are likely to be tempestuous and short-lived (King 1989; Tourish and Wohlforth 2000) given the need for the leader to exert complete control.

Totalist Systems as distinct from Total Institutions

Five key differences exist to differentiate a totalist system from Goffman's (1962) total institution. As discussed above, the first key difference from Goffman's total institution is that the charismatic leader is the defining element within a totalist organization, rather than an organizational structure and bureaucracy (say, of an asylum) that can continue essentially unchanged through generations regardless of leadership changes at the top. Secondly, Goffman's definition requires a shared residential life, and highly structured

daily interactions. Totalist systems, while they may be residential communities or formal organizations, do not *require* these attributes as part of their definition. They do, however share with Goffman's total institutions the fact that they are "forcing houses for changing persons; each is a natural experiment on what can be done to the self" (Goffman 1962 p. 12).

Third is the use of coercive persuasion – while persuasion may end up being backed up with force in a totalist system (for instance, at Jonestown, where people were not allowed to leave the camp in Guyana), it does not *have* to be. Typically, followers are not trapped by locked doors (Lifton 1999; Schein 1961; Singer and Lalich 1995). Fourth, Goffman discusses the "basic split" between inmates and staff within total institutions. Although there are important levels of hierarchy in totalist systems (the layers of the onion that Arendt describes), such a basic split does not exist, and lieutenants constantly risk being "busted" to the ranks of the lowly followers emphasizing the essential identity of status between lieutenants and "foot soldiers". The basic split that *does* exist, however, is that between the leader and everyone else.

Finally, within certain total institutions there may be an assumption that, at some point, one may be able to return to one's prior reality (Berger and Luckmann 1966). In fact, Goffman (1962) puts this quite clearly: "The full meaning for the inmate of being 'in' or 'on the inside' does not exist apart from the special meaning to him of 'getting out' or getting on the outside.' In this sense, total institutions do not really look for cultural victory" (p. 13). Totalist systems, on the contrary, seek an absolute "cultural victory" and the internalization of a terror of the outside. The goal of totalism is to reject entirely and forever the prior reality and the outside world.

The totalizing ideology

The totalist ideology acts in service of this rejection of the outside world and the creation of a fictitious world within the totalist system. It serves a dual function, therefore, as defense from the outside, and as a justifying mirror and prop of the internal totalist structure.

Mannheim (1936/1985) is helpful in clarifying two types of ideology: the particular and the total. The particular form of ideology has three aspects: a) that the ideology forms only part of an opponent's assertions, rather than their total worldview, b) that they share criteria of validity with opponents, and c) that the ideology is based on a psychology of interest of the parties espousing the given ideology. On the other hand, a total ideology is a) a total worldview, b) represents a fundamentally divergent thought system that makes use of c) a different language, and meanings of language, d) that the totality is more than a set of individuals' views, and e) that the total ideology is an ideal type of thought, "the whole outlook of a social group" (p. 59). This is similar to Arendt's (1994) definition: "*isms* that pretend to have found the key explanation for all the mysteries of life and world" (p. 349).

Totalist systems, especially when they are not of a national form, but are located within a non-totalist national political system, can be confusing to observers who may assume that their ideology fits Mannheim's "particular" form. In these cases outsiders may look at a group, its dogma, and the pronouncements of its members, and attempt to understand it based on an assumption of shared criteria of validity with a shared language and meanings of language, and the assumption that the individual member's promulgation of such ideology is motivated by their individual interest. In point of fact – and as the name suggests – a totalist system represents a completely divergent thought system that cannot be understood with an outsider's vocabulary and understanding, and should not be mistaken to share criteria of validity with those outside of the system. As Lofland (1977) found in relation to the Unification Church (called Divine Precepts in his study):

> DP's wanted the entire world to know and accept their ideology, but only certain parts were felt to be appropriate for disclosure to outsiders. Other parts should be held in secret until prospects were sufficiently instructed to understand them properly. The secret portions were controversial and, moreover, they made no sense apart from an acceptance and understanding of the less esoteric sections of the system (p. 14).

For an example of this confusion in the field of new religions, see Barker's (1984) attempted deconstruction of the Unification Church's dogma. Barker gets sidetracked by

her in-depth, but ultimately unenlightening, analysis of the UC dogma, and avoids completely the issue of conversion, membership and a close look at the internal life of the group. In contrast, Lofland (1977) summarizes the total ideology in a few brief pages before moving on to the more salient issues of conversion, relationships within the group, proselytization, and faith maintenance. This confusion in distinguishing Mannheim's two forms of ideology can cause difficulties in interpretation which may lead the observer to seek "rational" and "self-interested" explanations of group members' behavior, and thus miss the signs of totalist control by the group leader. The individual interest of the member of a totalist system should not be assumed to be represented by their repeating of the dogma.

The system of totalism is a social structure headed by a single point of power, with a marked isolation and atomization of those within the system. In Durkheimian terms, this isolating and hierarchical social structure is reflected in, and at the same time reproduced by, a totalizing ideology. As there is a single, absolute point of power, so there is a unitary, absolutist ideology. In this sense the structure of the ideology is more important than its particular contents[8]. The key element of a totalizing ideology is its focus on a single truth. This single truth, the sacred word, is the word of the leader, or possibly, that of a deity to whom the leader is the only one to have a direct line (i.e. the Rev. Moon, Lofland 1977). All knowledge comes from the leader. While the leader may change their mind as new "insights" appear, followers may never do so, although they must ever be on the alert to jump to the leader's sudden ideological shifts and reversals (Arendt 1948/1979), as when Orwell's (1946) pigs jettison the earlier revolutionary glorification of the four-legged and are obliged to rise up on their hind legs to chant the latest slogan, "*Two legs good, four legs bad*." This example also highlights a potential vulnerability of totalism; that is: the frequently extreme contradiction between its liberatory ideological pronouncements and the oppressive structural reality (Savelsberg 2000).

[8] For an interesting study on this see Martin's (2002) *Power, Authority, and the Constraint of Belief Systems.*

Durkheim (2001) states that religion (*qua* ideology) "is above all a system of notions by which individuals imagine the society to which they belong and their obscure yet intimate relations with that society" (p. 170). The relationships the leader sets up with followers, and the rigid boundaries between those included or excluded by the group, are reflected by this ideology. For instance, the dichotomous We/They thinking that Lifton (1961) describes provides the ideological basis to label non-members as profane, and members as, while not sacred, at least having access to the sacred, and the ever-elusive promise of being saved if sufficiently compliant to the dictates of the leader.

The internal disposition of the leader (as discussed more fully below) drives him or her to seek a guaranteed attachment from followers. Thus the social structure they create is designed to secure this iron-clad attachment. This structural focus on the leader is then mirrored in the ideology which raises the leader both to god-like omnipotence and to the symbolic position of parent to the group. Interestingly, in many totalist systems the leader has, among their titles that of "Father" (Kim il Jong), "Dad" (Jim Jones) or "True Parent" (Rev. Moon), reflecting symbolically this primary attachment relationship of followers to leader. Another example of this relationship reflected ideologically is a popular song in Mao's China which exhorted: "Father is close, Mother is close, but neither is as close as Chairman Mao" (Chang, 1991, p. 263).

The social psychologists' contribution

After World War II, in addition to the Frankfurt School, the field of social psychology also tackled the social and group dynamics that led to the massive social control exerted by Hitler. This effort was spearheaded by Kurt Lewin, a refugee from the Nazi regime. Lewin studied prejudice and group behavior, and developed field theory and the idea of the spread of tension within social systems (Lewin 1975; Lewin and Gold 1999). He founded the influential Center for Group Dynamics[9].

[9] In an ironic twist, or a classic case of unintended consequences, Lewin's work provided the basis for encounter and "T" groups which later influenced new age "human potential" totalist groups such as EST, Lifespring and MSIA.

Festinger, who had worked with Lewin at the Center for Group Dynamics, built on Lewin's work and developed the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1962) based on the idea that "Dissonant cognitions produce an aversive state which the individual will try to reduce by changing one or both of the cognitions" (Jones, p. 23). This theory was applied to social influence, decision processes, attitude change, and, famously, to explain the bizarre and counter-intuitive phenomena of increased commitment in the face of failed prophecy (Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter 1956). But while Festinger showed demonstrable effects on cognition by the manipulation of variables such as social support, size of reward, or desirability of the goal, he did not investigate the relationship between cognition and emotions, other than to describe this state of tension.

Asch (1952) tried to delve into this state of tension more deeply. He critiqued behaviorism (which posited that each individual learned anew a set of behaviors through a process of conditioning by trial and error, reward and punishment) as an individualist reduction of Darwinism which could not account for group effects, altruism and so on (prefiguring current critiques of rational choice theory, i.e. Ferree 1992). He also critiqued Freud's emphasis on individual pathology and indirect expressions of libido, unconscious impulses, and fantasies, preferring to look at the "daylight" motives, decisions and planning of people who have a direct interest in life. Asch, like Bowlby, proposed a combination of effects on the adult: effects from early childhood influences, which are then modified by the "structural conditions in the immediate social field" (Asch 1952 p. 22) of ongoing life experience. On the other hand he critiqued Durkheim's view "with its seemingly ruthless elimination of the human factor – its treatment of the individual as a mere intersection of social forces" (p. 250).

Asch, rather, saw that the essential problem of social psychology was "how individuals create the reality of groups and how the latter control their further actions" (p. 256). His interest was in understanding both the "distinctness and inseparability of group and individual" (p. 257) and how "group conditions penetrate to the very center of individuals and transform their character" (p. 257). His motivation for his work was to develop understanding of the principles of social life in order that people might be less

subject to being controlled by them: “to the extent that we understand [social forces] we are bringing history back into the fold of psychology” (p. 268).

His classic experimental studies on conformity (following the "autokinetic effect" experiments of Sherif and Sherif 1948/1956) regarding the effect of group influences on individuals’ perceptual judgments were key in revealing the power of group processes. In his famous lines experiments, individuals denied their own sense perceptions in the face of a unanimous, but incorrect group opinion (reflecting Festinger’s cognitive dissonance). But when just one other member of the group stood against the majority, the original majority effect weakened to almost no effect whatsoever. This finding, said Asch, “points to a fundamental difference between the condition of being alone and having some source of human support” (Asch 1952 p. 479), a finding that is central to this study.

Asch also discussed propaganda at some length, delineating the importance of distinguishing truth from lies. In parallel with formulations from other disciplines – that of action and speech (Arendt 1958/1998); of communicative action (Habermas 1984; 1989); and of the coherent narrative (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996; Main 1991), he thought it critical to differentiate when “we are dealing with a person who is fleeing from fact and truth and when we are dealing with the opposite attitude, that of trying to reach a true understanding” (Asch 1952 p. 20). This view stands in contrast to the nihilism of what Antonio (2000) calls “strong program post-modernism”.

Milgram’s (1974) classic obedience experiments, influenced by Asch’s work, graphically highlighted obedience to symbols of authority, and a remarkably generalized response to situational factors. These experiments emphasized the situational vulnerabilities of subjects and became a lasting challenge to the dispositional analysis of obedience and conformity. Milgram’s work illustrated the power of legitimate authority and informational and normative factors in obedience behavior (Zimbardo and Leippe 1991). His work challenged fundamentally the commonly held view that “that would never happen to me.”

More recent work in social psychology has focused on the multiple variables that affect persuasion (Petty and Wegner 1998), resulting in a complex formulation of interactions of persuasion variables and their effects. Of interest to the topic of

conversion to a totalist ideology is the analysis of the varying effects on central[10] versus peripheral[11] routes of information processing. Petty and Wegner discuss specific variables that encourage peripheral effort processing: message repetition, conditions that reduce information scrutiny and increase influence of the source's perceived expertise (such as interruptions, rapid presentation), and fear. These methods tie in with various propaganda and indoctrination strategies used by totalist systems. The importance of differentiating central versus peripheral routes of processing will be discussed later in the next chapter.

A large body of work by social psychologists studying social influence focused on issues of social norms, conformity and compliance. Cialdini and Trost (1998) confirm the importance of Asch's majority effect: "the majority elicits convergence on the group norm, whereas a dissenting minority elicits innovative responses" (p. 165). This clarifies why the totalist system cannot tolerate *any* form of dissent – even allowing a weak minority opinion to exist threatens the stability of the totalist structure. Work on ingroup/outgroup identification has shown that cross-group cooperative contact is the key to improving intergroup relations and reducing prejudice and discrimination (Brewer and Brown 1998), supporting Sherif's (1961) early work in this area. This work again shows the necessity for totalist groups to maintain rigid group boundaries to prevent cooperative cross-group contact from weakening the totalist structure.

Zimbardo (1999) followed in the experimental tradition of social-psychology and his Stanford Prison Experiment remains a classic study of dispositional versus situational forces where, as he puts it "The Evil situation triumphed over the Good people" (Zimbardo 2004, p. 14) to such a degree that the experiment was terminated early. Zimbardo's work showed the power of the situation in determining authoritarian behavior, and he has continued this work more recently in looking at torturers and suicide bombers. He gives a useful framework of the situational conditions necessary to transform people into these violent perpetrators, and he provides evidence that denies the

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[10] Central route processing involves focusing on the content of the communication and evaluating the arguments.

[11] Peripheral route processing involves being persuaded by cues and heuristics logically unrelated to the issues.

stereotypes of sadists or the socially desperate. He does not, however, look at *why* these situational conditions get set in place and *how* these structures or situations are held together. Later I will argue that, in the case of totalism, the specific qualities of the leader, the properties of the system (in particular the closure of the structure) and the relationship of both to the follower, work together to create a context in which these conditions operate.

Scholars of brainwashing in China and North Korea

Schein (1961; 1985), Lifton (1961; 1968; 1983; 1986; 1993; 1999) and Singer (1995) all worked for the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research in the 1950s, and in this capacity conducted research on people who had been through the re-education and prisoner of war camps of Communist China (where the term "brainwashing" originated) and Korea. These scholars emphasized that "the attempts to indoctrinate United Nations prisoners of war in Korea […] was but one segment of this total program of ideological re-education" (Schein 1961 p. 16). Further:

> One of the unique features of Chinese Communist rule is group indoctrination on a very large scale. Contrary to some opinion, the techniques labeled "brainwashing" by Westerners are not restricted in their use to inmates of Communist jails or labor camps […] similar techniques, which show great psychological insight into means of manipulating and controlling men's minds are used in small study groups to which millions of ordinary citizens belong. […] virtually no one in the society could escape exposure… (p. 48).

Schein developed the concept of coercive persuasion. He noted the establishment of mutual surveillance in the population, including encouraging children to spy on their parents (which was seen to tragic effect in other totalitarian states such as Nazi Germany and Pol Pot's Cambodia). These methods, along with "the liberal use of secret police terror, forced labor, and political imprisonment" (p. 45) were to achieve the aims of a) creation of obedient citizens and cadres (reminiscent of the concept of deployable agents), b) re-tooling of the existing entrenched bureaucracy into an arm of the Communist state (reinforcing Arendt's idea that the organization of the totalitarian state is not, in fact, a bureaucracy, but another form entirely), and c) creation of ideological

unanimity. As Arendt discussed the collapse of public and private life, so Schein stated that:

> All aspects of life become related to the political, hence all areas of life become the target of political scrutiny, and the demands for unanimity, though they may originate in a purely political sphere, often spill over into the most minute details of daily living (p. 71).

Later he continued:

> The main result of totalitarian control is that the sphere of private activity becomes restricted or eliminated, that the belief systems become ritualized and come to serve solely an adjustment function, and that such ritualization may leave the individual without the cognitive tools to lead a creative private life; i.e. in the end both his public and private spheres may become dominated by ritual. The concept of beliefs playing only a social adjustment function explains two important facts about citizens in totalitarian states: their cognitive "emptiness" and inability or unwillingness to examine their own cognitions or fantasies; and their ability to change their belief systems frequently as the regime's official dicta change the ideology (p. 267).

Schein noted, in a parallel to Asch's experimental work, and Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance, that: "It is an interesting fact that such social isolation can be produced merely by coercing public utterances. It does not matter how disaffected the citizen is privately. As long as he does not speak his mind to others, his disaffection is, in effect, irrelevant" (p. 77).

Schein's model of coercive persuasion was derived from Lewin's analysis of change processes in groups and consists of three phases: unfreezing – breaking down the person's existing equilibrium and self-concept; changing – a change agent provides information, arguments and models to be imitated or identified with to provide change and in beliefs and behavior, and refreezing – the provision of reward and social support for the new changes in order to reintegrate the new equilibrium[12].

Lifton's (1961) study of a similar population resulted in his well-known eight themes of ideological totalism: milieu control; mystical manipulation; demand for purity;

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[12] In another ironic development, Schein later used this change model in academic and consulting work to promote organizational change in companies, and to develop what he terms "transformational visionary leadership", a trend enthusiastically taken up by corporations and recently critiqued as an example of how cult-like processes are entering the corporate realm (Tourish and Pinnington 2002).

cult of confession; sacred science; loading the language; doctrine over person; and dispensing of existence. Of these themes, Lifton says:

> Each has a totalistic quality; each depends upon an equally absolute philosophical assumption; and each mobilizes certain individual emotional tendencies, mostly of a polarizing nature. Psychological theme, philosophical rationale, and polarized individual tendencies are interdependent; they require, rather than directly cause, each other. In combination they create an atmosphere which may temporarily energize or exhilarate, but which at the same time poses the gravest of human threats (p. 420).

Lifton came from a psychoanalytic perspective, influenced particularly by Erikson (1994) and his ideas of self and identity, and this can be seen in Lifton's ongoing emphasis on the symbolic death and rebirth of self in relation to totalist conversion processes (Lifton 1968; 1983; 1986; 1993; 1999). However, there are many parallels in his work to Schein's model, though Schein comes from a social-psychological and organizational perspective rather than a psychoanalytic one.

Finally, Singer (1995), primarily a clinical psychologist, led the move to apply the understanding of Chinese and North Korean brainwashing to the epidemic of new age and political cults that sprang up in the U.S. in the 1970s. She summarized this work in her volume, *Cults in our Midst*, and her clinical and educational work provided a key bridge to the next generation of scholars of totalism discussed in the "New Cohort" section below.

Sociologists of religion

Lofland, a sociologist largely concerned with social movements and the sociology of religion, did an excellent early ethnographic study of the Unification Church (Lofland 1977). In this he developed his model of conversion which included seven factors: 1) enduring, acutely felt tensions; 2) within a religious, problem-solving perspective; 3) which lead to defining oneself as a religious seeker; 4) being at a life turning point; 5) forming an affective bond to adherents; 6) extra-cult attachments are low or neutralized and 7) exposure to intensive interaction required to consolidate deployable agents.

Lofland distinguishes between the outsider's versus insider's view of the group and details the care with which these boundaries are maintained, largely, he asserts, through covert and deceptive means, reflecting Arendt's statement of the "fictitious" life that is created within totalist groups. He does not get distracted by the details of the UC ideology, but is, rather, interested in the issue of conversion, and how affective relationships play into this. Similar to later work by social movement scholar, McAdam (1986), he sees that pre-existing network ties were an important aspect of recruitment – though this finding is complicated by other findings that people who are less well-networked and more isolated are more likely to be recruited[13] (Baumeister, Dale, and Muraven 2000; Baumeister and Leary 1995; Singer and Lalich 1995). Once a person is in the group, Lofland emphasizes the establishment of new affective bonds, and the cutting off of pre-existing relationships where those relationships do not support the group. This means that at the point of conversion (distinct from recruitment) only attachments supportive of the group remain, so that, "in a manner of speaking, final conversion was coming to accept the opinions of one's friends" (Lofland 1977 p. 52), giving credence to Festinger (1956) and Asch's (1952) work on the importance of social support in relation to beliefs.

Lofland, however, is not typical of the majority of sociologists of religion working in this field. His emphasis on careful empirical work is shared by some, such as Balch with his work on Heaven's Gate (1998), and Rocheford in his study of ISKCON (1985; 1997). However, as Lalich states, "Cults try to prevent you from coming backstage after the show" (2001b p. 125). She cites Balch and Langdon's critique of the empirical work of some of their colleagues who fail to go "backstage" and she quotes their useful suggestions for the study of "alternative religions":

> First, scholars who study alternative religions need to be familiar with the charges against them before they begin collecting data. Second, they should not take members' claims at face value, however reasonable they seem. Third, they need to interview defectors and other critics to get different viewpoints, although here too they must be aware of hidden agendas. Finally, whatever the source of information, statements presented

[13] The current study yet further complicates these findings. See Parts Two and Three for a discussion of pre-existing social networks, and the role of alternate attachments in retention.

> as fact need to be corroborated and verified with independent evidence (Balch and Langdon, cited in Lalich, 2001 p. 145).

A sizeable group of sociologists of religion (among whom are those critiqued by Lalich and Balch and Langdon above) share three related views and see themselves in opposition to what they term the Anti-Cult Movement, in which they place those scholars, former members, or family members who disagree with these views. These views can be briefly summarized as a) there is no such thing as coercive persuasion in the context of these groups, there is only a conversion process which is entered into by the free will of the member; b) the category of "cult" is a politically-motivated construction designed to abrogate the rights of deviant new religions; and c) critical narratives by former members of such groups are dubbed "atrocity tales" written by apostates, and should not be considered valid, but rather as self-serving or politically motivated. (This view of first person narrative accounts is in startling opposition to the importance and value of personal accounts put forward by feminist sociologists such as Laslett (1999) and De Vault (1999)).

A notable exception to this group is Zablocki (1980; 1997; 1998; 1999; 2001a), a sociologist of religion and of social psychology who has played an important role in building on Lifton and Schein's work, and in building bridges to the new cohort discussed below. He came to the study of what he prefers to call "brainwashing" through his extensive, longitudinal study of communes in the U.S. (1980). His aim has been to move beyond the somewhat vitriolic debates that have hampered the discussion of cults and brainwashing in the academy, towards a "scientific definition of brainwashing and an examination of the evidence for the existence of brainwashing in cults" (2001a p. 159). Most recently he has proposed a set of definitions and testable hypotheses in the effort to clarify and move forward these discussions. He states that this is a conceptual model of the earlier work of Lifton, Schein and Sargent applied to "charismatic collectivities" (p. 181). His model can be summarized as looking at charismatic influence within a totalist social structure which then implements a resocialization process (brainwashing). This process enmeshes (some) people relationally, at the same time as they may become hyper

credulous. The relational enmeshment and hyper credulity result in increased exit costs, and finally, may lead to uncritical obedience, or deployability (1999; 2001a).

Zablocki is also one of the few scholars (see also: Herman 1992; Hopf 1993; 1998; Smith 1992; Smith and Stevens 1999; Stein 2001) who have begun looking at attachment theory and trauma theory as a way to understand what he calls the two parallel tracks on which brainwashing relies: the cognitive and the emotional. I will argue later that these two tracks in fact are best understood as two (deliberately split apart) facets of a single process, that of dissociation in disorganized attachment.

The new cohort of scholars of totalism

A new cohort of social scientists is currently producing a body of work building on the earlier empirical and theoretical works of Lifton, Schein and Singer. What differentiates this new cohort is their personal experience within the US and European totalist systems that arose in the 1970s – either religious or political in ideology.

Hassan (1988) described his inside experience of the Unification Church and then generalized this using Lifton (1961), Singer (1995) and Schein's (1961) analyses. Lalich (1992) came out of ten years in a left-wing political group and wrote *The Cadre Ideal,* an analytical account of this US-based "feminist" group. Other personal accounts followed, some descriptive (Layton 1998; Stein 2002; Williams 1998), while other authors wrote case studies as they gained advanced degrees and expertise (Lalich 2001a; 2004; Siskind 1999; 2003; Tourish 1998). Of particular note here is Lalich's (2004) comparative study of the New Age/UFO Heaven's Gate and the left-wing Democratic Worker's Party, highlighting as it did the four common structural aspects of these two – ideologically-speaking – radically different groups. Her theory of "bounded choice" sees the individual as enmeshed in the center of a structure consisting of charismatic authority, a transcendent belief system, a system of control, and a system of influence. This study served to bridge the artificially separated categories of religious and political totalist systems, a divide created by disciplinary divisions within sociology and by the view described above that saw only a simple conversion process at the heart of these systems (Barker 1986; Bromley 1998a; 1998b). Tourish's (1998; Tourish and Irving 1996;

Tourish and Pinnington 2002; Tourish and Wohlforth 2000) work also challenged these boundaries using Lifton's model to examine psychotherapy and political cults, and corporate transformational leadership trends, within a totalist framework.

Some of the work of this new cohort focused on the particular issue of children in these groups, noting similar dynamics and relationships to reproduction, children and families that seemed to occur across groups. Very few studies have been done in this area. The extreme nature of the control of children, and of parents' relationships with their children, came out in the narratives of former members (Atack 1990; Layton 1998; Singer and Lalich 1995; Stein 1997; 2002; Williams 1998) and from children raised in totalist groups (Collins 1999; Jones, Jones, and Buhring 2007; Siskind 1999; Tate 1997). Reproduction decisions, family structures and relationships were seen to be consistently and somewhat predictably interrupted by the leader's orders, to the point of removing children from parents, child abuse, and sexual exploitation of children (Layton 1998; Singer and Lalich 1995; Siskind 1999; Stein 1997; 2002; Williams 1998). Meanwhile, some sociologists of religion saw only the "front stage" (Goffman 1959) of life in these groups and described instead rather benign relationships of collective child-rearing and discipline and framed this as simply being part of a "deviant" and quirky lifestyle (Palmer and Hardman 1999). Despite this "tolerance" of difference, cases – sometimes fatal – of child abuse and negligence in totalist groups continue to surface on a regular basis with more and more attention being paid to the contribution of processes of influence or coercive persuasion in these incidents[14].

Social Movements Theory

Contemporary social movements theory developed during the same period as the study of New Religious Movements (NRMs). Social movements theory grew beyond the earlier "irrational crowd" theories of LeBon and Blumer as a result of the resurgence of social movements in the 1960s and the entry into academia of social movements activists from

[14] For current examples in the press, see the case of Karen Robidoux (Wedge 2004), the high rate of suicide among those raised in the Children of God/The Family, or on a large and political scale, that of the children press-ganged into the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (Plaut 2004) or Zimbabwe's National Youth Service Training Programme (Andersson 2004).

that era (Stryker, Owens, and White 2000). Two main threads developed – rational choice theory and related perspectives emerging largely in the US, and theories of identity, meaning and culture rooted in European scholarship.

Rational choice and its critics

The rational choice theory approach was somewhat of a reaction to earlier theories of irrational collective behavior and strain and in this reaction social-psychological views of social movement activism were discarded in favor of the rational actor model (Klandermans 1997). Resource mobilization theory focused on the rational appraisal of costs and benefits of activism and the availability of resources (Klandermans 1997; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996). A related perspective was political process theory focusing on political structures, processes, and political opportunities (Klandermans 1997; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald 1996; Stryker, Owens, and White 2000).

Ferree (1992) critiqued the rational choice-based model from a feminist viewpoint, challenging its competitive, individualist view of the actor (based, she states, on the experience of white middle class men). Ferree cited the mother-child bond and the networks of interdependence frequently found in and among poor and working class households as examples of cooperative and meaningful social ties based in a "collective identity that fosters a sense of commitment to the social good of the group" (p. 40). She agrees with Knoke that: "neither affective-bonding nor normative-conformity motivations can be reduced to utilitarian cost benefits, except by a tortuous logic that renders the latter concept universal, and, therefore, useless for empirical work" (Knoke 1988 p. 315). Rational choice theorists have typically devalued the role of emotion and obscured "the ways in which community relations and rootedness are, for many people, inseparable from their self-interest" (Calhoun 1988, cited in Ferree 1992, p. 42).

Aminzade and McAdam (2000) echo some of this view in discussing what they call a "silence" in the social movement literature and discuss the "emotional processes/dynamics that shape the ebb and flow of protest activity" (p. 14). Aminzade and McAdam seek to address the role of emotions in the relationship of individual to

group, in motivating the actions of other parties, in micro-macro linkages and in the generation of "collective experiences and expressions of emotion."

This inclusion of emotions challenges notions of pure rational choice and these authors propose a combined analysis where both reason and emotion are looked at, noting that, for example: "An analysis that ignores the emotional dimensions of attachments and commitments is incapable of explaining activists' determination in the face of high risk […] including torture and death" (p 21). They detail several factors explaining the absence of emotions as part of the sociological study of contentious politics, including: the limited impact of feminist scholarship and the associated research methods that focus on the personal and emotional lives of actors; the naming of emotions as irrational; and the "state-centric understanding of politics."

New Social Movements Theory

Theories of identity, meaning and culture developed in Europe under the umbrella of New Social Movement (NSM) theory (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994). These scholars argued that people were in search of new collective identities transcending class structures, and thus the social construction of meaning and identity formation became central to their study. Grievances in NSM theory tend to "focus on cultural and symbolic issues" (p. 7) and are socially constructed rather than being based on economic, class-based motivations. Identity is seen as both individual and collective and in this sense may have facilitated the more recent reintroduction of social psychology into the study of social movements by scholars such as Klandermans (1997; 1987).

NSM theory, however, runs into the same issue as discussed above in relation to NRM theory: that is, a bundling together of different types of movements and organizations with very different attributes. As Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield (1994), state: "The bundle of new social movements mentioned earlier were difficult to conceptualize with either the imagery of the ideological movements of the past or the rationally organized interest group" (p. 6). Yet they then collapse into a set the peace, student, anti-nuclear, animal rights, minority nationalism, gay rights, women's rights, alternative medicine, fundamentalist religious, New Age and ecology movements. But in

their attempt to define these NSMs they include several factors that specifically *preclude* totalist forms, of which, however, many are present in their initial set (i.e. eco-terrorist groups, many of the fundamentalist NRMs, New Age and alternative medicine groups). These problematic definitional factors, which exclude totalist systems from their set, include the following:

- NSMs exhibit “a pluralism of ideas and values [and…] pragmatic orientations […] that enlarge the systems of members’ participation in decision making [and…] imply a ‘democratization dynamic’ of everyday life” (p. 7).
- NSMs tend to be decentralized, segmented, diffuse.
- Individuals’ social life will include others outside the movement group.

On the other hand, Johnston, et al. do see that the degree to which identities are changed in NSMs can be used “as a means to classify movements – from totalizing cults of personal transformation […] to check-book quasi-movements like Greenpeace” (p. 12).

The definitional and boundary confusion often seen in this literature is demonstrated by phrases such as: “*with the exception of totalizing groups such as cults and radical cells*, the collective aspect of identity formation tends to be at best a part-time endeavor” (p. 19, my emphasis). Thus there is a fairly consistent bracketing of totalist systems, at the same time as an acknowledgment that such systems do exist within the set under discussion. This is a serious weakness in this literature.

As in the NRM literature, we also see the conflating of religious and political groups into the set of NSMs. For instance, in Snow and McAdam’s (2000) discussion of identity work processes in social movements many of the empirical examples are drawn from NRMs such as Soka Gakkai International (a buddhist group), Heaven’s Gate, or the Jesus People. I argue that the reason these categories get conflated is precisely because it is the totalist groups which overlap the two categories and there is a struggle to understand how to fit them in to the analyses of each field. Yet at the same time there is a reluctance to grapple with the fact that these groups do not fit the dominant theoretical models in each of these fields of study. Aminzade and Perry (2000) address this problem directly and lay the blame for this narrow analysis on the over-specialization and

fragmentation of academic subfields in addition to the "overly rationalist and instrumentalist assumptions of much social movement theory" (p. 158). They detail the common features of social and religious movements including the sacralization of texts and objects, the common importance of charisma in both types of movements, and the "identity transforming experiences" or conversions of followers, all of which features also apply to totalist groups.

Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed a broad literature related to the study of totalism and coercive persuasion. I have briefly discussed the work of the Frankfurt School to raise issues of causality at the macro, societal level, discussing the loss of community structures and ties and the resulting effects on private and public realms. The literature on charisma and authority provided a useful way to begin to describe the characteristics of totalist leaders, while a look at Goffman's definition of "total" institutions helped both define and differentiate the structure of totalist systems at the meso level of analysis. Mannheim's view of total ideology and Durkheim's understanding of ideology as reflective of social structure work together to explain the function of ideology with the totalist system. A review of the social-psychological literature showed the development of scholarly work on group influence, obedience and persuasion at the meso and micro levels of analysis. I reviewed the work of early scholars of brainwashing and coercive persuasion who linked the experiences of individuals in captivity with broader social influence processes in totalitarian states, and raised, again the issue of the collapse of the private and public realms into one another. I then discussed scholarship within the sociology of religion, briefly addressing the current debate about cults. The work of a set of contemporary scholars of totalism, whose perspective is marked by personal experience within totalist groups, was addressed highlighting its efforts to bridge artificial divides between types of totalist systems, and also, its newly developing focus on families and children. Finally, I provided a critical review of the social movements literature, flagging its analytical weakness in identifying totalist systems as a particular form of social organization. In the next chapter I develop the theoretical framework of this study.

Chapter Four

Theoretical Framework: Social structure and disorganized attachment

> "*The first method in reasoning is to give the patients a powerful stimulus, yell at them 'you're sick!', so the patients will have a fright and break out in an over-all sweat; then, they can be carefully treated*" (Mao ZeDong in *Opposing Party Formalism*, cited in Schein 1961 p. 37).

Introduction

The core theoretical concept of this study of totalism is that of disorganized attachment (Main and Solomon 1986), its situatedness in conditions of trauma and isolation, and its effects on behavior, memory, and cognition. Disorganized attachment is a theoretical construct that arose out of Bowlby's (1973; 1980; 1982; 1988) attachment theory. In exploring this concept, I will discuss micro-macro issues, evolutionary theory, social networks and social capital, attachment theory, trauma and dissociation, narrative, and language.

Micro-Macro Issues

This study is micro-sociological in that it explores the interactions of individuals in social situations (Knorr-Cetina 1981), and further, explores the internal emotional, cognitive and linguistic processing of individuals within these specific situations. However I also seek to generalize from the experiences of individuals and rather than simply describing these experiences as in radical ethnomethodology (Collins 1994), I wish to use this micro-sociological view to explain the mechanisms of totalist systems. I am attempting then, what Collins calls micro-translation: "a revisualization of social theory in micro terms, a sort of X-ray vision of the micro components and linkages that make up the macro-structure" (Collins 1981 p. 95). In this way I hope to build an "empirically stronger theory, on any level of analysis, by displaying the real-life situations and

behaviors that make up its phenomena [and to introduce] empirically real causal forces in the shape of human beings expending energy" (p. 93). Following Collins I see the micro as a building block for macro-sociological concepts, rather than as a replacement for macro-sociology.

Building then, on this micro-sociological view, a first level of aggregation of the chain of micro-interactions (Collins 1998) lies in working out the network shape of the totalist system, and the egocentric networks of individuals within totalist systems. From the micro view of each individual's social experience, the examination of dyadic ties between them and others within and without the system can provide a basis to draw these network shapes. This then offers the possibility of showing that particular types of micro-interactions (and, further, their effect on people's internal cognitive, linguistic and emotional processing) may be correlated with particular network shapes. Further investigation and aggregation of micro-interactions may also show correlations between these phenomena with certain types or structures of ideologies (i.e. total ideologies versus particular ideologies).

Where the meso and macro levels of analysis divide in this conception is difficult to state – is this again just another level of aggregation? Is a small organization meso and a large, national organization macro? For my purposes I will generally use Collins (1981) who states that the only macro variables are number, time and space. He sees micro interactions unfurling like a scroll, aggregating temporally, numerically and spatially and thus making up the macro-level of analysis. By this view a distinction between macro and meso may be unnecessary; however, the meso level does seem conceptually useful in terms of using network theory to diagram the structure of systems, and so I will retain it in that context.

In Collins' view, then, as with Stolte, Fine, and Cook (2001), it is in the spirit of "seeing the big through the small," and in also, perhaps, *explaining* the big through the small, that I am exploring individuals' attachment relationships and social networks, and their use of language in discussing their group membership.

We must look, however, not just at the additive aspect of the aggregation of micro-interactions, but also at how these micro-interactions inter-relate and interact

(Knorr-Cetina and Cicourel 1981 p. 31). Isolation in one instance may not result in totalism. Dissociation may result from combat trauma, say, rather than from a relational trauma in a context of isolation, and thus may not be relevant. It is in looking across levels of analysis, and in seeing the patterns of a variety of micro-interactions, that we can start to differentiate totalist from non-totalist systems, and begin to describe an ideal type of totalism and its constituent parts. But it is only by digging deeply into the micro-level that we can put "a real skeleton inside the superficial skin" (Collins 1981 p. 103) of the human experience of totalism.

Coleman's (1986; 1994a) view of the micro-macro problem involves, first, an assertion that, in looking at social systems, one must start with a purposive actor: "Purpose is rejected at the level of the system, but not at the level of its component actors" (Coleman 1986 p. 1312). In this study my position is that the follower may *initially* act purposefully, say in acting on a political belief and joining an organization based on that belief (see, for instance, autobiographical accounts such as: Crossman and Koestler 1950; Koestler 1968b; Stein 2002). However, it is precisely in the *breaking down* of this initial purpose and rational action that the particularity of the totalist bond takes hold. And this breakdown occurs at the level of each individual – it is at the micro-level that the individual's purposive action is hijacked by the totalist system's induction of dissociation.

Coleman posits that the macro must be deconstructed then, to its micro, component parts (i.e. the actions of individual actors), and then changes in behavior among these component actors must then be *re*constructed to show the change in the macro-level system. He refers to this last as the micro-to-macro relation (or type 3 relation), and states that this is the most difficult and critical aspect of the micro-macro problem. Although I disagree with the definition of the individual actor as being always a purposive one, investigating totalism at the micro level does help to explain the macro totalist system. In other words, it is in understanding the dissociation and disorganized attachment of the individual that we can see how a leader can gain control of a set of deployable agents – whether a small cell, or a larger force. The necessity of inducing this

dissociation itself then helps to explain and predict the isolating structure and ideology of totalism.

The aggregation of this deployability can also change the quality of the system. In the most minimal case of totalism – a simple dyadic relationship, such as in domestic violence – the system is limited to the two persons involved. Instead of an ideological component, the narrative in the relationship may just be that of intimate love. There may be impacts on the follower's family, or children, but not beyond that. However, in a system that grows beyond a dyad, broader ideological themes may be needed, and rituals, rules, systems and even group norms, may be set in place to ensure followers' isolation and to induce and maintain dissociation. Some followers may become lieutenants who are needed to grow the system. Further, such followers may be deployed to remote locations, their deployability (per Zablocki's 1999 definition) resting on the inner coercion that guarantees they will continue to operate loyally without need for surveillance (at least for some period of time). From the coerced individual, then, a larger system can be built, one where a culture of obedience is created, where minority dissent is quashed immediately to prevent the corrosive effect on totalism of any tolerance of minority views (as noticed by Asch 1952), and where these coerced individuals monitor and surveil each other, thus strengthening the system.

Evolutionary Theory

Evolutionary-based theory in the social sciences is a direction of scholarship that is familiar to social-psychologists (Asch 1952; Buss and Kenrick 1998) and currently under serious consideration by sociologists of emotion such as Turner (2000). I discuss it here primarily because of its importance in the development of attachment theory which is further explored below.

Asch (1952) critiqued behavioral psychologists who reduced the complex concepts of evolutionary adaptation and instinctive behaviors to a narrow view of trial and error in individual learning with the single goal of gratifying primary physiological needs for food, shelter and sex. In line with Asch, Buss and Kenrick (1998) state that evolutionary psychology is an interactionist, not a genetic determinist position, and that it

emphasizes adaptations to the environment, rather than simply an individualized struggle to maximize individual goods. Further:

> Economists have discovered that humans do not behave according to models of rational economic self-interest, but instead routinely violate those models in line with principles predicted by evolutionary psychologists (e.g. Frank, 1988). And anthropologists previously committed to the view that humans have no nature and that culture is infinitely malleable and variable, have come to recognize an astonishing set of empirically documented human universals (p. 1019).

Rational choice theorists, with their focus on individual competition, have little room for the ideas of inclusive fitness (the favoring of "indirect" copies of one's genes – as with siblings, cousins, nieces, nephews) or reciprocal altruism (the survival benefits of sharing). These are concepts which solve the straw man argument of the free rider problem (wherein a person may opportunistically reap collective benefits without contributing to the associated costs) by introducing evolutionary reasons for cooperation, kinship, belonging, sharing, helping and social exchange (Asch 1952; Buss and Kenrick 1998). It is evolutionarily adaptive for human beings to help and care for each other. The naïve view of "the survival of the fittest" reduces the notion of evolutionary adaptation to "every [competitive] man for himself" in an over-simplified and inaccurate formulation. Rather, reproduction is "often facilitated by cooperation, mutualism, altruism, and even self-sacrifice" (p. 984). Some scholars such as Coleman (1994a) and Lawler (2001; Lawler and Yoon 2000) are moving beyond a simplistic rational choice model and attempting to include less individualistic models that include emotions, group affiliations, solidarity and social capital. It is evolutionary social psychology, state Buss & Kenrick (1998), that "places social interaction and social relationships squarely within the center of the action" (p. 993) by looking at the development of human capacities and social behaviors as being the result of adaptations which are "evolved solutions to problems of survival and reproduction" (p. 989).

In Turner's (2000) study of the sociology of emotions, he also takes the long, evolutionary view and, critiquing the other end of the academic spectrum, states that "it is

probably a weakness in the theories of social constructivists […] that they barely consider the neurology underlying social phenomena" (p. 75) and continues:

> True, the way that emotions are displayed is subject to socialization (just like different languages are), but even here, there are limits to the plasticity of displays because these emotions are universal and, it seems, part of human neurology (p. 75).

While Asch (1952) rejected a strictly biological formulation of human behavior (and a distinction between this and a "cultural superstructure"), a complex reading of evolutionary theory can lead to his interactionist view of human development, to a view privileging neither the rational choice theorists' competitive individual, nor the reduction of the individual to a Durkheimian intersection of social facts. Rather, according to Asch:

> We will attempt to show that men in [social] interaction with each other form invariant properties which cannot be reduced to the traditional categories of instinct or habit. […] the processes of interaction produce motives and capacities that revolutionize the nature of men and become as central to their character as the needs called biological (p. 79).

I follow, therefore, Asch's (and to some degree Turner's) view that social interaction is based in human evolutionary adaptation and has had consequent effects on the human mind and emotions. In order to understand these phenomena, then, an understanding of these adaptations and of human development is useful. This will be taken up further in the sections on attachment and dissociation.

Social Networks and Social Capital

Network theory offers an updated means of understanding and researching what Asch (1952) called an interactionist perspective. However his view might now better be addressed by what Emirbayer (1997) terms the "relational" or "transactional" approach, which "sees relations between terms or units as preeminently dynamic in nature, as unfolding, ongoing processes" (p. 289). Network theory is a "broad strategy for investigating social structure" which allows us to look at human behavior and social processes in ways that go beyond categorical attributes of either individual or collective

actors (Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). Network methodology allows the modeling of relational ties to map the patterning of social structures. It offers the possibility of opening the black box of these social structures to explore "the structure of relations among actors and the location of individual actors in the network [which] have important behavioral, perceptual, and attitudinal consequences both for the individual units and for the system as a whole" (Knoke and Kuklinski, 1982, cited in Emirbayer & Goodwin 1994).

Social Networks

At the macro level, Pescosolido and Rubin (2000) use network theory to describe historical changes in social structures over time (following Simmel). They describe the concentric circles of life in the premodern era (or Habermas' "archaic societies") "where space and place largely coincide" (p. 54). They represent the modern era by intersecting circles where the individual is a member of many overlapping groups and exists at the point of intersection of these groups. This, they say, allowed for increased individual autonomy, yet offered weaker protections and security for the individual. Finally they pose that the social network formation of the post-modern era is a spoke structure at the center of which is the individual linked to groups that are only loosely tied and infrequently overlapping, with these ties, and the groups themselves, being often "temporary, ephemeral, and contingent" (p. 63). The strength of this type of network form, they argue, is the individual's increased freedom and flexibility. But the weaknesses include the potential for "alienation, isolation, and fragmentation" (p. 64) with the possible reaction to this being a return to fundamentalism and nationalism (which I associate with total ideologies and totalist social structures). This view reflects the earlier ideas of the Frankfurt School – as in Fromm's (1941) "escape from freedom." This map of the relational network shape of post-modern society may contribute to understanding how the fragmentation of the larger social structure can condition the development of totalist forms of organization. Pescosolido and Rubin (2000) also usefully acknowledge that the pre-modern, concentric circles of the archaic structure is the very same structure seen in contemporary totalist systems such as Heaven's Gate,

Jonestown and the Branch Davidian cult "forming Durkheim's over-regulated social structure in opposition to the dominant culture" (p. 54).

At the meso level, network methods are extremely useful in studying organizational structures and resulting organizational features. In the study of organizational networks and interorganizational tie-formation rates, Kenis and Knoke (2001) identify several properties for examination: density, reciprocity, centralization, multiplexity and hierarchy. Totalist groups can be described using these properties: they have limited inter-group ties; dense, non-reciprocal, multiplexed within-group ties and are hierarchical, centralized and cohesive in structure. The within-group ties have a complex quality, however, and do not fit in the standard definitions that network theory uses to describe network ties. Social ties within totalism include the cult-affective bonds and intensive interaction that Lofland (1977) speaks of, yet these ties are constrained and, as the data in this study shall show, they do not include close ties that allow a sharing of doubts about the group, nor close ties that can be used as safe havens. Therefore, in studying totalist groups, it is important to closely examine the content of network ties to differentiate the special quality of interaction that takes place in such groups.

Kenis and Knoke's propositions can be particularly useful in looking at how totalist systems interact with other organizations. For example, they state that "Stronger out-group interactions may also attenuate such negative consequences of within-subgroup intimacy as conformity, radicalism, and hostility." This is shown in an interesting, empirical way in Paxton's (2002) study on democracy and social capital. She found increased rates of democracy in countries whose members participated in multiple open and connected associations, rather than in those whose members had fewer, less-overlapping (and thus more closed) associational memberships. In other words, more complex out-group interactions correlated with greater democracy.

Network theory bridges the micro-meso-macro divides by looking at broad social structures, groups and individuals and the relationships among them, with a particular emphasis on enabling or constraining structural patterns. Padgett and Ansell state that, in relation to their study on the rise of the Medici, "social attributes and group interests are 'merely' cognitive categories, which party mobilization, networks, and action crosscut"

(cited in Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994). In regard to organizations, "relational structures *per se*, and not just the positional attributes of organizations, are critical sources of organizational behavior" (Kenis and Knoke 2001).

By applying network methods to the study of organizations, we have the possibility of getting beyond a group's self-definition through their ideological pronouncements, to look at the actual relational structure of the group. This idea is also taken up in Marsden and Friedkin (1994) who suggest that network studies of social influence can be explanatory by looking at factors such as structural cohesion and social proximity of actors. As organizational network properties can be examined, so can an individual's ego-centric network (Wasserman and Galaskiewicz 1994). Thus the quality and changes of an ego-centric network can be examined for properties such as multiple vs. single sources of information, overlapping ties, reciprocity, hierarchy and so forth in order to evaluate whether or not the individual concerned is, in fact, a member of a totalist group.

Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994) emphasize the need to integrate the analysis of cultural and discursive factors with structural analysis. For the purposes of this study, this means looking at the characteristics of the rhetorics that shore up hierarchical, totalist systems (Lifton 1961; Mannheim 1936/1985), as well as how the effects on language and cognition of isolation and disorganized attachment contribute to the maintenance of these systems (Herman 1992; Stein 2001; Zablocki 1999). This involves looking at the cultural, discursive and emotional content of network ties, and the narratives and stories that describe the social networks in question (White, cited in Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994).

The failure to look carefully at content can lead to partial analyses such as Lawler's (2001; 2000) studies on emotion and social exchange. For instance, Lawler states that positive or negative emotions can arise from social exchanges which, when attributed to a group, lead to respectively, affective attachment to, or detachment from, that group. This does not, however, work to explain the disorganized attachment to groups seen in totalism – an attachment that is, in fact, made up of *both* positive and negative emotions. In fact, as will be discussed later, it is this very *mix* of emotions that produces the strong bond to a totalist group. Lawler works with a rather global and crude

division of emotions into “positive” and “negative”, whereas a much finer view is required in order to understand the particular bonds of totalism.

McAdam (1986) has applied network theory on the meso and micro levels to mobilization efforts in his study that showed friendship networks were key in recruitment to high risk/cost activism. However his study must be analytically differentiated from studies of recruitment to totalist groups, many of which are also, by most definitions, high-cost and often high-risk (i.e. terrorist groups). Totalist groups often have success recruiting atomized individuals, rather than those who have strong friendship networks (Baumeister, Dale, and Muraven 2000; Baumeister and Leary 1995; Lofland 1977; Singer and Lalich 1995). On the other hand, open democratic forms of high risk/high cost groups (i.e. groups active in the Civil Rights Movement) may seek out and benefit from the participation of persons with robust social networks. This apparent contradiction again leads to the idea that totalist groups have particular characteristics over a range of dimensions and thus need to be treated as a different set than non-totalist groups.

Social Capital

The study of social capital is firmly intertwined with network methods since “social capital is captured from embedded resources in social networks” (Lin 2001 p. 3). The study and discussion of social capital in regards to totalist versus more open and democratic systems requires a fine-grained definition and approach, as discussed above. A central question remains throughout this discussion as to whether the *network structure* itself predicts particular types of social support and capital (i.e. as raised by Paxton’s 2002 study on democracy and association memberships). Regardless of this, however, and as discussed in the previous section, the *content* of the network ties must also be examined if we are to understand how the structure is created and maintained.

A key argument in the discussions of social capital is that of Burt’s (2001) concept of social capital inhering in structural holes (related to Granovetter’s work on the strength of weak ties), as opposed to Coleman’s (1994b) conception of social capital inhering as a result of network closure. Burt (2001) states that social capital – which he defines by using, among others, Coleman’s definition: “a function of social structure

producing advantage" (p. 32) – results from the strength of the broker, or bridging position in the "participation in, and control of, information diffusion" (p. 34). He contrasts this with Coleman who sees that dense networks are the source of social capital due to the facilitation of sanctions which makes trusting others in the network less risky, as well as providing improved communication channels (Coleman 1994b).

A problem in this discussion lies in the definition and measurement of social capital. Portes (1998) points out that as there are multiple sources of social capital (value introjection; bounded solidarity; reciprocity exchanges and enforceable trust) so there are multiple functions of social capital, namely as a) a source of social control, b) a source of family support and c) a source of benefits through extrafamilial networks. So, for example, an individual's performance in a competitive employment setting (Burt 2001) is a quite different function of social capital than the type of cooperative support a family might gain from a stable and well-connected neighborhood (i.e. Hagan et al cited in Portes 1998).

The definition of social capital must also include qualifications to differentiate a social capital that supports the autonomy of the individual within a supportive community, from a repressive, negative "social capital" as discussed by Portes. In fact, excessive network closure, as Pescosolido and Rubin (2000) point out, is a feature of closed totalist systems where sanctions are frequent, social control is extreme and generally emanates hierarchically from a single point of power, and where trust (though not loyalty) is, in fact, almost entirely broken or absent (Arendt 1948/1979; Schein 1961). On the other hand, too open a structure, with too many structural holes, can lead to anomie and "a certain fragility to social relations because they are not supported by webs of relations that criss-cross social life" (Pescosolido and Rubin 2000 p. 64). Lin (2001) posits that open networks enhance the gaining of resources and instrumental returns while denser networks may enhance the protection of existing resources and expressive returns. However it is not clear in his examples when or how the dense, more closed network might, in its extreme form, transform into an excess of social control such that resources and expressive returns are actually *reduced* rather than protected – again, as in a totalist system. It is important to differentiate the qualities of a dense network that Lin (2001)

hopes would support a mother of young children, from the qualities of the dense network that, for example, controlled Karen Robidoux's mothering to the point of gross neglect and the resulting fatal starvation of her child (Wedge 2004).

An important element in the discussion of social capital that has been raised by Johnson and Knoke (2004) is consideration of whether an individual can *access* the resources of their network[15]. In a totalist system it is the leader who has unlimited access to followers' resources. Followers may only access the resources of the group as a social network with the permission of the leader. Thus resources flow upwards, generally reducing the resources of the follower and increasing those of the leader. Taking this element into account would thus help differentiate totalist from non-totalist social networks.

Portes (1998) usefully discusses four *negative* consequences of social capital to help clarify the analysis the analysis of social capital:

1) exclusion of outsiders
2) excess claims on group members
3) restrictions on individual freedoms
4) downward leveling norms

The first three of these directly relate to totalism, and therefore need to be assessed when evaluating the social capital of social networks. As Portes (1998) indicates, the concept must be more rigorously defined, and he states that:

> it seems preferable to approach these manifold processes as social facts to be studied in all their complexity […]. As a label for the positive effects of sociability, social capital has […] a place in theory and research provided that its different sources and effects are recognized and that their downsides are examined with equal attention (p 21).

Darnell and Sherkat's (1997) study, *The Impact of Protestant Fundamentalism on Educational Attainment*, for instance, shows this need clearly. Data from the Youth-

[15] Johnson and Knoke (2004) state that: "the *probability of access* is ego's subjective belief about the likelihood that alter will make those resources available for ego's use upon request for assistance"

Parent Socialization Panel Study demonstrates that fundamentalist beliefs and conservative Protestant affiliation have substantial and negative influences on educational attainment. The authors state that "closely integrated social ties promoting shared understandings" (p. 307) are responsible for this. They see these dense ties as having largely cultural effects – i.e. the shared belief systems reduce interest in a secular education – this is merely a "cultural orientation". However a structural view of this is also applicable – i.e. that reduced interest in a secular education is propagated to justify withdrawal from mainstream education in order to minimize interactions with the outside world so as to preserve (and reproduce) the isolation and closedness of the fundamentalist social structure.

A study by Pagel, Erdly and Becker (1987) looked at the content of interactions in the social networks of spouses caring for Alzheimer's patients. Their study sought to differentiate positive and negative aspects of social support in order to contribute to a fuller definition of the concept. They found that, "upset with one's network was consistently related to depression and to reduced satisfaction" (p. 801). This did not mean the network was absent, but rather there was upset within and with the network. Here social capital relies on the *emotional content* of the relationships and ties within the network, rather than the structure itself.

In summary, a structure that has webs of relations that overlap, that is neither completely closed and thus threatening to individual autonomy, nor with too little cohesion to provide support for the survival and security of the individual (White's "primordial and continuing urge" for "secure footing" in an "otherwise chaotic social world" as cited in Emirbayer & Goodwin 1994, p. 1437), seems to be desirable to support the flexible, yet secure "protean self" needed to flourish in this "age of fragmentation" (Lifton 1993). The question remains as to how we define this in network and social capital theory, and what contents of the ties between people need to be examined in order to identify such flexible, open, and responsive network structures. As Emirbayer and Goodwin (1994) suggest, this effort entails an integration of analysis of networks, culture, and agency. It also involves an integration with network methods of analysis of emotions, belonging and attachment (as suggested by Aminzade and McAdam 2000;

Baumeister and Leary 1995; Smith 1992; Smith and Stevens 1999; Stein 2001; Zablocki 1999).

Belonging, Affectual Ties, and Social Movements

Baumeister and Leary's (1995) comprehensive review details studies on *belonging* as a fundamental, and evolutionarily useful human motivation. They collect an important set of empirical studies evidencing that "the need to belong is a powerful, fundamental, and extremely pervasive motivation" (p. 497), and they propose a general need for belonging. However, the review fails to get at the *content*, *mechanisms*, and the *variations* of "belonging" and interpersonal attachments and downplays the significance of Bowlby's work dissecting the black box of attachment relationships. While they correctly note that threat causes people to seek out and form bonds, a weakness in their analysis is that they are unable to explain the role of this powerful dynamic in relationships such as those of domestic violence or totalism. The authors find that Stalin's "charisma is perplexing […] because of the horrific internal violence he directed" (p. 243) but again are unable to explain this apparent paradox. Attachment theory, I suggest, can help explain how a Stalinesque authoritarianism is, indeed, a key aspect of the totalist social system, and of the strong bond of belonging engendered by charismatic authoritarian leaders. These authors do note, however, and in contrast to McAdam (1986), that social isolation is often a factor in people joining charismatic-led social movements.

Baumeister, Dale and Muraven (2000) touch on the possible use of attachment theory in looking at individual differences in regard to belonging – however, they hypothesize (with no cited evidence) that the avoidantly attached may be more likely to join social movements in order to satisfy the need to belong without having to enter into intimate attachment relationships. This is an inadequate application of attachment theory to this issue, and, like most of the social movements literature, confounds radically different forms of organization (totalist forms and open, democratic forms) into one general category. An alternate view of the role of attachment in totalist social movements is proposed below.

There is beginning to be an attempt to look at emotions and attachment in relation to social movements – mostly in the context of noting the absence thus far of work in this area (Aminzade and McAdam 2000). Goodwin (1997) also notes the lack of theory and research in this area in his paper on affectual ties in a high-risk movement (the Huk Rebellion), but in his analysis he too ignores the highly validated theoretical work of attachment theory. Although he observes that strong dyadic ties pulled people away from the movement he studied, he is unable, using a theoretical concept he calls the "libidinal opportunity structure" to untangle the phenomena he uncovers – for instance the attempts by leadership to control affectual ties by providing "forest wives" (short-term, primarily sexual, relationships) to prevent cadres' defection to return to their actual wives. The group he describes appears, again, to be a totalist group, and affectual patterns would therefore be expected to be different from a non-totalist group – e.g. the emphasis would be on removing competing attachments in order to isolate and control followers. A comparative analysis with another high-risk, yet non-totalist group such as the African National Congress would have made for a more compelling and enlightening study. He states rather vaguely that "affectual ties and sexual relationships can be divisive as well as cohesive" (p. 66) but does not have a theoretical understanding to explicate when and how we might expect either division or cohesion to occur.

Attachment Theory

Attachment theory can begin to shed light on these issues – by opening the black box of how affectual relationships impact behavior, emotions, cognition and language. "Attachment theory is concerned with social behavior and emerging expectations of self, others, and relationships" (Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, and Carlson 1999 p. 84). As a relational theory it fits in the direction suggested by interactional, relational and network theory sociologists (Asch 1952; Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992; Emirbayer 1997; Kenis and Knoke 2001; Mead 1934). Building on the robust theoretical work initiated by Bowlby (1973; 1980; 1982) and continued by Ainsworth and Main (1991) among many others, much empirical work has already been done in both child and adult attachment in looking at differential outcomes in adulthood including: domestic violence and violent

crime (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999), and, more recently: political extremism and authoritarianism (Hopf 1993; 1998), altruism and prejudice (Mikulincer and Shaver 2001), and religious affiliation (Granqvist 1998; 2001; Kirkpatrick 1998).

In this section I will summarize attachment theory in relation first, to children, and then to adult attachment. I will discuss, in particular, disorganized attachment, and later show how the dissociation that results from disorganized attachment produces a similar cluster of symptoms and effects as found in post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). One could say, perhaps, that disorganized attachment produces a kind of PTSD which is located in a relational context. Further, unresolved PTSD is likely to produce disorganized attachment in the next generation. Disorganized attachment produces both symptoms of dissociation and a strong attachment bond to the relationship in question. I suggest that conditions of social fragmentation in late modernity – Lifton's (1993) "historical dislocation" – result in both increased PTSD[16] and disorganized attachment, thus providing one of the links from the macro level of social causes to the micro level of individual functioning and dyadic relationships.It is important to understand these psychological and relational mechanisms in order to make sense of the structural, attachment, and linguistic features of totalism.

A brief summary of attachment theory

Bowlby (1973; 1980; 1982; 1988) proposed that attachment between parent and child is an evolutionarily useful bond that serves to maintain proximity between caregiver and child for the purpose of protection of the child. When all works well, and the parent is open, flexible and responsive to the child, secure attachment results. Secure attachment is found in about 60% of non-clinical US populations. When the child experiences threat (fear, the dark, fatigue, hunger, etc.), they seek out their attachment figure, who, ideally, will be responsive and provide comfort and protection. The attachment figure is then functioning as a *safe haven*. When the threat passes, the child is free to explore, and moves away from the attachment figure – but close enough to return in case of further

[16] For example, Zena Stein (personal communication) suggests that a majority of Sudanese are currently suffering from PTSD.

threat. The attachment figure is now functioning as a *secure base*. Bowlby saw this as a homeostatic control system with proximity seeking behaviors (attachment behaviors – including approaching, crying, seeking contact) alternating with exploratory behaviors. Attachment behaviors, according to Bowlby, need to be "terminated" effectively, through adequate and reliable comfort[17] in order for the exploratory phase[18] to effectively take place. Secure attachment has been shown to be predictive of protective factors in life such as resilience (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe 1993), protectiveness of others (Troy and Sroufe 1987), altruism (Gillath, Shaver, and Mikulincer in press) and empathy (Weinfield, Sroufe, Egeland, and Carlson 1999).

Along with the secure attachment status, two *insecure* forms of attachment are described by Bowlby. For persons who had unreliable attachment figures, where a safe haven was only intermittently available (and thus, attachment behavior was not effectively terminated through reliable comfort), clinginess, separation anxiety, and a failure to effectively use the attachment figure as a secure base, resulted. This is termed *ambivalent attachment* and is characterized by a hyperarousal of the attachment system and attachment behaviors. The ambivalent child still has hope for attachment and comfort, but without adequate comfort to terminate their attachment behavior, this hope yields fear and anxiety about potential loss of the attachment figure. This attachment status has been correlated with, for example, later anxiety and hypervigilance, and being victimized by bullying (Troy and Sroufe 1987).

The second form of insecure attachment occurs when the attachment figure consistently rejects the child, and the child deactivates their attachment behaviors – resulting in *avoidant attachment*. Having not experienced attachment the child does not fear losing it. Studies have shown, however, that physiologically the child is aroused in the presence of the parent – having a heightened heartrate and so forth – but the child does not exhibit attachment behaviors such as seeking the parent for comfort. This attachment status has been correlated with anger and aggressive behaviors such as bullying (Troy and Sroufe 1987).

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[17] Associated with production of opioides and endorphins in the brain (Smith and Stevens 1999).
[18] Associated with production of noradrenaline and cortisol (Smith and Stevens 1999).

Ainsworth developed a procedure to study attachment behavior called the infant strange situation by which infant responses were classified according to these three statuses (Bowlby 1988). In working with this procedure, an additional classification, *disorganized/disoriented,* was added later by Main and Solomon (1986) to describe the attachment behaviors of children who have been unpredictably frightened by their caregivers. Children with this classification may show the typical secure and insecure strategies described above, but they will *also* display "temporary lapses in their strategies; these are marked by fear, freezing, and disorientation" (Kobak 1999 p 34). This form of attachment was later significantly correlated to dissociative symptoms (Kobak 1999).

Disorganized attachment is characterized as resulting from experiences of "*fright without solution"* (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999):

> The caregiver, who at once becomes the source of comfort and the source of alarm, arouses contradictory responses in the infant – that is, the infant experiences inherently contradictory tendencies to both flee from and approach the caregiver" (p. 520).

The infant's attachment strategies collapse, hence the term *disorganized*. The other three types of attachment responses – secure, ambivalent and avoidant – are *organized* strategies. Although the avoidant and ambivalent may not be optimal in terms of securing attachment, they are useful responses, or adaptations, to particular attachment situations – in the one case increasing the chances of attachment through vigilance, and in the other preventing harm to the self by avoiding rejecting and possibly harmful behaviors on the part of the caregiver. The organized strategies work as a homeostatic control system, ebbing and flowing within the limits of an environment of adaptedness (Bowlby 1973). *Disorganized* attachment, on the other hand, is a breakdown of attachment and attentional strategies resulting from a caregiver who is either frightened or frightening. The conditions in the environment overwhelm attempts to adapt and the homeostatic system fails. Withdrawal to safety becomes paradoxically an approach to threat and results in dissociation and confusion. Attachment disorganization in infancy predicts "controlling behavior with caregivers, aggressive and fearful peer relationships […] as well as

dissociative symptoms and elevated psychopathology during adolescence" (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999 p. 550).

Adult Attachment

The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) protocol was developed in 1980 by George, Kaplan and Main. An adult's AAI classification strongly predicted their child's strange situation response (Hesse 1999). In adults, those assigned with an *autonomous* AAI status tended to have children who tested as secure in the strange situation. Adults with *preoccupied* attachment status tended to have children with ambivalent status, and those with *dismissing* attachment tended to have avoidantly attached children. The disorganized classification in children was predicted by the Unresolved/disorganized classification in their caregiver.

The AAI is a semistructured protocol "focusing upon an individual's description and evaluation of salient early attachment experiences and the effects of these experiences on current personality and functioning" (p. 426). The analysis focuses on the ability of the interviewee to maintain collaborative, coherent discourse (reflective of Grice's 1979 conversational maxims) when discussing these attachment experiences. The subject is required to access and reflect upon attachment experiences "while simultaneously maintaining coherent […] discourse with the interviewer" (p. 397). Autonomous speakers are able to achieve this dual objective, regardless of the quality of the attachment experiences that they describe. Preoccupied speakers exaggerate attention to the interview and may have lengthy, and sometimes angry responses. Dismissing speakers minimize the discussion of their attachment experiences, and may offer inconsistent responses. Attachment scholars noted that the parents of disorganized/disoriented children spoke in particular and unusual ways about loss and trauma. These Unresolved/disorganized speakers showed:

> brief slips in the apparent monitoring of thinking or the discourse context during the discussion of loss or (later) other potentially traumatic events. These discourse/reasoning lapses appear suggestive of temporary alterations in consciousness or working memory, and are believed to represent either interference from normally dissociated memory or belief

> systems, or unusual absorptions involving memories triggered by the discussion of traumatic events (p. 405).

It is suggested that this is a “collapse in attention […] occasioned by the arousal of unintegrated fear” (p. 427). In adults, Unresolved/disorganized attachment status (hereafter referred to simply as disorganized attachment) in conjunction with an insecure alternative attachment category predicts frightened and/or frightening behavior towards their child. However, those disorganized adults with an alternative attachment category of secure/autonomous seemed to be able to buffer their behavior towards the infant and did not show frightened or frightening behavior towards their children. Thus it appears that an interaction between disorganization of attachment and an insecure secondary classification is predictive of intergenerational transmission of disorganized attachment.

Cognitive and emotional effects of dissociation in disorganized attachment and PTSD

Bowlby (1980) proposed that there are two memory systems: the episodic and the semantic. In more recent works by other scholars working on issues of memory and trauma these are termed implicit and explicit memory (Siegel 1999b; van der Kolk 1996a; 1996c; van der Kolk, Hart, and Marmar 1996; van der Kolk and McFarlane 1996). *Implicit memory* is nondeclarative, procedural, and “devoid of subjective sense of ‘recalling’” (Siegel 1999 p. 31). Implicit memory includes memories of skills, habits, emotional responses, reflexive actions, and classically conditioned responses. Focal attention is *not* required for encoding this type of experience into implicit memory (similar to peripheral route processing, perhaps). There is no hippocampal involvement for implicit memory. Implicit memory involves the central nervous system and the “older” areas of the brain associated with the brain stem.

Explicit memory is declarative, episodic/semantic, and requires hippocampal processing for storage. There is a conscious and subjective experience of remembering. Focal attention is needed for encoding (this can be related to central route processing). Explicit memory is associated with the frontal lobe, neocortex, and hippocampus (later developing areas of the brain). Cortical consolidation of implicit memory into explicit memory makes selected events a part of permanent memory – a conscious awareness of

facts or events (van der Kolk 1996c). Siegel (1999) states that this process of consolidation involves a back and forth between left and right hemispheres of the brain such as is experienced during REM sleep, one's internal dialog, conversation, or other language-based communications such as telling stories.

Both attachment scholars and scholars of traumatic distress and PTSD place the lack of integration between implicit and explicit memory, and the resulting effects on emotion and cognition, at the heart of their analyses. In disorganized attachment a dissociative process occurs whereby implicit memory is inhibited from the usual cognitive processing required to become explicit memory thus resulting in the discourse features expected in the AAI of a person with disorganized attachment. (The other forms of attachment display different discourse features, but the theoretical basis is the same – that the discourse style reflects a certain relationship between implicit and explicit memory.) In disorganized attachment the narrative about trauma or loss becomes incoherent in a particular way, namely: cognitive lapses, loss of sense of time or place, vivid sensory images as if the experience is currently still happening, long pauses, loss of thread of the narrative (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996). In the same way as occurs in PTSD, the experience has not been processed linguistically and this results in an incoherent narrative where the individual is attempting, but failing, to put language to the experience of the relationship of "fright without solution."

In situations of trauma, as in disorganized attachment, encoding of the trauma into explicit memory can also be impaired. The victim of traumatic stress, and resulting PTSD, may focus on a nontraumatic aspect of the environment or on their imagination during the trauma as a means of "escape". This focus away from the trauma is believed to lead to encoding of the experience in implicit but not explicit memory. That is, the traumatic experience remains at the level of the "older", more primitive areas of the brain (such as the amygdala) and is not processed, through use of language, to become stored in the "higher level" neo-cortical regions of the brain. Also, the release of stress hormones in trauma and excessive discharge of amygdala activity in response to threat,

> may impair hippocampal functioning. The outcome for a victim who dissociates explicit from implicit processing is an impairment in

> autobiographical memory for at least certain aspects of the trauma […]. [I]mplicit memory [...] is intact and includes intrusive elements such as behavioral impulses to flee, emotional reactions, bodily sensations, and intrusive images related to the trauma" (Siegel 1999 p. 51).

The chronic stress of dissociation, states Siegel, may damage the hippocampus itself. The hippocampus is involved in the organization and integration of experience and thus its impairment may prevent future explicit memory processing and learning, even after the stress has terminated.

Trauma scholars have shown that when reading narratives of their traumas back to PTSD sufferers, the amygdala and related areas (implicit memory storage) were activated in PET scans, as well as the right visual cortex – reflecting the visual re-experiencing of their traumas. The Broca's area – which is the area where experience is processed by language – was "turned off". "We believe that this reflects the tendency in PTSD to experience emotions as physical states rather than as verbally encoded experiences. Our findings suggest that PTSD patients' difficulties with putting feelings into words are mirrored in actual changes in brain activity" (van der Kolk 1996a p. 233)

Van der Kolk states that dissociation at the time of trauma (as opposed to being able to seek comfort, or to take some effective action during trauma – in other words, being in a situation that Main would call "fright without solution") is the best predictor of PTSD[19]. The symptoms of PTSD again are essentially the same as in disorganized attachment: hyperarousal; disorientation; numbing and avoidance; dissociation; intrusive thoughts. In PTSD "Chronic physiological arousal and the resulting failure to regulate autonomic reactions to internal or external stimuli, affect people's capacity to utilize emotions as signals" (p. 218). PTSD, therefore, disrupts the protective balancing of soothing and stimulation, seen in secure attachment. In parallel to this, Siegel (1999) notes that those with disorganized attachment have a marked inability to self-regulate emotional arousal. PTSD produces other effects which are readily seen in the narratives

[19] This can help resolve the question of individual differences in terms of vulnerability to totalism and the dissociation that results. Persons with earlier dissociation are, according to this view, more vulnerable to later dissociative processes. However, even those without this early exposure to dissociation, are certainly still vulnerable later, depending on the strength of the situation, the degree of trauma, and their ability to take effective action. A detailed discussion of this is beyond the scope of the current paper.

of those who have experienced totalist systems: learned conditioning, "shattered meaning propositions" (van der Kolk 1996a p. 279), phobias, social avoidance, "excessive dependence, and a loss of the capacity to make thoughtful, autonomous decisions" (van der Kolk and McFarlane 1996 p. 14). Siegel (1999) states that: "the disorganizing effects of trauma and its lack of resolution can be passed from generation to generation […and…] produces ripple effects of devastation across the boundaries of time and human lives" (p. 60).

Thus we see that the effects of disorganized attachment and PTSD are highly similar, linked by the shared experience of dissociation caused by fright without solution. I suggest that followers of totalist systems are, in effect, in a semi-permanent state of dissociation, which has been systematically induced within the system itself. In summary, the emotional effect of lack of self-regulation, and the negative cognitive effects of cognitive lapses, intrusive thoughts, and the inability to reflect at a higher processing level on the trauma or frightening relationship, are the same in both disorganized attachment and PTSD. These effects can begin to explain some of the behaviors witnessed within totalist groups. The freezing and emotional and cognitive impairments of dissociation are the conditions that allow for the later development of hyper credulity and deployability in the member of a totalist group.

Disorganized attachment, trauma, and coercive persuasion in totalist systems. Disorganized attachment has been correlated with controlling and aggressive behaviors in relationships, and consequent relational violence (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999), up to and including murder (Main personal communication). Lyons-Ruth and Jacobitz (1999) note that: "The relations between attachment and adult maltreatment, physical aggression, or violence need to be explored from at least two perspectives – that of the recipient of aggression or maltreatment, and that of the aggressor or perpetrator of maltreatment" (p. 542).

I suggest that in the totalist system, the leader has a disorganized attachment status (likely with an alternative category of dismissing) while followers may have a variety of attachment statuses prior to membership, with a disorganized status (with an

alternative category of preoccupied) in relation *to the leader, or group as proxy*, being induced through mechanisms set up within the system.

The leader's disorganized attachment

Aberbach (1995) uses the concepts of attachment theory to look at charisma in the political and religious realms. The charismatic, he says, may master the grief of loss by "transforming it into a creative motivation," and his childhood experience of loss gives him "unusual insight into societal attachment behavior" (p. 846). This loss has also prevented him finding satisfaction in securely attached relationships and so the charismatic "creates a prosthetic relationship through which he aims to find the resolution, the love and wholeness […he] never had in private life" (p. 847). The relationship he builds with the group (of whatever scale, whether national, a cult, or even, one supposes, a battered partner) becomes this prosthesis. This clearly describes the charisma of the insecure, rather than that of the securely attached as would be demonstrated by a non-authoritarian leader such as, for example, Ghandi or Nelson Mandela. A disorganized attachment status, with a secondary dismissing classification, would be highly predictive of bullying, relational violence, and controlling behavior. Given the totalist leader's absolute power, it is this cluster of attributes of the disorganized/dismissing leader that may be expressed, given the right conditions, in violent acts within, or by, the group.

Several qualitative studies of charismatic authoritarian leaders show histories of likely disorganized attachment with a strongly dismissing character. David Koresh, leader of the Branch Davidians, had a self-reported history of abuse as a child, along with a history of early behavior problems and a pattern of aggression (Tobias and Lalich 1994). Lyndon LaRouche, a right-wing extremist, described his childhood as that of "an egregious child, I wouldn't say an ugly duckling but a nasty duckling" (King 1989 p. 4). Stephen Kent's study (1994) of David Berg, leader of the Children of God, details a childhood history of sexual and psychological abuse. Alice Miller (1980) has described the physical and emotional abuse of Hitler's early years.

Given that even ideal social conditions can produce disorganized attachment, nonetheless, conditions of fragmentation, social isolation and atomization can increase the possibility of this exploding into the epidemic of charismatic-authoritarian-led totalist systems we see today (Karen 1998; Lifton 1993; 1999). Social conditions of fragmentation can produce three relevant effects: 1) decreased social support for caregivers resulting in increased numbers of people with disorganized and dismissing attachment (Bowlby 1988; Karen 1998; Main 2000) leading to an increase in potential charismatic and authoritarian persons; 2) increased isolation and atomization of individuals potentially leading to seeking behaviors in order to mitigate social and emotional isolation and thus leading to more vulnerability to recruitment (Baumeister and Leary 1995; Lifton 1993; Singer and Lalich 1995); and 3) a lack of social structure equipped to sanction the controlling and aggressive behaviors of potential totalist leaders (following Coleman's view of social capital).

I expect to see in this study that the disorganized leader[20], given conducive social conditions, uses various methods to create a disorganized attachment to followers in order to exert an extreme control over them. I suggest that these leaders learn these methods first, "at their caregiver's knee," within a disorganized relationship (Berger and Luckman's "primary socialization"), and second, through later associations in adulthood where they cross paths with similar figures and further develop methods of coercive persuasion[21]. The core of these methods is to create a situation of fright without solution to induce a state of dissociation. If dissociation is successfully induced, cognitive and emotional processing are impaired thus forming the pathway for the creation of hyper credulity and deployability in followers (Zablocki 1999). From a micro perspective, the leader originally builds the system one disorganized relationship at a time until a critical mass is formed whereby lieutenants can take up as proxies for the leader in the

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[20] It may also be that totalist leaders could have a "cannot classify" status (Sroufe personal communication). That is, if they were to do the AAI, their responses would have a more global incoherence, with cognitive lapses as discussed above appearing throughout the transcript, not simply in discussion of trauma or loss.

[21] A fascinating exercise is to draw network genealogies of totalist systems and leaders, as per Collins' (Collins 1998) intellectual networks. This makes plain the influence and lessons passed among totalist leaders, and yet shows the fundamentally competitive relationships among them.

recruitment and indoctrination of further followers. At this point an absolute ideology must exist that can be taken up and used by these lieutenants. This process of growth, from the early, founding members, to a formal organization, with an associated division of labor and delegation of duties would be an important direction for future studies.

Creating disorganized attachment and dissociation in followers

There is much evidence to show that successful totalist organizations use strategic and systematic methods of inducing dissociation. Of course, in the early stages of recruitment, the potential follower is given attention (the classic "love-bombing" of the Unification Church), and other "positives" to draw them in to initial contact (in the case of voluntary entry into the system, as opposed to, say, the enforced re-education of prisoners, cadres, and so forth in the thought reform camps studied by Lifton, Schein and Singer).

In the most general way pre-existing attachment relationships are then controlled and/or removed leaving only a remaining attachment to the group or leader. Trusting and intimate attachment relationships are targeted by the group both in its actions and ideology. The potential follower may already be isolated, due to a normal life transition (Singer 1995 refers to these as normal life "blips" – i.e. going to college, job change, divorce, etc.), due to social upheavals and population movement (such as wars, natural disasters, rapid changes of government or national borders, as, for instance, in the former Soviet Union), or due to simply their own poor attachment systems, a weak family system, or other social isolation. As previously discussed, it may be that simply living in a post-modern world means we live in more vulnerable social networks (i.e. Coleman 1994a; Pescosolido and Rubin 2000). A totalizing ideology then justifies a division between those in, or entering, the system and those outside, providing the theological, political, or other ideological rationale for breaking ties with family, friends, and other pre-existing attachment figures. The intense schedule and activities of the group will further reinforce this separation by simply leaving no time to continue pre-existing attachment relationships. And there may also be a physical isolation – whether for a

weekend workshop, or more long term physical isolation by moving the follower away from family or friends, communal living, or other means.

Once the follower is effectively isolated, fright is then induced through criticism, fatigue, physical abuse, apocalyptic ideologies, or other means. With no prior attachment relationships remaining, and now in a condition of fright or stress, the follower is thus in a condition of fright with no solution. Fear causes the follower to approach the only remaining attachment – the leader, or group as proxy. In doing this they are approaching the source of fear and thus find themselves in a condition of trauma with no ability to take effective action to avoid the trauma. The result is dissociation which causes impairments in cognitive, emotional and social functioning as discussed above. We can see all these symptoms and impairments frequently described in the narratives of victims of totalist organizations (for example: Koestler 1968b; Lalich 2004; Layton 1998; Lifton 1999; Stein 2002).

There are, in addition, many other methods commonly used in totalist systems to create and consolidate this dissociation and disorganized attachment. Sleep, for instance, is generally restricted, preventing the REM sleep that Siegel (1999) believes is necessary for the storage of memory in explicit memory. A general lack of rest creates fatigue and stress, which, along with a lack of privacy, also prevents the reflection needed to maintain an internal dialog for the cognitive processing of experience. Other environmental stressors such as malnutrition, poor shelter, excessive noise or other stimuli, also contribute to creating conditions suitable for inducing dissociation.

This enforced lack of cognitive processing can also be related to the social psychological studies of peripheral vs. central routes of processing as discussed by Petty and Wegner (1998), where rapid, repetitive information delivery, interruptions, and fear, reduce scrutiny of the information and increase perceptions of the source's expertise – both named as low-effort processes of attitude change. In order to use high-effort processes to influence attitudes "people must be both motivated to think … and have the ability to think …" (p. 328). Thus we can see that the dissociation of PTSD and disorganized attachment both support low-effort, peripheral route attitude change

processes and reduce high-effort critical thinking processes requiring more neocortical involvement.

Communication is highly restricted within totalist systems – in particular communication about the actual experience of followers. Free use of language is not available with which to construct a narrative and thus store experience in explicit memory.

> The most basic feature of the thought reform environment, the psychological current upon which all else depends, is the control of human communication. Through this milieu control the totalist environment seeks to establish domain over not only the individual's communication with the outside (all that he sees and hears, reads and writes, experiences, and expresses), but also – in its penetration of his inner life – over what we may speak of as his communication with himself (Lifton 1961 p. 420).

This restriction of communication has important impacts on the language usage of the follower, as will be discussed further below. But in essence, the narrative that the follower might construct to reflect their own experience is disrupted through the induction of dissociation. The dogma of the group is then substituted for the individual's potential narrative. Only one story is allowed, and this is the official story with no deviations allowed for individual difference. As Lifton says, there is the "demand that character and identity be reshaped, not in accordance with one's special nature or potentialities, but rather to fit the rigid contours of the doctrinal mold. The human is thus subjugated to the ahuman" (p. 431). Developing one's own narrative is seen as betrayal at worst, and self-indulgence at best (Stein 2002). Orwell's 1984 is a classic, and brilliant, exposition of how the restriction of attachments and communication coupled with fear are used to achieve this result. Contemporary examples of these methods can be seen in cults (Atack 1990; Ayella 1998; Berlet 1987; Betz 1997; Collective of Women 1997; Corydon 1987/1992; King 1989; Lalich 2004; Layton 1998; Singer and Lalich 1995; Tobias and Lalich 1994) fundamentalist religious organizations (for an interesting and topical example see ANC leader Farid Esack's description of typical educational methods and organization of fundamentalist madrassahs: Goodman 2001), and many cases of domestic violence (Boulette and Anderson 1986; Tifft 1993).

The other key effect of creating a disorganized attachment bond is that the attachment bond is strengthened. First, because the induction of fear or threat causes the individual to seek proximity to the only available attachment figure (or group as proxy). Second, because this attachment behavior is never "terminated" through adequate comfort, the normal exploration phase, or using the attachment figure as a secure base, is impaired thus causing the paralysis and freezing indicative of disorganized attachment. As the attachment figure is simultaneously the source of threat, so there is a continued state of fear arousal or hyper-vigilance, impeding the normal phase of distancing and exploration that would occur in a secure attachment. The dissociation that occurs also results in misattribution of emotions (hence, presumably, the difficulty in emotional self-regulation: van der Kolk 1996b), and an inability to think through the situation and take effective action to protect the self from an existing threat (Siegel 1999b; van der Kolk 1996a). Van der Kolk discusses this issue of increased attachment in the face of danger and states that: "Central components of these increased attachment bonds in response to threat include captivity, a lack of permeability, and absence of outside support" (van der Kolk 1996b p. 200). This increased attachment can also be seen in the Stockholm Syndrome, relationships of domestic violence where the battered spouse cannot leave, and cultic relationships (Herman 1992; van der Kolk 1996b).

If totalist groups were to allow freely chosen attachment relationships, access to diverse sources of information and minority, dissenting opinions, the "fright without solution" core of this dynamic would be impaired. Followers might begin to find solutions to their dilemma of bonding to the source of threat, and so begin to re-integrate their dissociated mental processes. Thus the totalist system, if it is to maintain itself, must strive to prevent these alternate attachments and alternate worldviews.

Memory and narrative

A status of disorganized attachment is assigned to a person based on the quality of their narrative about trauma or loss. In disorganized attachment (as well as in traumatic stress) the disjoint between implicit and explicit memory, or the failure to process implicit memory through language into stored, explicit memory, is restricted to the trauma, or

relationship in question[22]. Thus, persons with PTSD or disorganized attachment might be able to discuss (and behave in) other areas of life in a coherent manner, but be flooded with implicit memory when triggered, or when attempting to discuss the trauma or frightening relationship. This two-fold functioning, this separation between the non-traumatic experience and the traumatic, may explain to some degree the phenomena that Lifton (1986) witnessed which he termed "doubling" and that he saw as characteristic of people within totalist systems. For example he describes, in *The Nazi Doctors*, the most brutal acts being performed by doctors in Auschwitz, and yet, at the same time, these doctors were able to return to their families at night and be caring husbands and fathers.

Implicit memory, which is what surfaces during these narratives – and which is at issue in PTSD in flashbacks, triggers, and flooding – is said to be "detailed, accurate and persistent" (Yuille and Cutshall 1989 cited in van der Kolk 1996c). Indeed, the very problem for daily functioning, is that these memories *don't* fade, and are intrusive and feel as immediate as when the trauma first occurred. Van der Kolk and McFarlane (1996) argue that while there are rare occurrences of total amnesia with trauma, in general, traumatic memories have a "timeless" quality even decades after the traumatic events: "the full brunt of the experience does not fade with time" (p. 9). Scholars of memory, then, state that the sensory, implicit memories of the traumatized or disorganized are quite accurate and reliable, a view opposite to that of those scholars who label the narratives of former cult members as "atrocity tales" stating that such narratives are unreliable and exist simply to stigmatize deviant groups (Bromley 1998a; 1998b). This is not to confuse these narratives with the controversial therapist-induced narratives of recovered memories, which are an entirely different category (van der Kolk and McFarlane 1996). The narratives of former members of totalist groups do not appear as *recovered*. They were, indeed, never lost. On the contrary, they are intrusive and invasive in daily life. But it is through rendering the narrative that these traumatized individuals begin to gain mastery over the trauma and recover a coherent, *organized* sense of self

[22] When the incoherence is seen globally throughout the AAI transcript, then a different classification is given: Cannot Classify (Hesse 1999). Adults with this classification are, like the disorganized, disproportionately represented in clinical and offender populations.

(Herman 1992; Tobias and Lalich 1994)[23]. As Arendt (1955/1968 p. 20) puts it: "This is lament, by which we reconcile ourselves to the past .... repetition in lamentation establishes its meaning and that permanent significance which then enters into history" (p. 20).

Primo Levi (1986), who has written several works on his experience of surviving Auschwitz, gives us an example of the coherent narrative in historical memory; he describes his writing style as follows:

> When describing the tragic world of Auschwitz, I have deliberately assumed the calm, sober language of the witness, neither the lamenting tones of the victim nor the irate voice of someone who seeks revenge. I thought that my account would be all the more credible and useful the more it appeared objective and the less it sounded overly emotional; only in this way does a witness in matters of justice perform his task, which is that of preparing the ground for the judge. The judges are my readers. All the same, I would not want my abstaining from explicit judgment to be confused with an indiscriminate pardon. No, I have not forgiven any of the culprits, nor am I willing to forgive a single one of them, unless he has shown (with deeds, not words, and not too long afterwards) that he has become conscious of the crimes […] and is determined to condemn them (Levi, Belpoliti, and Gordon 2001 p. 186).

Those scholars who deny the value and validity of these narratives both reject valuable data, and may impede the important process of resolving the dissociation suffered by these individuals. Primo Levi spoke of returning "from the camp with an absolute, pathological narrative charge" (Anissimov 1999 p. 257). His greatest fear was that he would not be believed, and, indeed, he encountered great resistance to his testimony from various quarters at different stages in his life.

The development of a coherent narrative is key to effective cognitive and emotional processing. Siegel (1999) suggests that this process lies at the heart of emotional self-regulation. He states that:

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[23] I would like to note, however, that not *all* persons subject to such experiences find the creation of a coherent narrative to be helpful. For some (perhaps those who are initially dismissing in attachment status?) this may have a re-traumatizing effect, and they may in fact do quite well later in simply "moving on" as long as they have a supportive social network and the ability to review their traumatic history with caring others when they do experience distress or troubling symptoms (Bruce D. Perry and Szalavitz 2007).

> The left hemisphere's drive to understand cause-effect relationships is a primary motivation of the narrative process. Coherent narratives, however, require participation of both the interpreting left hemisphere and the mentalizing right hemisphere. Coherent narratives are created through inter-hemispheric integration (P. 331).

This integration creates stable, complex connections among the various representational processes and is essential for memory consolidation (from implicit to explicit memory – thus avoiding dissociation) and this consolidation is necessary for the development of coherent narratives. Coherent narratives require an integration of the two hemispheres of the brain, and the two types of memory. The process of developing a coherent narrative is also the process of integrating these two aspects – of reflecting on implicit memory and making meaning of it. Siegel (1999) goes on to discuss how the reflective co-construction of stories, particularly between parent and child, "may foster bilateral integration between the two hemispheres of both child and parent. The resilience of secure attachments can thus be proposed as founded in part in the bilateral integration that these relationships foster" (p. 207).

Feminist theory has raised the status of the personal narrative in scholarly work, with the work of scholars such as DeVault (1999) and Laslett, Maynes and Pierce (2000) discussing how these narratives can shed light on the study of emotions, agency, the situatedness of individuals in history and society, and may serve to uncover previously hidden issues. In line with feminist methodology Laslett, Maynes and Pierce (2000) see no contradiction in personal narrative serving as a part of an individual's recovery and also serving the scholar in understanding the social world. Sociologists can frame their work in accessing, facilitating and analyzing personal narratives as part of Foucault's (1980) archeology of subjugated knowledges and DeVault's (1999) "excavation" of personal testimonies that have frequently been ignored, censored, and suppressed.

Narrative and the telling of stories is not only important for the individual. The telling of stories is central to Arendt's (1958/1998) political philosophy. It is in this telling of stories in the public realm that the individual is able to show themselves as an individual. Stories allow the disclosure of the individual to others to create the "in-

between" that lies in the web of relationships among people. And this sharing of stories also allows society to see itself:

> Only where things can be seen by many in a variety of aspects without changing their identity, so that those who are gathered around them know they see sameness in utter diversity, can worldly reality truly and reliably appear (Arendt, 1958/1998, p. 57).

It is only by speaking and listening to each other that we create and hear the varieties of stories and thus begin to grasp a collective sense of reality. This is what Arendt calls "common sense." Arendt fears the loss of this "in-between," the space in which to speak and act that constitutes freedom, and sees the loss of each person's story as a defining marker of totalitarianism.

In summary the methods used in the analysis of the AAI may be useful to determine coherence of narrative in accounts from current and former members of totalist groups, and thus provide us with a tool to evaluate truthfulness and accuracy of these accounts and the presence or absence of dissociation. Such narratives are not only important for the well-being of the individuals involved, as part of re-integrating their experience and memory following dissociation, but they are also a vital part of understanding history and society, and are thus a critical source of data (particularly when triangulated with other sources). Further, the open exchange of narratives is a feature of democracy, while the absence of this exchange is a marker of totalitarianism.

Language in Totalist Systems

There are two aspects considered here in the use of language in totalism. On the one hand is the language of the group member as they describe their individual experience, reflecting internal mental processes. On the other is the language used at the group level as a means of domination and control. It is expected that the individual follower will use both forms while in the group, though possibly only the first form after group membership has terminated, when reviewing their group experience retrospectively. The topic of language in totalism is potentially huge, and only a small subset of this topic is addressed here.

The meso social structure of the totalist system employs a variety of methods, as discussed above, to induce a dissociation at the level of individual neuro-processing. Therefore, in the first aspect of language I consider I will expect to see at the micro level of the individual's narrative about their totalist group experience, a reflection of dissociated mental processing. This language usage may be expected to show much individual variation. Thus we see the meso level of the totalist structure reflected in the micro effect on individuals. At the level of the group I expect to see the group's absolute ideology reflected in language usage in group propaganda and internal documents, as well as in speeches, and (partially) the speech of individuals. This language is identified by a marked sameness across speakers, writers, and so forth, with little individual variation. Thus the meso level of the group's absolute ideology will be clearly identifiable and bounded by those who use and understand this special language.

In the first instance, the focus on language usage is restricted to using language as a lens by which to examine mental processes, and as a method to determine whether dissociation is occurring. This is in line with the methods used by adult attachment researchers as discussed above. This is a primarily psychological, even neurobiological view (with universal implications: Gumperz and Levinson 1996; Hesse 1999), rather than a relativistic, cultural view, such as is discussed by language scholars such as Lucy (1992) and Gumperz (1982; Gumperz and Levinson 1996).

The linguistic relativity hypothesis states that diverse languages influence the thought of those who speak them – and that the grammar of language structures the coding of meaning in each language, which in turn has an effect on the shaping of culture (Whorf cited in Gumperz and Levinson 1996). In this study I am interested, rather, in the effect of social structure on language use, and the recursive use of language as a tool in creating and maintaining the social structure of totalism. This is a different, though related, agenda to the work of those investigating linguistic relativism.

Scholars of the linguistic relativity hypothesis are beginning to look beyond simply the analysis of grammar to the contexts and meaning of language, and to imagery, sensorimotor representation and emotion (see Gumperz and Levinson 1996). Lucy (1992; 1996) notes that very little adequate empirical research has been done on the linguistic

relativity hypothesis – how the structure of language influences thought and culture – and states that “Adequate investigation of the proposal must be comparative, deal with significant language structures and actual speakers” (1996 p. 63) and must also include non-linguistic data as part of understanding the actual meanings of language in specific situations. There is also discussion about the study of language in context (Duranti 1994; Gumperz 1982); as Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1982) state: “communication cannot be studied in isolation; it must be analyzed in terms of its effect on people’s lives” (p. 1).

Slobin (1996) begins to get at the idea presented here of language as a reflection, or marker, of thought when he discusses “thinking for speaking” and how this is a:

> a special form of thought that is mobilized for communication. Whatever effects grammar may or may not have outside of the act of speaking, the sort of mental activity that goes on while formulating utterances is not trivial or obvious, and deserves our attention. […] That is, the activity of thinking takes on a particular quality when it is employed in the activity of speaking (P. 76).

It is precisely this “particular quality” that is being evaluated by the AAI. The study of language usage at this micro level can help shed light on the larger social structures – in this case, the totalist system – that the speaker experiences and reflects. This exemplifies Stolte et al’s (2001) view of sociological social psychology as a form of microsociology which is “a lens through which broader social forces, properties, and processes can be understood” (p. 388).

If the disorganized attachment/dissociation hypothesis presented above is correct, the language of the totalist group member or former member, when discussing their experiences in the group (in particular experiences of trauma and loss, and attachment relationships within the group), should display features of implicit memory: vivid recollection of unique and specific sensory details, confusions of time and place, long silences, loss of train of thought and unexplained segues to different topics, and a difficulty putting words to their experience (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996; Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999; Main 1991; Siegel 1999a). As these are implicit memories that are intruding, we would expect them to be specific and unique to the individual – not processed and stored via socially ordered ways as would be expected of explicit memory

(Siegel 1999a; van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth 1996). Of course, some former members may have effectively integrated their experience after the fact, through developing a coherent narrative, and in this case these markers of dissociation may be absent or minimized.

But in a general way it is expected that the language features of disorganized attachment will be seen in the narratives of members and former members of totalist groups. We may not see this in their discussion of other aspects of experience (hence the "doubling" effect), but should see it in reference to the relationship with the group. In this case we are seeing language as a reflection of totalism's dissociating effect on the individual's mental processes. On the other hand, we should not see these features in the narratives of followers' experiences with groups that are non-totalist, where dissociation is not a primary organizing principle of the group.

In this sense, these narratives, with their expected dissociated and disorganized properties, do reflect the structure of the totalist group, in that this structure is based on effectively causing dissociation in followers. In other words, the social structure will have affected, or structured, the follower's use of language.

The second aspect of language discussed here is the language used both within the totalist group (indoctrination), and by the group to the outside world (propaganda) as discussed by Arendt (1948/1979) and Asch (1952). This is language used for domination, as concealed strategic communication (Habermas 1984; 1989) or as the "loaded language" of thought reform which serves to constrict thought (Lifton 1961). It is the language of total ideology where outsiders may not understand the different meanings implied in this different usage as described by Mannheim. This is language used, not to reveal people and their multiple stories to one another in the web of relationships (Arendt 1955/1968; 1958/1998), but as a tool of the single truth of total ideology:

> The ideology operates not only as a unifying force and a guideline to action in ambiguous situations, but also as a *language*, a set of semantic guides, which make possible rapid and efficient communication of the wishes of the central authorities (Schein 1961 p. 91).

Here language is used to dominate, constrict thought, restrict conversation and communication, and funnel thought and communication into pre-approved channels. Language used in this function will be repetitive, canned, and replete with jargon. The set of individuals within a given totalist group will employ the group language in ways that do not differ substantially, as opposed to the highly specific, individualized accounts and intrusions of implicit memory discussed above. Rather, this type of language will have a dreary, predictable, and often, incoherent (especially to the outsider) quality. Orwell (1949) describes the function of the limited totalist vocabulary in 1984's appendix, "The Principles of Newspeak":

> Relative to our own, the Newspeak vocabulary was tiny, and new ways of reducing it were constantly being devised. Newspeak, indeed, differed from almost all other languages in that its vocabulary grew smaller instead of larger every year. Each reduction was a gain, since the smaller the area of choice, the smaller the temptation to take thought. Ultimately it was hoped to make articulate speech issue from the larynx without involving the higher brain centers at all (p. 254).

A key function of this constricting totalist language is to provide a single interpretation of followers' experience, one which upholds the dissociation from their own, felt experience, and impedes their ability to develop their own cognitive interpretation of what is happening. Bowlby describes this in terms of the parent/child relationship:

> One of the more intractable forms [of the disconnection of the implicit and explicit processing systems] results from a parent implicitly or explicitly forbidding a child, perhaps under threat of sanctions, to consider any mode of construing either his parents or himself in ways other than those directed by the parent. […T]he more persistent the disorder from which a person suffers the greater is the degree of disconnection present and the more complete is the ban he feels against reappraising his models (Bowlby 1980 p. 249).

This type of control on interpretation, or construal, is precisely that found in totalist systems. The dreary, repetitive, and obfuscating quality of language is an obvious result when an entire group or population must follow the language and interpretive rules dictated from on high. The restrictive, dominating function of the repetitive, canned

ideological statements of the group's loaded language has, as its strategic function, the domination of followers through the imposition of a unitary story (Arendt 1948/1979; 1955/1968). This unitary story sits atop the actual experience (Lifton 1961; Schein 1961) of the individual, bearing no real resemblance to that experience and thus propping up the existing dissociation of followers. Thus, the totalist language serves as an additional division between implicit and explicit memory, preventing the cognitive processing of real experience through a narrative of that experience.

So, while the two types of language are very different, they serve to prop each other up. The forced totalist narrative shores up the dissociative wall between the individual's lived experience and trauma within the group and their ability to think this unique experience with language in communication with others in order to master it and remain integrated rather than fragmented. To put this in terms of the linguistic relativity debate, we see a recursive, two-way relationship. In the case of the individualized but disoriented language of the individual's narrative of trauma, mental processes influence language usage. But in the case of the unitary totalist language, the use of this restricted language influences, channels, and constricts thought.

Autobiographical narratives of trauma such as those of Levi (1986), Timerman (1981), or Layton (1998) in fact link the implicit memories of trauma with an explicit cognitive understanding and analysis. These narratives can be read as "organized" accounts – where the survivor of such an experience has, as part of mastering the experience, and once outside of the conditions of fright without solution, worked to retrospectively interpret and organize their experience. In putting creative (what attachment theorists would call "fresh": Main and Sroufe 2002) language to the experience these writers produce both some resolution and integration for themselves and also bring news to the outside world from the totalist land of the dissociated about the actual nature of these experiences. Those who deny the validity and value of these accounts – from Holocaust deniers on a grand scale, to the minor pitched battles within sociology (as discussed by Bromley 1998a; Lalich 2004; Zablocki 1997) – serve only to slow the development of knowledge and understanding about these systems.

The impact of dissociation on hyper credulity and deployability.

Dissociation, then, and particularly the fact that it can be induced through isolation from attachment figures, trauma, and restriction on communication and language both internal to a person, and externally, with others, is central to the creation of the two interrelated states that Zablocki (1999; 2001a) describes: deployability, and hyper credulity. Although Zablocki states that the process of brainwashing proceeds on two tracks: the emotional and the cognitive, I would like to state rather that it proceeds by inducing dissociation, and indeed *separating*, or dis-associating, the emotional and cognitive functioning. Once this separation is achieved, then the fictitious group narrative can be "installed" and the group member now can "accept" the dissociative state having received an alternate view of their experience. The fact that the group account is fictitious, as Arendt (1948/1979) calls it, is not trivial. As Asch (1952) states:

> one distinction of importance is between actions that aim to develop potentialities for thinking and feeling and those that aim to rob persons and groups of the possibility of seeing their situation and of acting according to their needs and insights (p. 620).

Although some scholars refuse to take a position on the ethical problems in totalist systems, resting on a "value-free" assertion that converts are simply acting on their "free will" (Barker 1984; 1986; Bromley 1998a; 1998b), Asch further states that:

> the refusal to distinguish between "good" and "bad" is based on the view that ethical distinctions are subjective. But the ethical value of an act may be inherently connected with its psychological quality. It would seem more justified to hold that objectivity requires us to distinguish the intrinsic psychological differences between truthful and untruthful, thought-provoking and blinding, for the same elementary reason that we distinguish between anger and joy (p. 621/622.)

These distinctions are important because the nature of totalist propaganda and ideology is to provide a narrative that is in the hands of the totalist leader, a narrative that manipulates a person's ability to interpret their experience of trauma – an ability that has been strategically weakened through processes that cause a dis-association between the two aspects of memory: implicit and explicit, and thus prevent coherent cognitive functioning.

With a fragmented cognitive functioning in place, a related hyper credulity, impairment in emotional self-regulation and in attribution of emotions, and a strong attachment bond to the leader or group, the follower is now in a condition of hyper compliance suitable to becoming a deployable agent (Zablocki 1999). As a deployable agent they can now be instructed to act in the interests of the leader rather than in their own survival interests. I suggest, however, that this does not reflect a rational choice, based on a calculation of high exit costs, as proposed by Zablocki (1998; 1999; 2001a). Rather it reflects a disorganized attachment bond along with the resulting dissociation. The fact of how and when people have been able to break away from totalist systems could be looked at with this in mind: do they break away when exit costs become lower? Or do they break away when some part of the system that creates dissociation is breached? In earlier work on mothers formerly in cults (Stein 1997) the latter view would be better supported: the mothers in that study left when their isolation was reduced in some way through some alternate, trusting attachment, or when their attachment to their children trumped that to the group, or when they had a change in conditions (for instance, more free time) such that, as one mother put it, "the thought processes kicked in" (p. 51).

Conclusion

I have suggested here that we can describe a Weberian ideal type: that the closed social structure of totalism co-exists with patterns of restricted attachment, with resulting cognitive, emotional and relational sequelae, and with (at least) two different, but interdependent types of language usage. All these parts of the ideal type work together to induce and maintain a relationship of disorganized attachment to the group. Disorganized attachment is seen when dissociation occurs in a relationship of unresolved trauma or loss, a relationship in which a person experiences fright without solution. While dissociation can occur in regards to any unresolved trauma (resulting in PTSD), when it occurs in a *relationship* that results in an attachment bond, we can term this disorganized attachment. The totalist system is built upon this bond. It can be understood by looking at the entire system and how the parts work together to create and then maintain this state of disorganized attachment.

Failing to differentiate this type of system from other organizational forms results in many inaccuracies and failures of analysis in the study of social movements, sociology of religion, organizations and even family dynamics. More importantly, the failure to differentiate these types of systems leaves society vulnerable to the problems that arise when people become deployable agents of others. I note that leaders of these totalist systems are thought to have disorganized attachment themselves which is predictive of poor outcomes such as aggression, relational violence and controlling behaviors. Therefore, the deployability is not likely to be benign, but to, in fact, reflect the aggression of these leaders.

The problem then is two-fold. On the one hand are followers who are no longer able to be protective of themselves or their children and other attachment figures – their generally adaptive ability to protect themselves or others has been hijacked by the dissociative process of inducing disorganized attachment to the group. On the other hand, the agent at the core of this process – the totalist leader – comes to the process precisely because they have relational difficulties and propensities towards relational violence, control and aggression. Therefore the deployability of followers can be predicted to be used in the service of propagating even further the relational difficulties of the leader. For this reason we need to look closely when we see the constellation of factors that make up the ideal type of a totalist system, because they point to potential relational violence, both within the system and towards the outside world. These systems then, are not neutral, where followers simply choose conversion to a deviant and perhaps odd ideology, but these are systems that, from their etiology can be seen as having a high risk for the propagation of violence.

In the next chapter I discuss the multiple methods I have employed in the comparative study of two political organizations, where I explore the presence or absence of these elements of the ideal type of totalism, and the fundamental mechanism of inducing disorganized attachment in followers.

Chapter Five

Research Methods

Design and Methodology

This exploratory comparative case study of two political groups uses multiple methods to create thick descriptions of each group with an emphasis on network shape and content, attachment relationships and attachment status to the group, discourse of group members, and type of ideology (total or particular). The comparison is of an ideologically totalist political group and a democratically run political group. The goal is to compare each group with the ideal type of a totalist system. The ideal-typical features of such a system are proposed as being the following:

- Leadership is charismatic and authoritarian situated in a single, living person who wields ultimate control. Secondary leadership is appointed by the leader and is subject to promotions and demotions at the will of that leader.
- The system is hierarchical, with a closed, dense, cohesive and highly centralized inner network shape.
- Coercive persuasion techniques are used.
- The ideology is a total, all-encompassing ideology. Sources are few, relying heavily on the leader or prior leader's words. The ideology and its sub-parts may change at the whim of the leader.
- Attachment relationships that compete with attachment to the leader or group are controlled in order to minimize or negate alternate attachments. Members demonstrate disorganized attachment (trauma bond) to the leader or group.
- Followers are exploited.

I have produced thick descriptions of each group showing, first, how close the presumed totalist group matches the ideal type of a totalist system, and second, how different the two organizations are, and which are the salient dimensions that separate the totalist from the non-totalist (Lofland and Lofland 1995). The comparison was theoretically informed by previous

empirical observations. While I did not start off with a set of clear hypotheses to test, I wished to examine, in particular, the role of induced dissociation, and the structural and ideological framework necessitated by this. The strength of the project is that the research is theoretically grounded and thus has a focus and sensitivity to certain issues beyond, perhaps, the scope of some exploratory projects. Certain propositions are being explored: the existence of a particular type of social organization; the structure of that organization; and the internal mechanisms key to the particular impact these systems have on human agency (Lofland and Lofland 1995). The limitation is that the results may not be testable statistically with the size of the sample used. On the other hand, general patterns and trends emerged, which point to future directions for study as discussed in Chapter 13.

Selection criteria of the two cases

I selected two groups for this study: the Newman Tendency[24] and the U.S. Green Party. I selected the Newman Tendency as an example of a totalist group based on initial study which concluded that it is run by a charismatic authoritarian leader, has a closed inner circle, and has a total ideology. Additionally, some ex-members have reported a high degree of exploitation and control of personal life and attachments during their tenure. They also reported a traumatic exit from the group (Berlet 1987; King 1989; Ortiz 1993; Tourish and Wohlforth 2000). Thus, on a relatively cursory examination many of the features of an ideologically totalist organization appeared to be present. I chose the Green Party as a suitable comparison group as it shares several characteristics with the Newman Tendency but is an open, loose formation with a relatively transparent process and no clear leader. Both groups are active nationally in the U.S. as third party political groups[25] with a stated left wing ideology. Both have their roots in the political events of the 1960s. Both parties have run candidates in local

[24] Choosing a name by which to refer to this group is a complex issue as the group has many front organizations with various names, and internally it has referred to itself by different names at different periods. In discussion with Chip Berlet, an early researcher of the group, I decided to use the name "The Newman Tendency" for this project. Fred Newman is the undisputed leader, and one of the more recently used internal names of the group is "The Tendency". However, this is not a public identification.

[25] Clearly the Newman Tendency is not *just* a third party political group, but it has, since the 1970s had, as a main activity, the creation of a third party – first as the New Alliance Party, and recently as the Committee for a Unified Independent Party (CUIP) – and the running of candidates at the local, state and national levels.

and national elections in the U.S., and are expected to continue doing so. The organizations each have a public presence. Table 1 summarizes these preliminary assumptions.

Table 1

Preliminary assumptions regarding comparative features of the Newman Tendency and U.S. Green Party

	Newman Tendency	**U.S. Green Party**
Founding (roots of both in left politics of 1960s)	Early 1970s	1980s
State and national election participation	Presidential and local campaigns	Presidential and local campaigns
Political ideology	Left wing, Marxist ideology, but also had alliances with right wing activists such as LaRouche, Buchanan, and various independent factions in the Reform Party. Platform states that it seeks to mobilize independent voters. Engaged in support activities with Ralph Nader in relation to his 2004 presidential race.	Ecologically-based, generally left-wing, social justice and democracy platform. Ralph Nader ran on as the GP presidential candidate in 1996 and 2000 with Winona LaDuke as his running mate.
Type of ideology	Total	Particular
Leadership	Fred Newman single and dominant leader since early 70's. Lenora Fulani periodically runs for U.S. president, but is merely a figurehead in the NT.	No single leader determines policy or platform.
Organization of party	Tight, secretive inner party, with associated front organizations.	Loose association of state and local Green parties with optional membership in national GP. Open structure and process.
Front organizations	Castillo Theater, All-Stars project, Castillo International. Press, Centers for Social Therapy, New York Independence Party (certain locals).	Not known to control front groups.
Impact on attachment relationships	Intense control of members' personal lives, including romantic and family relationships. Therapy groups part of party life.	No known control of members' personal lives.
Former members	Some former members report traumatic exit, secrecy, exploitation in group.	Former members have a variety of political disagreements. No known traumatic exits reported.

Sampling strategy

A purposive sampling was used of informants who were knowledgeable about the internal life of each group, willing to talk about it, and representative of a range of points of view (Schutt 2001). As it was expected that current members of the Newman Tendency (NTers) would be reluctant to participate (or disallowed from so doing), the emphasis was on former members (Ayella 1993; Lalich 2001b; Zablocki 2001b). In all, 14 former NTers and 12 former Green Party members (GPers) participated in the study. Given the lack of representation of current NTers, I matched that sample by only recruiting former, not current GPers. I circulated an email flyer to GP activists and posted it on progressive listserves in order to recruit GPers. Some heard about the study by word of mouth. For NT recruitment, I circulated an email flyer to the ex-iwp.org website, approached current members at observation of public events during my field work, and others heard by word of mouth. The current NTers I approached all had the same response: they initially responded quite openly, stating they would consider participating and that they would get back to me. However none later contacted me to follow through, and in fact it was due to this that the NT became aware of my project which later had impacts, described below, in my observation attempts.

A selection bias is acknowledged, but I did attempt to reach as wide a range of participants as possible to mitigate this, including persons who were members at different times, and those with varying responses and conclusions about their group experience. Pseudonyms have been used and identifying details changed throughout to protect the privacy of participants.

Instrumentation, data collection and analytical methods

The study was conducted using multiple methods: in-depth structured and semi-structured interviews of former members, a survey, observation of public events, archival resources, and discourse analysis. Multiple analytical methods were employed: attachment analysis,

network analysis of ego-centric networks, discourse analysis and the creation of thick descriptions of each group with analysis of emerging themes.

The Group Attachment Interview

The structured Group Attachment Interview (GAI), modeled closely on the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI: George, Kaplan, and Main 1996) was conducted first with each participant (following instructions for the AAI protocol). This is a new instrument I developed for this project. The GAI focuses on the relationship of an individual to a group as differentiated from the AAI's focus on the relationship to a person's primary caregivers. The GAI seeks to establish the participant's current state of mind in respect to their attachment to a group. As with the AAI, the GAI is designed for analysis of a retrospective account by attending to qualities of coherence of the narrative. The changes I made to develop the GAI from the AAI followed a general rule that where the question in the AAI concerned a primary caregiver, the relationship with the group was substituted. Thus the GAI asks for the following:

- The first question is to ascertain the name by which they would like to refer to the group. This was particularly important for the NT, as it has many front groups, and over its history has changed its name many times. Thus, depending on era of membership, and type or area of membership, participants might refer to the group differently.
- A brief description of the participant's living situation, activities immediately before entering the group, and the approximate span of years involved. This served to generally orient the participant to the time period under discussion.
- The participant is asked to give "five adjectives or words that reflect your relationship, as you remember it, with *[group name]*, starting from when you first became involved?" Ex-members are also asked "….and up to when you ceased to be involved with the group." The remaining follow-up probes are as for the AAI, substituting the group name for the caregiver designation.
- For the question concerning threats, discipline or abuse, the following criteria were added:

> For the purposes of the Group Attachment Interview, abuse experiences for adults include paddling, physical isolation, forced separation from loved ones, imprisonment, work detail punishments, food deprivation and certain other punishments. All physical punishment will be considered abuse when administered to adults. If to children, then use same criteria as the AAI.

Further, an additional probe was used:

> While in the group, did you ever experience behavior or situations that you felt violated your physical, emotional or intimate boundaries, or situations that were out of your personal control, or threatening?

These changes were intended to include and/or elicit some of the fear-arousing abusive, punitive and/or control measures used in totalist groups, which are different than the rather narrowly defined abuse measures of children stated in the AAI.

- Questions were added asking about separations from family members, romantic partners or close friends while in the group. These are potentially highly distressing experiences within the context of totalism, and thus were queried in order to explore participants' response to such losses. Probes included:

  > How did you respond to the separation? Do you remember how the group responded? Or perhaps anyone else in the group? Was this person a member of, or associated with, *group x*?

- The AAI question concerning other important adult or parent figures was removed as these are related to childhood experiences, rather than to the group.
- Questions concerning loss of loved ones were retained, but reworded to ask only about losses that occurred during the participant's tenure in the group, or since leaving the group. These questions highlighted if and how processes of mourning were affected by group membership.
- The AAI question concerning current relationship with the participant's children was changed to ask about: "current involvements or relationships with any group activities? How do you respond now, in terms of feelings, to this type of involvement? […] Do you ever feel worried about what may happen to you in

relation to this group?" This was in order to investigate after-effects of group membership and how that may carry over to subsequent activities.

- The AAI question about wishes for one's child's future was changed to ask about wishes for the participant's own future. This was an intuitive change, made after the pilot tests of the interview. Former members of totalist groups often have particular difficulties regarding relationships to children due to their group experience (Stein 1997), and are also often in a protracted process of rebuilding their own life. Given the AAI states that the purpose of this question is "primarily intended to help the participant begin to look to the future, and to lift any negative mood" (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996, p. 59) I determined that this would be better achieved with this change in wording.

The GAIs were analyzed following the AAI protocol to determine participants' state of mind in respect to attachment to each group. Minor changes were made to the AAI coding methods. These are discussed in Chapter Eleven. In former or current group members, attachment to the group (retrospective in the case of former members) is identified by: a perception of lack of interchangeability with any other group or relationship, and extreme distress on exit. Further, disorganized attachment status to the group is determined following the general AAI analysis methods, with the changes noted above, and is evidenced by loss of monitoring of discourse, reasoning, or reports of extreme behavioral responses. These features can include cognitive lapses, extended pauses, loss of sense of time or place while discussing experiences of abuse or other trauma while in the group and traumatic exit from the group.

In a future iteration of the GAI I would ask more explicitly about the group member's experience of leaving the group. In this study that question was asked, but in the following interview, and thus was not coded for the types of lapses expected above, unless the participant volunteered that topic elsewhere in the interview.

The Group Psychological Abuse Scale

Following the GAI (or, in some cases, later), each participant filled out the brief Group Psychological Abuse Scale (Chambers, Langone, Dole, and Grice 1994). This is a validated instrument currently in use by researchers of cults, but which, so far has not been systematically tested with members or former members of political cults. It consists of 28 questions divided into four subscales: Compliance, Exploitation, Mind Control, and Anxious Dependency. One-tailed hypothesis t-tests were conducted to compare responses between the two groups.

Semi-structured interview and Close Relationships Schedule

A semi-structured in-depth interview was conducted next with questions covering participants' entry into the party, their experiences within it, and their exit from the group. This interview was quite free-form with the exception of the Close Relationships Schedule. During this part of the interview I first attempted to generate a list of names of persons "extremely close"[26] to the participant during their group membership. I then asked a set series of questions for each person on that list, including frequency and type of contact, whether the alter was also a group member, and the nature and content of the relationship with a particular focus on reciprocity, trust and helping behaviors (Schensul 1999) . While this focus on strong ties may limit the analysis in certain ways, it aims to highlight the effects of group membership on strong attachment relationships—relationships which, as Johnson and Knoke (2004) note, are those to which people turn in times of uncertainty. In other words, the study seeks to explore the impact of the group on individuals' safe haven relationships. (A study that includes weak ties would certainly be a useful future endeavor.)

Based on theoretical considerations stemming from attachment theory I sought to differentiate interpersonal trust and intimacy from instrumental closeness. I operationalized emotional trust and intimacy as "Did you ever talk to this person about problems and private, inner feelings you may have had?" The problems that occurred

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[26] Following Zablocki's social network question in his 25th Year Questionnaire for the Communal Households Project.

with this operationalization are addressed in a later chapter. Instrumental closeness was operationalized by asking: "Did you feel you could have turned to this person at any time if you really needed help?" and then probing for specific types of help: emotional, practical, financial and so on. However, the emphasis was on eliciting instrumental helping. Finally I asked about participants' ability to share with close alters doubts about, or problems with, the group. This was to operationalize within-group isolation and ability (or lack thereof) to dissent. In the analysis phase I then assigned each answer a weight on a four-point scale, from 0 – none (i.e. participant never sought help from alter), to 1 – weak, 2 – moderate, 3 – strong. For each of these questions I also asked the reciprocal—i.e. "Did this person ever turn to you for help," and coded these responses in a similar way.

The Close Relationships Schedule, the GAI and the semi-structured interview provided the data for creating color-coded ego-centric networks of each participant showing the quantity and quality of relationships while in the group, and the changes in the quantity of relationships before, during, and after group membership. The ego-centric network data were also entered into a spreadsheet and averages and differences between the two groups were calculated and examined for statistical significance. As the entire organizational populations were not available, network diagrams of each organization are not presented, although a schematic of the NT is presented in Chapter Six in order to better visualize the rather complex structure of the group.

Both the GAIs and the semi-structured interviews were color-coded and analyzed for repeating themes that emerged both from theoretical conjectures, and from the interviews themselves (as in Lofland and Lofland's 1995 "*emergent induction* of analysis"). The themes that came out of the initial coding and were carried over into focused coding (Lofland and Lofland 1995) were:

- Life before entering the group
- Processes of recruitment, entry and exit
- Relationships with family of origin, romantic relationships and friendships
- Sexuality and reproduction
- Children and child rearing
- Leadership and structure (formal and informal) of the group
- Secrecy (internal and external)

- Relationship with leadership
- Exploitation and manipulation of members
- Discussion of weapons or violence
- Financial issues
- Medical issues and care
- Schedule and commitments
- Living situations
- Therapy sessions
- Group programs
- Group publications
- Group ideology and goals
- Language
- Emotional responses while in the group and on exit
- Resistance
- Lessons learned and hopes for the future

These themes became the basis for the written histories of each group, and for tracing and analyzing individuals' trajectories through each group. (I created individual narrative and network summaries for each individual as part of this process). The themes overlap with most of the categories discussed by Lalich (2000 citing Balch 1985) as being necessary for a comprehensive study of cults. Analytical emphasis was placed on the following:

- *Network ties between members*: lines, content, and frequency of communication; relationship to leadership; relative openness or secrecy of the group; presence of cell structures.
- *Party life*: discipline, schedule of activities, content of party work, study of party materials.
- *Impact of party life on attachments*: spousal/romantic attachments, relationships of parents and children, reproduction, close friendships, attachments to those outside the group.
- *Entry and exit processes*.

Event observations

I observed public group events (see Table 2) to understand each organization more broadly, and for the purpose of triangulation[27]. Observations focused on the actions of current group members in relation to each other, to the public (including myself), and to leadership figures, as well as on the content of the public events. As was expected, once the nature of the study became known by the NT, my attendance at NT events—such as a volunteers meeting in Atlanta (to which I was initially invited by a current NTer) and a publicly advertised fundraiser in New York—was prohibited by the group. At no time did I attempt to hide my identity, nor did I make any attempt to enter these events "undercover", rather, I accepted this restriction by the group. However, this is a predictable response by totalist groups, given their secrecy, and should be borne in mind by researchers, as suggested by Lalich (2001b) and Ayella (1993). It further demonstrates the lack of transparency typical of totalism.

Perhaps this is the point to note that the NT may well have presumed bias on my part in this study, and this may be why they did not come forward as participants, and "disinvited" me from these two events. As I did not hide my identity they would have been able to discover from my previous work that I myself had been involved in a political cult and that I have engaged in scholarship and activism on the subject of cults for many years. While this was a drawback in terms of gaining participation of current members, it was, on the other hand, a strength in recruiting former members. Several former NTers expressed the fact that it was only after they had read some of my earlier work that they felt they could trust me to understand and not misrepresent their experience, and thus they then agreed to be in the study. Therefore I was able to access and build rapport with a generally hidden population (Schensul 1999) that may have been less available to other researchers. While on the one hand these effects of my earlier work and experience do indeed add to possible bias in this study, they are also, arguably, what enabled it to occur at all.

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[27] Triangulation is particularly important in this field of study, particularly when relying on member and former member accounts (Lalich, 2004) to describe events. This is due to the controversy over the use of such accounts – see, for example Bromley (1998b) and Carter (1998), as well as, more generally, the limitations of retrospective accounts.

Table 2
Observation of party events

Newman Tendency	**U.S. Green Party**
Political event: Independence Party state meeting	*Political events:* State Winter conference Local GP meeting
Fundraising event: attempted to attend Psych Out Awards, but disallowed.	*Fundraising event:* Fundraiser for GP school board candidate
Cultural events: Visit to Castillo Theater to purchase tickets All Stars (youth) play Castillo (adult) play	*Cultural event:* Potluck picnic of GP local
Centers for Social Therapy event: Visited Atlanta Social Therapy office. Invited to, and later attempted to attend volunteers meeting, but was then disallowed.	

Observation field notes were recorded immediately after I attended group events. Common themes of behaviors, interactions and language usage were noted, and the groups' publicly distributed printed materials were collected. These data, together with archival research, contributed triangulating evidence to validate accounts from the interviews.

Archival sources

The following archival resources were examined to gain a historical overview of each group, to provide exemplars of party rhetoric, and for triangulation:

- Political Research Associates archive
- Ex-Newman Tendency archive (www.ex-iwp.org)
- U.S. Green Party archive
- Cultic Studies Journal archive
- A variety of GP publications and online sources as referenced in the bibliography
- A variety of NT-related publications and online sources as referenced.

These sources provided a wide range of data and were written by members of the groups themselves, by journalists, by former members, sometimes by friends or family of members, and by academicians. In order to create a history of the rather complex development of the NT I created a multi-level timeline which I cross-referenced with interviews and archival materials. This included tracing the year-by-year development of the different aspects of the group: the internal party, Social Therapy, electoral and public political activities, the cultural programs, and children's programs, as well as the timing of key external investigations into, or exposés of, the group.

Discourse analysis

The use and internalization of group language was analyzed using the coded interviews, observation of public events, group documents, former NT members' website, GP websites, and other archival documents. I compared individuals' language usage to group language as evidenced in group publications. I coded for individuals' use of group vocabulary, noting, where I could whether such use was "canned" (unconscious) or raised and critically discussed as part of the groups' recruitment or retention processes. I also coded the interviews for any discussion of the way the group used language (which was frequently found in NT interviews and rarely so in those of GPers).

I studied group-created documents to examine both ideology and patterns of language usage. In relation to the NT I studied a selection of Newman's work from the early period of the group to the present, in addition to a wide variety of documents produced by the various elements of the NT (both internal and external documents). I also examined a variety of GP documents including newspapers, conference agendas and documents, position papers, listserve discussions, mailings and press releases.

I then looked for repeated themes, focusing on those relating to power relations, discourse as "ideological work" and as a form of social action (Van Dijk 2001). I further attempted to interpret and explain the patterns of discourse seen. Following critical discourse analysis, I attempted to explain discourse structure "in terms of properties of social interaction and especially social structure" (p. 353). In particular, I analyzed the discourse of each group for the following elements:

- Loaded (Lifton 1961) or “canned” (Main and Goldwyn 1998) language
- Type of ideology (total or particular: Mannheim 1936/1985)
- Control of form and content (Van Dijk 2001)
- Cooperative discourse (Grice 1975)
- Appeal to peripheral or central route processing (Petty and Cacioppo 1986)

Summary of research methods

I thus used multiple methods to gather and analyze the data for this study. I used the GAI to determine attachment status to the groups. I gathered ego-centric network data through the Close Relationships Schedule along with the other interviews, and analyzed ego-centric networks both schematically as well as testing for statistical differences between means of various attributes of these networks. Each individual’s trajectory through his or her group was summarized and analyzed from the two in-depth interviews. The Group Psychological Abuse scale was administered and averages compared for the two groups. The histories of each group were obtained by studying archival materials, including existing histories, journalistic accounts as well as through the interviews. I explored language usage through the in-depth interviews, observation, and through archival research and study of group materials. In this way I have attempted to create a rich comparative study and “methodically [connect] realms of social life that are normally treated by separate sciences and with disparate methodologies” (Bourdieu 1992 p. 27). Reliability and validity issues are addressed in the concluding chapter.

Part Two

Chapter Six

A History of the Newman Tendency

> *I was sensitive and thoughtful, a man to be sure, filled with all the competitiveness and aggression that became the hallmark of my gender long before capitalism came along, but with a sensitivity to suffering and pain* (Newman 1990).
>
> *Resistance will be rolled over with a huge steamroller. So, if you wish to persist in it, you'll simply probably increase your therapeutic bill* (Newman in: Office of Economic Development 1983).

Introduction

The Newman Tendency's earliest beginnings gestated during the Columbia University student strike in the iconic year of 1968 when "liberalism, as Tom Hayden put it years later, was 'decapitated'" (Gitlin 1993 p. 305). The student strike—in which the Tendency's founder, Fred Newman, participated—brought together two important historical strands: the New Left whose roots were largely in the earlier Civil Rights movement, and the Counterculture, a mélange of artists, hippies and dropouts. The Newman Tendency (NT) then fully came to life in the period that Gitlin (1993) refers to as "The Implosion". Political violence had marked the sixties – from the assassinations of the Kennedys, Martin Luther King Jr., and other black progressives, to the Watts and Days of Rage riots. It was in this context that leftwing groups became increasingly closed and militant, each vying to become the "vanguard party" of the revolution, and with

many beginning to support “armed struggle”. These were the years, starting in 1969, when the Weathermen (later the Weather Underground), Progressive Labor and other sectarian groups closed in on themselves, taking on a Leninist cell structure, and various Marxist Leninist and/or Maoist ideologies. Other activists left the movement entirely.

The Implosion “left not only political wreckage but a spiritual and psychological crisis” (p. 424). Activists who had moved away from the New Left met the encounter and human potential movements that had developed in California, largely based at the Esalen Institute[28]. This, along with the burgeoning women’s movement created a new wave: the merging of the personal and the political. It was in this cultural and political environment that Fred Newman first formed his group.

From these roots he eventually built a group structured as a cell organization, with a totalizing ideology that changed from Marxist to post-modernist, but which always included an emphasis on transforming the personal to the political through group therapy. From the start he employed group therapy as a key means to recruit and retain followers to a group that he has dominated since its inception. Almost 40 years from its founding the NT now consists of a secret party organization that controls a changing roster of front groups[29].

The NT has been variously known as the Centers for Change (CFC), the International Workers Party (IWP), the Tendency, or most recently, the Development Community. The details of its 40-year history are extremely complex. First, a large number (in the hundreds) of front organizations have come and gone during this time, some appearing and disappearing briefly (Lofland’s “ad hoc front organizations”), some

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[28] Much of the development of these encounter style groups, as previously noted, were popularizations of the social-psychological work of Kurt Lewin.

[29] Lofland (1977) details a similarly long list of the many front groups of the Unification Church (Divine Precepts) in his study Doomsday Cult. He states that a “duplicitous movement” executes its “duplicity in two basic organizational forms: action in their own organizational name and structure versus action in terms of a separately created and named organizational structure. The latter is the commonly- and well-named “front organization”” (p. 291). Arendt (1948/1979) says that front organizations exist where the “masses which have been won through propaganda [fall] into two categories, sympathizers and members” and that these fronts form a “protective wall which separates” the membership from the “outside, normal world” while at the same time they “form a bridge back into normalcy,” without which the members “would feel too sharply the differences between […] the lying fictitiousness of their own and the reality of the normal world.” (p. 366).

merely shell entities, while others have been more substantive and long-lasting (Lofland's "enduring fronts"). Second, the organization operates along several major themes: a "Leninist"-type of quasi-cell-structured, underground organization; a therapy practice; a cultural and performance element; children's and youth schools and programs; publications of all kinds; and a public political presence, often implemented through third party organizations. To further complicate the picture, these themes or areas intertwine and support each other, exchanging financial, material and human resources, and coming together in various ways, shifting in both form and content over time. Lastly, Newman's organization has had numerous alliances over the years with an array of political, cultural and academic figures, which also shift and change in often surprising ways.

The sources for this chapter were drawn from journalistic reports, ex-member testimonials, NT and front group documents[30], interviews with former members, and materials and information collected during observations of group events.

Fred Newman: a brief early biography

As Fred Newman is the dominant figure in the Newman Tendency, a brief portrait of his early life is given here. The information is largely from Newman's own accounts, from NT publications, or from journalistic accounts and not all details have been independently verified.

Fred Newman was born in 1936, and "grew up on welfare in a large working class family in the South Bronx" (New Alliance Party 1982). He was the youngest of five in this Jewish family (Conason 1982). In 1957, at the age of 21 he married his first wife. Two years later, financed by the GI Bill as a veteran of the Korean war (Grann 1999), he received his BA from City College of New York (CCNY). His daughter, Elizabeth, was born in 1961, and he also had a son during this period who was born "very severely retarded" and who "has been institutionalized for almost his entire life" (Newman 1990).

In 1963, he completed a Ph.D. in Philosophy from Stanford titled "Explanation and explaining in history" (Newman 1963) and took his first assistant professorship at

[30] Many of these sources are easily accessed at the website www.ex-IWP.org, a comprehensive archive and discussion site set up by a former member who left in the early 90s.

Knox College in Galesburg, Illinois. A year later he was hired at CCNY. This same year he acknowledges receipt of a grant from the US Air Force in support of his studies on the "Logic of Belief Structures," (King 1977) a title which is intriguing given his next steps in life. By 1966 he had gone through a "traumatizing separation and divorce from a nine-year marriage (even more traumatizing!)" (Newman 1990). He now became an active figure in the burgeoning New York anti-war and leftist milieu, mostly centered around the student strike at Columbia University on the West Side of Manhattan. He had a series of six academic jobs during the 1960s (New Alliance Party 1982) and finally resigned in 1969 from academic life to: "pursue community and political organizing" (East Side Institute for Group and Short Term Psychotherapy).

The table below shows the main phases of the group, as described in the body of the chapter.

Table 3
Phases of Newman Tendency growth

Phase name	**Years**	**Estimated number of members**[31]
Inception and early years	1968 –1974	10-40
Consolidation and growth	1975 – 1988	100-~400-600
Overreaching and rebellion	1989 – 1993	300
Leveraging political power	1993 – 2006	150 – 200

Inception and early years: 1968-1974

According to an early "official" history of the NT (at that time called "Centers for Change") Newman, then 33, met Hazel Daren in 1968, when she was 18 and a student of his at CCNY (Centers for Change 1972). They met at an encounter group that Newman ran under the aegis of the CCNY Philosophy department (Thompson and Staff 1974). A photo from this period shows him as a burly, mustachioed man with long, dark, disheveled hair and a broad, pale face. Newman recounts how Hazel Daren later begged him to return from a hiatus in California, in,

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[31] These are estimates made by former members of the NT who were active during these periods.

> a beautiful letter, made all the more profound and touching by Hazel's child-like handwriting. Most fundamental, however, was her child-like sincerity and reasoning. ‘Don't leave the struggle’ was the essence of her message. ‘You were made for activism and our people, working people, need you’ was the implication (Newman 1990).

Hazel became the first of Newman’s common-law wives and was a member of his inner circle until her death in 2004.

Building on this first relationship, a collective of about 10 people, named IF…Then, formed in New York City. The ideological position of the group was not yet clear; an early history simply states that: “The attempt was to try to produce encounter workshops between political radicals and activists and what we labeled at the time as white middle-class people” (Centers for Change 1972). The IF…Then collective’s “modality […] was obscenity. It prided itself on putting out the most obscene brochures and pamphlets in the whole city” (Centers for Change 1972). Later that year IF…Then became Encounter House, an entity whose goals were to “live together”, to create a communal school offering courses for adults, a “heavy therapeutic input”, communal dinners and encounter groups (Centers for Change 1972). Encounter House also offered classes for high school students, prefiguring the long and consistent involvement in children’s and youth programs of the Newman Tendency. It was at this time that the first mention of “sharing money” is made.

The kernel of the group that was to become the NT had formed. As the group’s self-documented history put it: “The structure of the organization was to be anarchic but characteristic of our kind of anarchistic structure-it was ruled by a benevolent despot” (Centers for Change 1972). Despite the claim of anarchy, this description indicates that a level of hierarchy already existed with Newman as its charismatic authoritarian leader. From a network analysis point of view, the group already consisted of an embryonic hierarchy with dense, multiplex, within-group ties (Kenis and Knoke 2001). Thus we see, from its earliest roots, the presence of a charismatic authoritarian leader in the figure of Newman, the existence of a hierarchical structure, and, in the group therapy sessions, the establishment of the group’s key site for the practice of coercive persuasion. The

ideology, while generally of a radical left flavor, was the only element still unclear, but it would soon become more fully developed in the subsequent phase.

The next period saw the development of the group from this intimate initial set to a larger group of 40 members, many of whom would end up becoming the life-long committed core – "lifers" in ex-member parlance (Jack interview). In 1969 inner core organizers lived separately in a Manhattan "organizational commune," thus creating yet another level of hierarchy with the establishment of this lieutenant layer. Several short-lived projects, including sensitivity groups, a high school, an elementary school, and the "Urban Confrontation Program," were set up. However nearly all of these projects folded by the start of 1970 (Centers for Change 1972). This phase, then, also prefigures the long history to come of temporary, "tactical" programs, or front groups through which money and recruits would flow.

In 1970 Fred Newman recruited some fellow employees from his job as a drug rehab counselor for the Narcotics Addiction Control Commission. They joined his new private therapy practice (established despite his lack of formal credentials as a therapist) and the inner core. Soon after, Newman started the Centers Clinic, a psychotherapy collective consisting of himself and several of his former patients who were now loyal inner core members. A group-written history claims that the Clinic had 85 patients in that first year and its services included individual, group, and "marathon" sessions as well as a therapist training program, emergency counseling and drug counseling.

Meanwhile, Jack Bateman[32], a new recruit who was well-connected with leftist groups such as the Black Panthers, taught political education classes both for group members and for other activists or interested persons. Group members now attended mandatory "Political consciousness raising" sessions (Centers for Change 1972). It was through these efforts that a clearer Marxist ideology was introduced.

Two new schools were started (which offered no actual classes), and staffed by NTers. Of note is that parents of Centers School students were *required* to attend group therapy sessions as "A growth experience as significant as the one the child will be

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[32] All names of group members, with the exception of known figureheads or deceased members, have been changed.

having at Centers, demands a parallel growth experience for parents" (Centers for Change 1972). Group encounter-style therapy[33], was thus merged with an activist political agenda, along with programs for children and youth. There was also a rapid shape-shifting of front organizations and entities. By 1971, for example, five schools had already been created, with the first three disappearing with barely a trace.

In 1972 CFC considered itself enough of an institution to warrant writing its own history: *Centers for Change: A collection of liberation centers*. Of 33 members listed in that document, 16 are believed to still be in the inner circle of the Tendency in 2006, or, in the case of Daren and Sema Salit, had passed away while in that role. This demonstrates a formidable retention rate.

During 1972 a further effort was made to collectivize funds, this time with Newman coercing large donations from members (Jack interview). In the official history these efforts are described as: "[W]e decided to pool our money" and "[communal] money sharing was instituted." This document also notes that CFC members worked without pay, "in addition to donating money to CFC" and that many worked a full shift after their "traditional" (i.e. non-CFC-related) jobs. The financial exploitation of members was now set in place.

It was in the fall of 1972 that Newman induced another new recruit, Karen Kessel, to form a "group marriage" with Newman and Daren (Jack interview). Relationships were, by this time (and likely had been since the early formation of the group), "open" with, as one NTer put it, a lot of "bed-hopping". In the era when the birth control pill was still new, this could be seen as simply reflecting a general cultural moment. But over the years Newman added other women (and possibly men: Jack interview) with whom he had sexual relationships, to his household, and these people, along with a few others, were to become the top leadership of the group, later known by former members as "The

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[33] The essence of this form of "therapy" is that one person is on the "hot seat" and the group mobilizes to attack that person's so-called defenses in order to provide some kind of psychological breakthrough. Its origins are in the T-groups that emerged, under the leadership of social-psychologist Kurt Lewin, from the Bethel Laboratories in the 50s. The goal of Lewin's work, however, was precisely the opposite of that of the many encounter groups that followed his T-group format. His goal was to increase democratic participation, and to promote positive aspects of group dynamics. However, when it takes the form of attack therapy, the encounter group format has been the basis of an environment of coercive persuasion in a long lineage of groups such as the drug rehabilation cult, Synanon.

Harem". As part of this process Newman had also begun to manipulate others' romantic relationships (Jack interview).

Organizationally, two key developments took place: a Central Committee was set up, and the psychotherapy clinic became The New York Institute for the Study of Radical Therapy, (the phrase "Radical Therapy" was soon changed to "Social Therapy"). This was also the year Newman began to experiment with dietary restrictions for the group, proposing – in the name of "revolutionary science" – an extreme macrobiotic-type diet for all members consisting largely of millet. This left followers weak and fatigued even beyond their previous level of depletion brought on by busy schedules of double shifts, constant meetings and intensive group therapy sessions, along with generally poor living conditions (Jack interview). While the millet diet was only temporary, the intense schedules continued.

The organization continued to be firmly under Newman's control, and already featured all the key elements of totalism, including a further developing hierarchy, Newman as the fount of what was now Marxist ideological wisdom (such as his "revolutionary science"), financial and sexual control and exploitation, and the ongoing institutionalization of group therapy as a means of coercive control.

CFC enters the LaRouche organization.

In 1973, Newman and Lyndon LaRouche (then known as Lyn Marcus) head of the then leftist group, the National Caucus of Labor Committees (NCLC), began to approach each other. Newman soon led his now 40-strong group into a merger with NCLC (King 1989). NCLC, which later took a sharp rightwards turn, and has had a long history of anti-semitic conspiracy theories along with a colorful and internally authoritarian history, had, in 1973, been involved in a series of violent attacks on left wing groups[34]. By 1974 they were pariahs of the left.

At the time of the merger with LaRouche, Newman's (1974) book, *Power and Authority*, was self-published. In the Foreword, Newman stated:

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[34] For an excellent history of LaRouche, including this temporary merger with Newman, see King (1989).

> We have traveled from a community-based storefront, to a health service collective, to a cadre socialist organization. We have traveled from non-existence to existence and finally back to non-existence at a higher level. For CFC is disbanded. We move, not as a collective, but as self-conscious human beings into the National Caucus of Labor Committees. We move to join our comrades in that dedicated organization to take on the Fascists at this most critical moment in the history of the human race. We move with pride in our past contribution, with awareness of many of our past mistakes, with total devotion to the serious work before us, with great respect for those comrades of the NCLC whom we now join. *Power and Authority* reveals the gestalt of the complex conceptual trip we have made under the label "CFC." It is printed not as a monument, for from the very outset CFC polemicized against monuments. It is printed as a contribution to the creative history of the human race (p. vi).

Despite this rhetoric, CFC's merger with a violent, authoritarian group was short-lived and resulted in isolating Newman from the rest of the Left.

Newman and his group stayed in NCLC only for the summer, and then, doubtlessly finding that two authoritarian leaders in a group was one too many, he resigned, exchanging a few of his members for a few of LaRouche's and leaving with about as many people as he entered. While he disagreed with LaRouche on many points, in particular his supposed failure at "brainwashing" (see below), it is likely that both he and LaRouche gained from observing each other's coercive methods of persuasion, both steeped in psychotherapy-speak. Refining their methods of "political-psychological practice" (Right on Time 1974) was a goal that was (and remains) central to both LaRouche and Newman. Newman's group left NCLC announcing, in their resignation letter, the formation of the International Workers Party (IWP) which:

> has already begun organizing with the intent of establishing eight regional centers throughout the United States in approximately ten to fourteen days and of immediately beginning to organize the class around the slogan "CLASS WIDE ORGANIZATION OR CLASS WIDE ANNIHILAT1ON" (Daren, Newman, and co-signers 1974).

After the break with LaRouche, Newman (1974) stated that he had, in fact, developed a correct theory of Marxist political-psychological practice:

> These carefully explicated ideas [Lenin's *State and Revolution*] lay the groundwork for the long final process of revolutionary therapy which

> becomes more and more indistinguishable from revolutionary organizing. For one thing it makes plain that the therapy must be divided into three steps (1) the insurrectional overthrow of the bourgeois ego; (2) the takeover by the proletarian ego (the dictatorship of the proletariat); and (3) the gradual withering away of the proletarian ego. Any attempts to short circuit this process is nothing more than bourgeois opportunism (p. 123).

In this way, the role of Social Therapy within Newman's organizing strategy was made clear: therapy was to become "indistinguishable from revolutionary organizing" (p. 123). Newman set out the ideological basis for group therapy: "We will not engage in individual psychoanalysis. For psychological problems are historical and therefore psychological "cures" are collective" (1974 p. xx). He had come away from the NCLC merger with a clearly developed total ideology, one which fully justified and positioned the coercive processes of Social Therapy.

One of Newman's criticisms of LaRouche's operation involved LaRouche's apparent inability to effectively brainwash his followers (scholars of LaRouche might debate this – for decades he has maintained tight control of his followers and run an aggressive, highly disciplined organization. See King 1989):

> The outsider's observation that [N]CLC members have been brainwashed is mistaken. [N]CLC members are mind-fucked […] not brainwashed. For brainwashing involves a changing of the person. Mind-fucking, on the other hand, requires that the person remain the same and the mind-fucker preys on those pathological features to keep the person under control. The operation requires that the person being mind-fucked retain those pathological characteristics. Thus, there is behavioral change but no internalized change (Newman and Daren 1974).

Clearly Newman sought internalized change in his followers involving a process of radical resocialization (Berger and Luckmann 1966), not merely a change in behavior. Newman further explained his goals for group therapy, one of which was to "empty the mind" of bourgeois ideological fictions.

> For when the mind is emptied of bourgeois fictions […] it becomes small enough to be a mass mind; small enough to be a part of a great social institution; small enough to change; small enough to create in ways which produce change […] As such it is a collective institution […] understandable in terms of workers and rulers and their relationships (Newman and Daren 1974).

On exiting LaRouche's organization, Newman had clarified his ideas, consolidated his group of followers and created a formal Party complete with cadres, Central Committee and ambitious plans for expansion. Power still rested solely in Newman's hands, however, with the Central Committee acting merely as an instrument for promoting and demoting cadres as a further method of control (Jack interview).

The organization's Midwest Regional Report dated Fall 1974 stated, without irony:

> We are the vanguard revolutionary party of the world. […] The leadership serves the cadre exactly as the revolutionary party serves the people. It serves the cadre by clearly defining reality—via decisions which enables cadre (the proletariat)—as well as demanding of cadre the fullest expression of their creative potential as revolutionary organizers. *What is demanded of cadre is no mere passive acceptance of leadership and their decisions. Following leadership involves creative work. What is demanded is the fully creative act of internalizing those decisions as fully correct (i.e. as literally defining reality), as well as creative, enthusiastic implementation of those decisions* [emphasis added - AS] (International Workers Party 1974).

Newman now defined "creativity" as the internalization of leadership as "fully correct." He had arrived at a formula of control, which he himself alluded to as brainwashing, and which was achieved by (among other things) mandated "internal therapy groups" (International Workers Party 1974). The group now had 40 members, firmly lined up behind Newman, their discipline and cohesiveness tested and reinforced through the short-lived merger with LaRouche. The NT had arrived, with all its elements in place and was ready to act as "the vanguard revolutionary party of the world."

Consolidation and growth: 1975 – 1988

The next phase was one of growth of NT membership as well as, importantly, their entry into electoral politics. By 1975 the NT had an estimated 100 members (Conason 1982), more than doubling its size since the birth of the Party a year earlier. By 1988 there would be an estimated 400 to 600 members.

A key factor in this period was the NT's transformation into a clandestine party, at the same time as it began to be active and later, quite successful, in electoral politics. During its first foray into electoral work – which consisted of an infiltration and takeover attempt of the People's Party – the NT (then known as the IWP) publicly announced that it had disbanded (Berlet 1987). But many first-person accounts (for example, participants in the current study) and documents (Tourish and Wohlforth 2000) contradict this statement; the NT has continued to operate as a closed, disciplined, and highly centralized underground organization. Cadres continued group therapy as a condition of party membership and in order to "learn how to be political" (Myrna interview). Party plenums were now held biennially and, despite ultra-secrecy and an underground cell structure, functioned as mandatory gatherings of the entire membership.

The NT favored the creation of front organizations with names similar to existing, legitimate organizations in order to siphon off support. For instance, in 1974 they formed the National Unemployed Welfare Rights Organization (NUWRO) attempting to profit from years of successful efforts by the black-led National Welfare Rights Organization (NWRO). This particular work also yielded a new alliance with another political cult based on similar attack therapy techniques – Gino Parente's National Labor Federation – an alliance that was to last for many years (Berlet 1987)[35].

During this period myriad publications came and went. Some of these publications were "mass" publications, such as *The Union Works*, while others had a quasi-professional Marxist/Social Therapy cast, such as *Critical Practice*. Still others were strictly internal for NT members only: *Organizing Notes* which "will serve our close contacts and periphery (2nd and 3rd circle) as "*Party Building*" serves internally (1st circle)" (International Workers Party 1976). These differing publications are evidence of the group's now formal (though not publicly stated) structure of different levels of commitment and function. This was expressed by the concepts of the "periphery," the "circles" around the core Tendency, and the "organic members" (see below). This reflects Arendt's (1948/1979) concept of the onion-like layers of a fully-formed totalist

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[35] Parente, interestingly, was an alumnus of Synanon, the drug rehabilitation program that pioneered the use of attack therapy as a cult organizing method.

organization where the leader provides the driving movement, the inner circle is hard to penetrate, and the outer circles are more porous, designed for recruitment, funding, or other supportive functions.

1977 saw the NT's first electoral success with the election of an NTer to the NYC school board. This was followed by other successes in local New York elections. These early electoral efforts were marked by intensive work by cadres and volunteers who gathered signatures for ballot access and campaigned, relying on exhausting 8-hour shifts (Sidney interview). The ability to mobilize supporters for petitioning and campaign efforts became a key organizational strength of the NT.

The NT now began to recruit "organic members" – generally referring to Black, Latino/a and poor people brought in through their work in numerous ad hoc front groups. These "organic members" (who would be useful politically in the diverse environment of New York City) were differentiated from the core leadership group recruited in the early years who were, so far, nearly all white and mostly middle class. Organic members were used (and continue to be so) to create the appearance of a poor and Black or Latino-led organization, although this was never actually the case (Serrette 1987).

Meanwhile Newman continued giving various public lectures through which new patients were recruited. The New York Institute for Social Therapy officially opened in 1978 and by 1979 had an estimated 200 patients (Conason 1982). Internally the party's focus was still to: "develop further within the party our existing expertise in the area of social-psychological techniques, i.e., the psychology of propagandizing" (International Workers Party 1976).

Control of personal attachment relationships continued: "In the past six months, for instance, almost half the members of the cult have split up with the person they were involved with at the beginning of that time span" (King 1977). Extremely heavy workloads also continued to be the norm, as did the now formal establishment of a dues structure, as well as ongoing weekly therapy fees from cadres. Cadres were also expected to attend, and pay admittance for, public events such as Newman's lectures, as well as being involved in a wide variety of fundraising efforts in the name of various front groups.

The structure of the underground party and its front groups was working effectively enough for Newman to take a major next step. Instead of relying on infiltrating and taking over existing third party formations, he now decided to establish his own electoral party that he could manage and control from the get-go. As Lofland (1977) discusses in his study of the Unification Church, infiltration is a slow process, and as with the UC, this may have been why Newman decided to move beyond his previous infiltration tactics to development of a new party. In 1979 the NT founded the New Alliance Party (NAP) (Conason 1982) with an anti-racist and anti-sexist platform, and a socialist "People instead of profits" ideology. NAP was funded by the highly profitable NY Institute for Social Therapy (Conason 1982), by phone and street solicitations, event ticket sales, newspaper sales, and other fundraising methods. The new party entered local New York politics by promoting candidates such as Joseph Galiber, a conservative black politician who had been recently indicted on corruption charges (Conason 1982). They also organized the Dump Koch (then the mayor of NYC) campaign. Eventually NAP would field multiple candidates in different races, including running Newman for Mayor and then later for the U.S. Senate.

Alongside these political developments, two important new cultural and youth projects started which would eventually become the Castillo Theater[36] and the All Star Talent Show Network. These projects represented the start of the theater and performance elements of the NT, becoming another tool in Newman's ever-more sophisticated recruiting, indoctrinating and fundraising toolkit.

The NT was now thriving financially. By 1982, the NY Institute had about 800 patients, with an annual cash flow that "may be about $500,000" (Conason 1982). An estimated half of these patients were NAP members (and of those, probably the majority were NT cadres) paying an average of $40 per weekly group therapy session. Considerable amounts of money were now flowing through the organization—not just through the NY Institute, but from various other activities, ranging from subscriptions to the newspaper, to a core member's dental clinic, and now, explicitly stated in an internal

[36] From its inception, the great majority of Castillo Theater productions were either written or directed by Newman (Unknown 2003) and it became seen as essentially a "vanity theater".

meeting of the group's Office of Economic Development (1983), the "money available to our organizers" (i.e. their personal assets). Newman stated: "There's only one place that money goes. It goes to the organization." He continued:

> In the simplest of terms, the primary responsibility of our economic entities, both the businesses, the individual organizers, our stock, our bonds, our scams, our piggy banks—whatever it is we have—the off the top responsibility, the off the top concern of all that money—is to support the pre-party. […] Resistance will be rolled over with a huge steamroller. So, if you wish to persist in it, you'll simply probably increase your therapeutic bill" (Office of Economic Development 1983).

In this same meeting Newman highlighted the profitable nature of the political and therapy operations:

> There's big money right now in Marxist Leninist organizing if we set up the structure. […] I don't know how big the money is but, there is in fact real money to be made in the model we developed—real money, serious money. The damn New York Institute for Social Therapy and Research is a bloody goldmine. […] There's big money out there. In all of its versions—Marxist version, cleaned-up version—all the different versions. There's heavy money (Office of Economic Development 1983).

It was in this period that the group formed a security unit and began to acquire and train with automatic and semi-automatic weapons. The security unit was required both to protect the increasing amounts of cash, as well as to protect the group from the ire of militant Jewish organizations such as the Jewish Defense League, which were beginning to agitate against Newman (Myrna, George interviews). Newman was also guarded by armed members of the security unit (Gasink 1993). The FBI opened files on the group and considered them "armed and dangerous" (Grann 1999)

Newman, as the leader of the "vanguard party of the world," now decided to enter the international political realm. His Rainbow Coalition (not to be confused with Jesse Jackson's Rainbow Alliance[37]) morphed into the Rainbow Lobby which had the mission of creating and maintaining contacts with various opposition groups in developing countries, such as Haiti, the Congo, and Colombia. According to one source, high-level

[37] The name confusion between the two groups was, however strategic and a way for the NT to piggy-back on the popularity of Jackson's group.

NT women developed these contacts by performing sexual favors for some of these leaders. The Rainbow Lobby also attempted to funnel money for weapons to some of these organizations (George interview).

Politically, the NT continued with alliance-building and electoral politics. The NT began contacts with Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam (George interview), an alliance that would continue for at least a decade. This coincided with one of Fred Newman's famously anti-Semitic statements that would dog him 20 years later: at a meeting in Harlem he stated, in language reminiscent of LaRouche, that "Jews are the decadent stormtroopers of capitalism" (Anti-Defamation League 1995). In the mid-80s NAP launched its first presidential campaign, running a black activist, Dennis Serrette, as the presidential candidate. In a mammoth effort, with cadres fanning out across the country, Serrette gained ballot status in 33 states. But following the 1984 campaign Serrette resigned and wrote his own exposé in which he described Newman's vacations in the group's mansion in the Hamptons where cadres cooked, cleaned and generally served him. Serrette stated that though he had initially been recruited to a supposed "Black-led" organization, in fact the white Fred Newman had complete control of NAP through his underground organization (Serrette 1987). Thus we see both ongoing exploitation of cadres, as well as the use of deceit to recruit persons of strategic value to the organization.

The control of attachment relationships now extended to the control of reproduction. Despite the ongoing emphasis on children's and youth programs almost none of the group members were having their own children. In fact, several reports indicated that women were strongly pressured to have abortions if they became pregnant (Dennis King 2005, George, Kelly interviews). Despite his polygamous household Newman himself fathered no more children, and no children ever lived in the inner circle's various dwellings. There was also considerable internal propaganda lauding the primacy of political organizing over the "bourgeois family" including one's own children. In addition, those who were parents (having become so prior to joining) were frequently sent away from their children, many of whom were cared for collectively in an organizational house. Other cadres sent their children to the newly founded Barbara

Taylor school until they finally pulled their children out due to the poor conditions and lack of supervision (George, Celia interviews). The exposés in the press continued in this period, now sometimes focusing on the group's work with children and growing concern about the often graphic sexual language and discussion that took place in the school (Lawrence 1986).

At the end of this phase an African-American woman, Lenora Fulani, was fielded as the 1988 presidential candidate[38]. Cadres once again set out across the country and succeeded, at great personal cost, in many instances, in getting her on the ballot in all 50 states— this despite her controversial earlier visit to Khadaffi in Libya (Fulani 1987) and her ongoing support of Farrakhan. Cadres were not paid – they raised their living expenses themselves, while on the road, and consequently sometimes did not have money for food or shelter. While they were petitioning, however, they were required to get therapy by phone, still paying for the privilege. This financial pressure led many lower level cadres to steal funds in various ways from NT operations in order to eat (Celia, Ruiz, Denise, Myrna interviews). But their petitioning effort was of historic proportions, and would firmly establish the NT as a force to be reckoned with when it came to mobilizing their followers and successfully navigating the nuts and bolts of electoral political organizing[39].

The attempted infiltration of other third parties continued to some degree, with forays into the California Peace and Freedom Party and the Green Party (George interview). Fulani and Al Sharpton formed yet another alliance, and Sharpton was even put on the NT payroll[40] (Gasink 1993). The NT also delivered cadres, "organic members", and even children from the Barbara Taylor school to controversial demonstrations supporting Khadaffi, and to various of Sharpton's organizing efforts.

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[38] Though nominally a leader of NAP, Fulani was not in the topmost leadership circle, but was put forward as a political figurehead (Celia interview).

[39] With this success, Federal Election Commission matching funds were achieved to the tune of almost $1,000,000 (Jordan 1992). A pattern of funneling the money to various NT fronts and "consulting" ventures, which would be repeated on a grander scale in 1992, assured that much of this money ended up in Newman's ever-growing account (Myrna interview).

[40] According to Gasink (1993) he earned $12,000 a year for which he apparently did no actual work.

At the end of this phase, the NT had been operating as an underground organization for many years. The underground nature of the party, with its consequent secrecy, hardened the boundary between those inside and the outside world, thus increasing the closed nature of the group. While members did interact with people outside the group, these interactions were closely directed by the NT rather than being autonomous initiatives. Internal group ties continued to be dense and multiplex, with cadres being involved at many levels with other group members: living together, group therapy, volunteering or now perhaps having a paid job with one of the programs, socializing together (even with therapists: King 1977), having intimate relationships within the group, and of course, still engaging in political activity. The addition of "circles" and the "periphery" further formalized the layers of the group's hierarchy. And lastly, the NT continued to explicitly develop and expand its use of what it called "the psychology of propagandizing"—in other words: coercive persuasion.

In this period, also, the NT proved itself as a potent and sophisticated political and fundraising force. It formed alliances with actual "Black-led" organizations and recruited and mobilized a range of progressives, including people of color. Recruits continued to be brought in through therapy, as well as through NAP. Two important enduring front organizations were created – the Castillo Theater, and the All Stars Talent Show Network, which would focus on programs for "inner city" youth and children, and provide a useful channel for further fundraising and recruitment. These various elements worked together to produce the greatest growth in the lifetime of the Tendency, reaching a peak of 400 to 600 members of the clandestine party. This growth was driven by the enormously hard work of cadres under the close supervision of Newman's inner core in their capacity as social therapists. Cadres financed both their own living expenses and their own social therapy (and thus their own coercive persuasion), as Newman strove to squeeze all available resources from them to support the organization and his own increasingly comfortable lifestyle.

Overreaching and rebellion: 1989 – 1993

Following this period of growth Newman may have overreached his charismatic authority. By the end of the next period his party membership saw a sharp decline in numbers to perhaps 200-300 cadres. However many of his front groups continued to be successful.

In 1989 Newman, now living with three women with whom he had been sexually involved (Daren, Kessel and Carol Bloom, his chief financial officer) decided to take a new wife, Gabrielle Kurlander, 28 years his junior, and a rank and file group member then married to another cadre. After a "communist wedding" (Grace interview), Newman promoted Kurlander to his inner circle and to the public leadership of the All Stars (All Stars Project n.d.), a job that, in contrast to the small stipends of rank and filers, by 2005 paid $200,000 per annum. But this rapid promotion of a former peer (who, though well-liked, was not necessarily well-respected) caused dissension in the ranks. Hearing the rumblings, Newman called a meeting that would go down in NT lore – the "Want Fred" meeting. This was the beginning of a campaign and purge that would once again consolidate Newman's power by removing dissatisfied elements. Cadre were instructed that if they didn't want Newman and Kurlander and their "hot, sexy relationship" (Sadell 1989), then they should leave.

How to "Want Fred" was demonstrated in several self-abasing letters from his wives and other inner circle women published in various IWP-controlled publications (collected in: Daren, Sadell, Rosen, Green, Frazier, and Ortiz 1990). A typical example follows, under the title, *Manifesto for FN and GK*:

> I am haunted by the spectre of this BEAUTIFUL LOVE! I admire it, and want to be near it within sight and sound of it it's like a beautiful aria! But I can never have the aria. Ah, the division of labor! […]
>
> You and Rie! [Kurlander - AS] You're in another, better world, a world of your own making. You deserve it! Good for you, comrades! […]
>
> In my own way, dear comrades, I have been "on the blanket," refusing, in the most spiteful way, to be touched by the simple humanity of a poor, Jewish man. You wanted to teach me a way out of this pain. I learned all I could from you, but not the way out of this pain. I didn't want to I didn't want you. I didn't want you to touch it. And that's my anti-Semitism that I see only now in the light of this BEAUTIFUL LOVE, and

> for this crime of rejection, dear comrades I am heartily sorry, and beg your forgiveness.
>
> And I tell you with all my heart that I will learn to want you to want you. I want to be more than an asset to the revolution, more than cannon fodder, more than a sacrifice (Jesus, till now, that was truly enough for me!) I want to want you. And I will!

Many cadres could not stomach this latest twist, coming on the heels of their extraordinary efforts for the 1988 election, and over the next couple of years there was considerable attrition, especially among the mid-80s recruits, and membership dropped to about 300 (Grace interview). The inner circle of 40 or so, however, hung on through the crisis.

In 1990 a new campaign was launched to get Fulani on the presidential ballot again. This netted $2,000,000 of matching federal funds[41], along with an endorsement by Farrakhan. The same pattern of funneling funds to shell entities occurred, along with faked donations in the name of cadres (Myrna interview, Gasink 1993). Several ex-members later reported these fraudulent activities to the Federal Elections Commission[42] (Shapiro 1999). Despite the increase in funding, this time Fulani only got on the ballot in 39 states.

In this period, NT membership declined, largely due to a perception on the part of the newer members that the group had ceased to be political and was becoming merely a vehicle for Newman's personal aggrandizement and promotion of favorites. One could argue that the group had always been such a vehicle, but the "motivational" or "cathectic" (Scott 1998) overtly-stated goals which had been successful in the earlier part of the 80's were now overshadowed by clearly ego- and money-driven actions of Newman's. He had failed, perhaps, to adequately screen his actions with political justifications. Disaffected former members also began to write their own exposés of the group, detailing fraud, exploitation and opportunism (Cohen 1993; Gasink 1993; Ortiz 1993; Pleasant 1993) and, importantly, provided a base outside the group to which yet

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[41] The growing wealth of the NT is, perhaps, illustrated by the fact that around this time, the group purchased a $2,000,000 building on Greenwich St. which would house the Castillo Theater, the East Side Institute for Social Therapy, and the Castillo publishing house.

[42] The FEC fined Fulani $600,000,of which she eventually paid only $117,000 (Shapiro 1999).

more members left when they were ready. Many, however, remained and they were likely strengthened in their commitment (Festinger 1962; Festinger, Riecken, and Schachter 1956) having survived another round of purging and testing of their belief in, and loyalty to, Newman.

Leveraging Political Power: New Alliances, New Enemies: 1993 – 2005

This temporary setback did not last long, and the group re-emerged from the "Want Fred" period with a kind of "mainstreaming" strategy, leaving much of the previous Marxist and revolutionary rhetoric behind, and instead embracing a discourse of "independent politics." They now engaged in a concerted effort to build alliances with high-profile politicians, including many on the Right. Ideologically, Newman (1997) began putting forwards a nihilistic "strong-program" (Antonio 2000) post-modernism announcing "the end of knowing."

In 1993, following the Waco conflagration that resulted in the deaths of 76 of cult leader David Koresh's followers, and 4 ATF officers, Newman launched a concerted, multi-pronged attack (in alliance with Scientology and the Unification Church) on the Cult Awareness Network (CAN), an organization started in the 1970s by families who had lost children to cults. NAP also sued the FBI over their designation of the group as a cult. Presumably these efforts were an attempt to regain legitimacy in reaction to the growing cult accusations from former members, journalists, and researchers.

The 1993 plenum gathered only about 170 cadres (Rusty interview), and was guarded by the security team in order to keep out purged group members, further illustrating the new, defensive stance. However a new political offense was also launched: NAP now began to build ties with third party presidential candidate Ross Perot, a move that led, the following year, to NAP dissolving and its organizers subsequently taking on key national posts at the Patriot Party's founding convention. Along with entering the Patriot Party (later the Reform Party), Newman formed a new entity: the Committee for a Unified Independence Party, to position his troops for further penetration into the newly re-energized third party movement. NAP leveraged their powerful signature gathering machine to gain influence in these efforts. In 1996 Fulani

opened up advances towards the far-right Pat Buchanan in a much-noticed, though short-lived, strange-bedfellows alliance. David Grann (1999) wrote in the New Republic that the IWP (i.e. NT) now had influence in the U.S.' "most important 3rd party of the late 20th century." By 1999 the NT had won control over the Reform Party, which, however, finally imploded a year later as non-NTers quit the party in protest.

At this point, the new vehicle for Newman's ambitions became the Independence Party, which NT organizers had also helped found. Real political power was at hand. This work was still supported by a cadre of over-worked NT members[43], who continue to pay for therapy, sometimes having as many as six different therapists during their tenure (Denise interview).

The programs for children and youth also made headway in these years. The Joseph Forgione Development School for Youth began, and was later lauded by prominent black academic Henry Louis Gates Jr. in a PBS special (Gates, like many other big names, would be drawn in to endorse one or other of the group's many activities over the years). In the late 90s the All Stars Project expanded to other states – notably the Bay Area, Atlanta, and Philadelphia. Wherever the All Stars Project existed, one would also find a Social Therapy center, sometimes operating out of the same building[44]. The All Stars and Social Therapy also made inroads into various social service agencies in this period (Gillian interview).

By the year 2001, Newman had achieved remarkable legitimacy and power, despite a succession of exposés. He controlled the NY Independence Party (NY IP) and its key 60,000 votes, which were delivered, via the IP ballot line, to New York

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[43] An example of the level of discipline still exerted over party members: one cadre was forbidden by his party leadership (also then the national secretary of the Reform Party), from going back to his home to tend to his dying mother. He was told that his "primary relationship" was to the NT, not to his mother (Jacob interview).

[44] Meanwhile, in continued mainstreaming, endorsement-seeking and fundraising efforts, a new tactic was implemented across all the front organizations. The 1990s saw the initiation of award programs: the All Stars PHAT awards, the Otto awards for political theater, the Psych Out Social Therapy awards, and the IP Anti-Corruption awards. Most of the awards were given to Tendency insiders, such as long-time social therapists. However the Anti-Corruption awards were strategically given to New York politicians such as Attorney General Spitzer (2002), U.S. Senator Schumer (2003) and Mayor Bloomberg (2004). These high-priced award ceremonies became another event to which both cadres and the now large numbers of people on the "periphery" – such as Social Therapy patients, theater supporters, volunteers, and so on – were pressured to attend and make donations.

Republicans Pataki and Bloomberg[45]. During the 2004 presidential election, the Newman-controlled NY IP supported Ralph Nader's presidential bid. Nation writer, Bruce Shapiro's (1999), earlier comment about Fulani and Buchanan also explained this latest strange-bedfellows alliance, "Fulani and the Newmanites have become the undisputed kings of 3rd party ballot lines".

In 2001 a new program emerged: Performing the World, a biennial conference that brought together the Castillo Theater, the All Stars, and the Social Therapy centers, along with what was called "independent politics." All the elements of Newman's world met in this public context, and initially (as with his other projects) considerable legitimacy was conferred by prominent academics, in this case, the well-known psychologist, Kenneth Gergen of the Taos Institute (Taos Institute n.d.).

Many All Stars participants contributed to this event (Ralph interview). Some of these "youth" were now actually in their mid to late 20s and had been associated with the All Stars since their mid-teens. They performed multiple functions for the group – sometimes working on the talent shows, sometimes presenting at the conference, other times participating in the adult Castillo theater, or working on IP petitioning campaigns, and, according to one source, likely becoming involved in Social Therapy (Ralph interview). Once again, the pattern of the group becomes clear – draw people in through one front, and then immerse them entirely in the dense, all-consuming group network.

In this period, it appeared that recruitment to the underground NT may have slowed down from its peak in the late 80s. Reports from people involved recently in the group's activities indicate a pattern of individuals entering Social Therapy, then engaging in voluntary work for the theater or children's programs and making donations to these programs. The NT keeps many of these people at arm's length from the internal workings of the group (in the "periphery"), selecting only a few for recruitment to the inner group. Newman seems to have developed a keen sense of how far he can push people, and what he can get from whom, allowing him to streamline the operation.

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[45] Four days before the IP convention that endorsed these two candidates, the New York Industrial Development Agency (IDA) approved an $8.7 million bond in the name of the All Stars Project (which now subsumed the ATSTN, Castillo Theater and the Development School for Youth) with which they purchased a building in a desirable off-Broadway location.

The group appears to have settled more into several layers: the ten or so "wives" and others who live with Newman, the inner circle of about 40 members, a concentrated cadre of perhaps 150 – 200, a large "periphery" who give money and time, and are involved in multiple programs (but are not aware of the clandestine group), and a further, yet more dispersed "periphery" who may participate only by giving money, or lending their name as sponsors, etc. and who are entirely ignorant of other aspects of the group. (See Figure 1.) What Lofland (1977) refers to as the "slickness dimension" has been burnished to a high shine – the front organizations now operate out of professional-looking offices, produce glossy, professional materials, and are endorsed by high-profile public figures.

In this period, then, Newman successfully regrouped after losing many cadre in the early 90's. His projects achieved perhaps their peak of success during this time, although membership of the inner party actually dwindled. Through his front organizations and most loyal cadres, Newman controlled and successfully leveraged 60,000 votes of the New York Independence Party. The All Stars Project raised large amounts of money and gained high-profile support, and Social Therapy gained legitimacy and reach through professional conferences, publications, activities such as Performing the World, and also gained entrance into public schools and social service agencies.

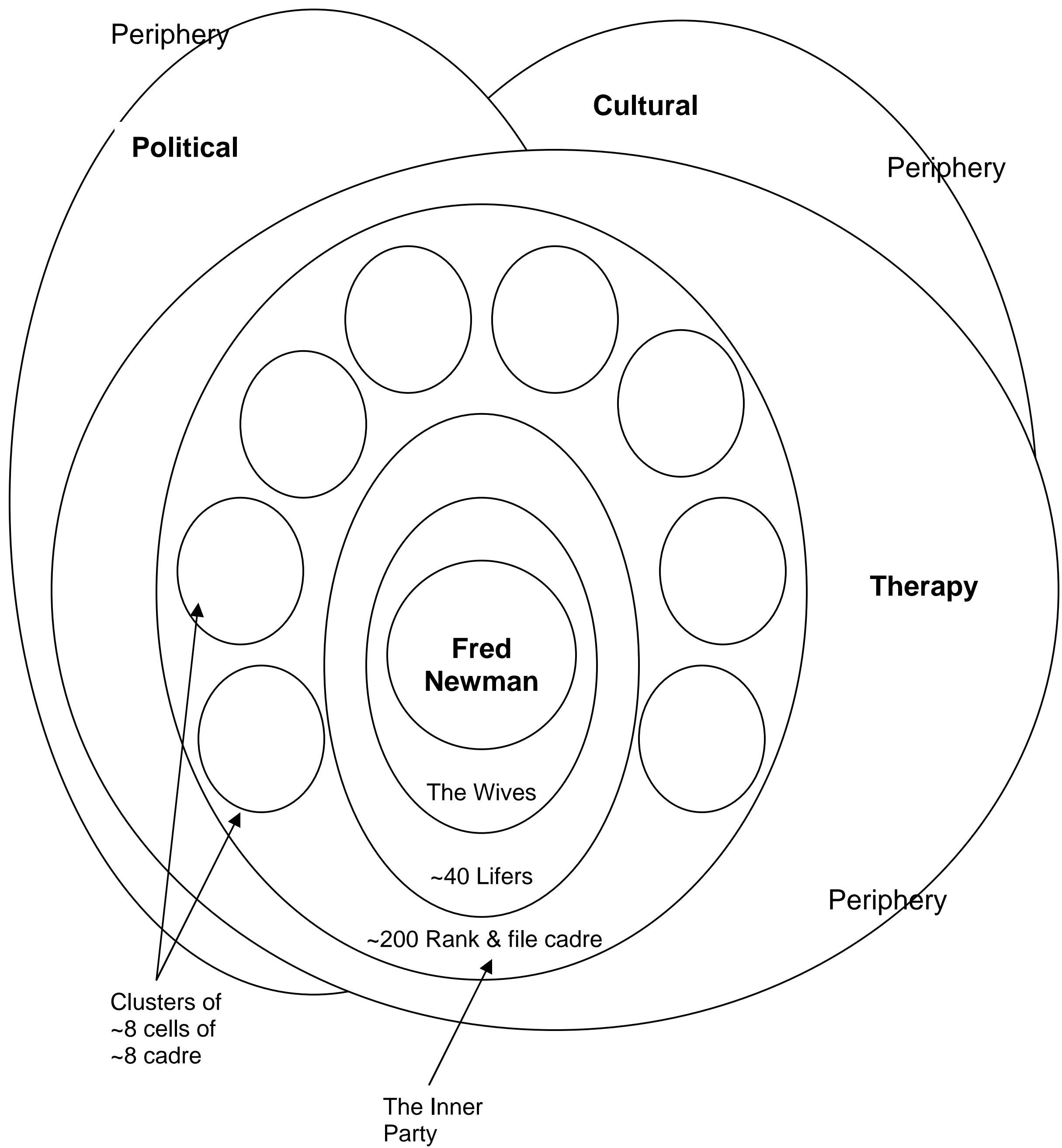

Figure 1.
The Newman Tendency

The Beginning of the End? Or Perhaps Just a New Beginning?

In 2005, a NY1 TV reporter produced an award-winning news series on the group (Nissan 2005). In this documentary Newman justified his long-time practice of therapists sleeping with their patients, saying of his own lovers, for instance, that "Some of them were in therapy [with me], yeah." Fulani refused to renounce her and Newman's earlier inflammatory statements about Jews. Ex-members went on camera and detailed a series of ethical breaches, fraud and deception. As a result of the broadcast, a contract for the All Stars to receive funding to provide after school programs in New York was put into abeyance, and politicians such as Hillary Clinton and Attorney General Elliot Spitzer now publicly refused to seek or take the IP line on the ballot. Newman and Fulani also quietly slipped off the All Stars Project board and its website, trying to save the lucrative All Stars donor base built up over years of free cadre labor doing "street performance" solicitations and telemarketing from the group's sophisticated phone bank. Recently there have been several formal complaints made of the group's practices, including one of child abuse[46] (Gillian, Bernice interviews). Other complaints in various states concerning breaches of professional ethics and licensing codes remain in process.

This news report aired at the same time that independent activists in the NY IP had ousted Newman followers from the State IP executive committee (field notes). As of this writing, the NT no longer has control of the New York IP[47]. All of the NT's other programs continue. Social therapists practice in New York, California, Georgia, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Washington D.C. The All Stars Project now has more new programs: Youth Onstage!, Production of Youth by Youth, and the Bay Area and Philadelphia Development Theaters. There is even a Newman follower in South Africa running a Center for Youth and Community Development. The Committee for a Unified Independence Party remains active, touting an "independent movement" on its web page which prominently features weekly discussions with Fred Newman. A California-based

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[46] This complaint was not upheld by the New York Attorney General's office.

[47] However, the Bloomberg-controlled New York Industrial Development Agency has just approved an additional $12.5 million bond for the All Stars Project, despite well-publicized protests by other NYC officials.

organization, The Independent Voice, is co-chaired by long-time NTers and "promotes the visibility and power of the State's independent voters" (IndependentVoice.org 2006).

Newman now lives in a high-priced brownstone on Bank St in Greenwich Village, along with ten of his inner circle, including Kessel, Tilsen, Bloom and Kurlander. The interlinks between Newman, this inner core of the NT, and all the varied front organizations are easily tracked through boards of directors and tax documents. Fred Newman is now 70 years old, has diabetes, and it is reported that he has been unwell for some time. Former members and others wonder what is the plan for succession? Some believe that a woman raised in the group, Vanessa Tilsen, is slated to take over, while others feel she lacks the necessary charisma. But there is agreement among former members that a plan and a structure exists – that there is enough wealth and infrastructure in the organization that it will be carried forward in some way, even in Newman's future absence.

All of the elements of Newman's empire, as formed in the late 60's and early 70's, remain in place. The internal party is strong and disciplined. The Social Therapy practices continue to flourish despite numerous complaints from former patients. The theater and youth elements have just received a financial boost from New York City. Politically the group has recently been weakened by their ouster from the New York IP, but given their past history of overcoming similar expulsions, this is unlikely to deter them from future efforts.

Conclusion

This chapter has described the history and development of the NT, and has shown how the NT has fit the criteria for a totalist organization, more or less from its inception. The charismatic and authoritarian Fred Newman was the undisputed leader from the start, and remains so today. He built the organization from an initial core of ten members, but throughout the life of the NT it is Newman who has controlled all aspects of the party: from its finances to the total ideology which relies on his pronouncements. He also controls the promotion and demotion of secondary leadership. Social Therapy is the main site of maintaining the resocialization of members, although the entire structure and other

practices of the organization also contribute to the overall system of coercive persuasion. Efforts to dissent have been met with purges and expulsions. A dense, hierarchical structure exists, made up of: a closed inner group answerable to Newman, a lieutenant layer (the "lifers"), and a changing roster of front groups. Inner party members are both deployable and exploited. Later chapters will explore in more depth the control of attachment relationships within the NT, the formation of a disorganized attachment bond, and will more closely examine the group's discourse and total ideology.

Chapter Seven

A History of the Green Party

> *Grassroots Democracy: Every human being deserves a say in the decisions that affect their lives and not be subject to the will of another* [First of the Ten Key Values]. *[…]*
>
> *There is no authoritative version of the Ten Key Values of the Greens. The Ten Key Values are guiding principles that are adapted and defined to fit each state and local chapter* (Green Party of the United States n.d.-b).

The Green Party in the United States has grown from its roots in the European Green movement in the 1970s to its current standing as a third party with hundreds of locals operating in every state. These various locals, while highly decentralized in operation, are nonetheless generally united by a platform of Ten Key Values, which delineate an agenda of social justice, "ecological wisdom", grassroots democracy and non-violence. The national political director of the Green Party of the United States (GPUS) reported that in the 21 states where voters register their party preference, 290,165 are registered to the Green Party. He estimates that in 2006, 500,000 people in the U.S. currently point to the Green Party as their primary party identification (personal communication).

This chapter traces the trajectory of the Greens' growth in the U.S. After tracing the international roots of the party, I then survey the history that led to the development of the two national Green Parties—the Green Party of the United States (GPUS) and The Greens/Green Party USA (TG/GPUSA)—and end with a brief look at the history of state and local Green groups in Midwest State[48]. The bulk of interviewees for this study were active in one or other of these Midwest State-based groups and so, given the high level of autonomy of local Green groups, some specific details have been given at this local level.

Sources for this chapter include books on the histories of the European (Capra and Spretnak 1984) and U.S. Green movements, and on U.S. third parties (Rensenbrink 1999; Sifry 2003). Material from interviews with formerly active Greens is included, along with

[48] To preserve anonymity, I have changed some identifying details, including place names.

observations from Green events. Additional material is drawn from the web pages of the two national Green Parties.

This history is divided into several phases. However, unlike with the Newman Tendency—and due to the Greens' decentralization—estimated membership figures are not available (except for the current period). The estimated number of local chapters is available for some periods and these are listed:

Table 4
Phases of Green Party growth

Phase name	Years	Est. number of local chapters (in the U.S.)
International roots	1967-1984	0
Inception and early growth	1984-1990	25-300
"Activist" vs. "electoral" split; Growth and consolidation	1991-2000	unknown
Regrouping	2001-2006	~600 (estimated) plus many campus chapters.

International Roots: 1967-1984

In 1984, Fritjof Capra, a physicist and systems theorist, and Charlene Spretnak, author, lecturer and activist, published *Green Politics*, a study of the West German Greens. Their book ended with a call to organize a Green movement in the U.S. It is thus both a source of historical information about the Green Party's roots in Europe, as well as being a crucial element in the creation of the U.S. Green movement.

The earliest roots of the Green movement are in the 1967 founding of the Values Party in New Zealand. The Values Party emphasized "not only environmental issues but also values and spirituality, and situat[ed] itself clearly beyond left and right." (Capra and Spretnak 1984 p. 173). From these roots, according to Capra and Spretnak and Sifry (2003), the worldwide growth of Green parties has become largely a localized, decentralized phenomenon.

The key site of Green activism then moved to West Germany in the 1970s, with a broad set of activists mobilizing around issues such as a nuclear freeze, pollution, and ending the Vietnam war, as well as activism around women's liberation and community

politics (Capra and Spretnak 1984; Green Party of Minnesota 2006). Much of this activism had been, in turn, inspired by earlier political developments in the U.S. As a West German Green stated: "We were often told that three of the basic principles of Green Politics—ecology, grassroots democracy, and nonviolence—were inspired in large part by citizens' movements in America, especially the civil rights and environmental movements" (Capra and Spretnak 1984 p. xx). So, although the Green Party did not emerge in the U.S. until the 1980s, it shares its political and historic roots with those of the Newman Tendency. The German Greens had their origins not just in the counterculture (which was a stronger element in the United States) but rather more in the "Marxist-dominated student revolt of 1968 and its aftermath" (p. 11) with its associated anti-capitalist ideology and militancy. In addition, the German Greens were very much aware of Nazism—"their nation's dark inheritance" (p. 134)—and thus took great care in regard to the use of symbols, names, references to spirituality, strong leadership, types of voting, and even, given the earlier Nazi focus on the special role of German mothers, in focusing on the rights of mothers.

In 1979 the West German Greens had their first electoral victory, winning 3.2% of the vote in an election to the European Parliament of the European Economic Community. The successful platform for this campaign decried over-industrialization and argued for "an ecological and regionalized Europe" (p. 74). Importantly, due to West German political party funding laws, this victory resulted in over $1,000,000 of federal funds being allocated to the new party (Capra and Spretnak 1984), which gave it a sound financial base from which to grow.

The West German Green Party won their first national parliamentary seats in 1983. This precipitated the most basic and ongoing split in the party. On the one side were the Fundis (fundamentalists), who opposed forming a general coalition in the government, fearing a dilution of their values and goals. On the other side were the Realos (realists) who favored such *realpolitik* coalitions (Capra and Spretnak 1984). As one Realo characterized this ongoing split: Fundamentalists "tend to fall in love with themselves as a movement and forget the goals of the Greens" (p. 138).

Shortly after this success Capra and Spretnak published their book, *Green Politics*, in English, about the West German Greens; this proved to be a catalyst for the founding of the Green movement in the U.S. In this book, they mention many problems and tensions challenging the German Greens, including the organizational and personnel problems caused by the Greens' insistence on rotating offices, the frequent burnout of activists, and the frequently heard view that "Two Greens, two opinions". However, Capra and Spretnak retained a vitally optimistic view of the German Greens, stating that: "They have brought into politics more than a grassroots, nonauthoritarian style and future-oriented approach; they have incorporated what the German philosopher Ernst Bloch called the principle of hope" (p. 145). Their book was widely read among progressive and environmental activists in the U.S., inspiring early organizing efforts.

Petra Kelly, a charismatic but somewhat controversial figure who was a founder and leader of the German Greens, also influenced the formation of the Green movement in the U.S. Though born in Germany, Kelly had lived in and been educated in the U.S. In 1983 she and other colleagues toured the U.S., presenting Green positions. While Kelly became a popular figure for Greens in the U.S., many Greens in Germany appreciated her less, seeing her as a publicity seeker, and rejecting the "idea of strong, charismatic leaders" (p. 8). A member of the Greens' national executive committee stated:

> Petra Kelly was very important in the formative stages of the party because charismatic personalities are necessary to create stability and to establish the new ideas in the public's consciousness. However, that function is no longer needed (p. 10).

But it was likely Kelly's early experience in the U.S.—during which she was influenced by the civil rights movement and worked on Robert Kennedy's presidential campaign—that contributed to the flow of ideas, organizing tactics, and experience from the U.S. to the German Greens and back again.

Capra and Spretnak point out several potential problems that they suggest would need to be overcome for Greens to become viable in the U.S. Among these is the question of who is to be a member of the Party: people with a hidden agenda and dishonest tactics should not be "allowed to ruin the movement" (p. 217). They suggest that the creation of

a clear statement of principles and goals as the first order of business would help to prevent this, but they caution: "If infiltration actually occurs, additional means would have to be devised to address it" (p. 218). They also discuss the problem of unconstructive personal attitudes, such as competition, and "negativity toward people with leadership abilities" – highlighting, perhaps, the problems that had occurred *vis à vis* Kelly. They point to the potential for a "tyranny of structurelessness[49]" (a critique that continues to be leveled at contemporary Green politics in the U.S.). Last, and related to the vulnerability created by "structurelessness", they warn of possible harassment by a "reactionary fringe group" (p. 221) as had happened in Germany[50]. All of these issues remain part of the discussion in the U.S. Green movement today.

The key aspect of this period was the international transmission of ideas and experiences of various social movements. First from the U.S. to West Germany, and then vice versa, the carrying "back" of these ideas and experiences, now developed into a new social movement and party, the West German Greens. As DiMaggio and Powell (1983) state, describing processes of change: "[W]hen goals are ambiguous, or when the environment creates symbolic uncertainty"—as certainly was the case in this historical period after "The Implosion" when progressive activists in the U.S. were jettisoning simple Marxism—"organizations may model themselves on other organizations" (p. 151). Spretnak, Capra and Kelly were key agents, therefore, in diffusing the Green model to the U.S.

The influences that the German Greens brought to the U.S. Green movement were steeped in a Green culture of participatory democracy and anti-authoritarianism, with a sharp historical awareness of the potential problems of charismatic leadership. But, as pointed out above, the German Greens also had an awareness of the potential weaknesses of an overly open "structureless" model that could be vulnerable to totalist infiltration.

[49] Freeman (1970) pointed out that a lack of formal structure does not prevent the inevitable formation of informal structures, and thus "[structurelessness] becomes a smokescreen for the strong or the lucky to establish unquestioned hegemony over others."

[50] They mention specifically the problems the German Greens faced when harassed by Lyndon LaRouche's group in Germany. This is the first of several interesting overlaps between the Greens and the Newman Tendency that have emerged in this study.

Thus early Greens, both internationally, and in the U.S., were consciously on guard against these elements of totalitarianism.

Inception and early growth: Greens in the United States 1984-1990

In the period following the upheavals of the 1960s and early 1970s, activists in the US were ready for new forms of organization that would link up the disparate areas of activism that were the legacy of earlier social movements. The very first North American Green Party was founded in British Columbia in 1983 (Capra and Spretnak 1984). Shortly after this activists in Maine met and started "a Maine Green party/movement" (Rensenbrink 1999 p. 101). And in August 1984, Spretnak, co-author of *Green Politics* called a meeting in St. Paul with the goal of forming a national Green organization (Sifry 2003). This brought together an eclectic crowd of about 60 people:

> They were 'independent peace activists, community organizers, organic farmers, religious people, bioregionalists, feminists, several academics, and a couple of union members who sought to create a new, values-based, multi-issue movement and political party in this country' (Sifry 2003 p. 148).

The meeting participants, who came from around the U.S., brainstormed what a "future green society would be like. Words such as 'empowerment', 'neighborliness', 'connectedness with the earth' and 'community' emerged from this exercise" (The Greens/Green Party USA). Together they wrote the founding document which included what would become the Ten Key Values. The new organization was named the Green Committees of Correspondence (GCoC), to commemorate the network of committees that organized prior to the American Revolution. In this way, the new Green movement drew on, and modified (Schwartz 1991), the grassroots democratic traditions and identity of their uniquely American past in quite a different way than the German Greens had to reconcile their (more recent) "dark inheritance".

The Ten Key Values were further developed by Mark Satin, Jeff Land and Charlene Spretnak, and by members of the anarchist theorist Murray Bookchin's New England Institute for Social Ecology. The final version was released at the end of 1984 after much cross-country dialogue facilitated by Spretnak (The Greens/Green Party

USA). The Ten Key Values built upon German Greens' formulation of the "Four Pillars" which defined the broad political scope of their movement: Ecology, Grassroots Democracy, Social Justice and Non-violence. These principles were, therefore, the negotiated work of many, rather than being dominated by a single figure, as is typical of the development of a totalist ideology. Thus, early on, the US. Greens followed Capra and Spretnak's advice in creating a clear statement of principles and goals which have had considerable staying power. The Ten Key Values continue to serve as the unifying principles of the U.S. Greens. They are:

- Grassroots Democracy
- Social Justice
- Ecological Wisdom
- Non-violence
- Decentralization
- Community-based Economics
- Feminism
- Diversity
- Responsibility
- Future Focus

The principles of grassroots democracy and decentralization, in particular, were attempts to consciously strengthen democratic processes and egalitarian structures as core elements of Green organizing.

According to Sifry (2003), the early growth of the Greens was bottom-up, not top down as in the case of, for instance, the Reform Party. The Greens relied solely on volunteers (and in most cases are still led by volunteers). In addition, the Greens have had, since their inception an almost "reflexive allergy to hierarchy or charismatic leaders" (P. 148). At first many local groups formed—in 1984 there were twenty-five, and by 1990 300 local groups existed across the U.S. National or regional organization was weak, although some regional groupings existed, and there was some participation in an

Interregional[51] Committee (Sifry 2003). The first national meeting (after the initial St. Paul meeting) didn't take place until 1987 (Sifry 2003). By 1990 the first Green Party ballot line in the US was recognized in Alaska. This was also the year that the California state Green Party was organized.

By 1991, according to Rensenbrink, Greens were still largely white and middle class, with just a few people of color. There was little or no coordination between locals, no workable fundraising operation, and they were "so tied up in awkward structures of their own making and so hesitant in their gestures toward political engagement, that the prospects for a successful Green politics seemed to be fading away" (cited in Sifry, 2003 p. 150). The Greens had grown out of the feminist, peace and anti-nuclear activism of the 1970s, where affinity groups and an intense focus on process dominated the political culture (and out of which period was coined the term "the tyranny of structurelessness" Freeman 1970). As a result Green meetings often tended to bog down in discussions of process. They relied on consensus decision-making, and the use of facilitators rather than leaders. In this effort to be democratic and inclusive, these methods in fact, according to Sifry (2003), "tended to produce a small and insular world" (p. 151). As one of this study's participants described the process:

> I mean consensus is great, man, you know, but just the language of it was, […] OK, the ground rules are to try to do everything by consensus, so the first issue would come up and then the moderator would say, "Is there anyone with a blocking concern[52]?"—well right there, you know, if I can barricade the door and block you from all getting out, how can we reach consensus? [laughs] But OK, so somebody would say, "I have a blocking concern", and then they would tell us what it was. Then the mission of everybody else was to break that person down, as far as I could tell, so that they would […] finally go, "OK, OK—I don't have a blocking concern anymore. I don't like it but my concern won't stop us from passing this somehow"—which to me is all the wrong approach, because it gave a very combative nature to it (Lynn interview).

[51] Eschewing existing political borders, the Greens preferred to speak of bioregions, and thus "interregional" meant, in Green terminology, "national".
[52] A "blocking concern" must be a concern that relates in some way to the 10 Key Values, thus preventing merely personal gripes and so forth blocking the process.

By the mid-80s, the Green movement was loosely established in the U.S. with local, mostly disconnected groups springing up around the country, and some scattered electoral activity taking place. The movement already had the character of a New Social Movement (NSM), as defined by Johnston, Laran and Gusfield (1994): it was decentralized and diffuse and exhibited "a pluralism of ideas and values [that…] imply a 'democratization dynamic' of everyday life." The Green movement as a whole was so far succeeding in preventing the rise of totalism in its ranks: it lacked a charismatic authoritarian leader employing methods of coercive persuasion, a total ideology and a corresponding hierarchical structure, or exploitation of followers.

"Activist" and "Electoral" split; Growth and consolidation: 1991-2000

Rensenbrink (1999) calls the prior period from 1984 to 1991 an "incubation period" during which "Greens were pretty solidly agreed that the basis of the movement was in the community-centered local groups" (p. 169). However, conflicts that had already emerged in the very first St. Paul meeting continued to deepen and finally produced a split in 1991 which reshaped the Green landscape, resulting in two national Green organizations.

A party to the conflict described the early foreshadowing of this split:

> The official report from the St. Paul conference notes that "Several people thought we needed to work towards an independent political process, though many others argued third parties are a dead-end --." Thus the 'split' between "movement and party", between an activist and a ballot box oriented American Green movement, was present from the beginning (The Greens/Green Party USA).

According to Rensenbrink (1999), this conflict, between the "ecological wisdom" philosophy of Charlene Spretnak and the anarchist-based anti-capitalism of Murray Bookchin, had simmered for years. An adherent to the Bookchin/anarchist side of the conflict started the Left Green Network in 1987, as a caucus of the Greens Committees of Correspondence (GCoC), to promote their strongly leftist and anti-capitalist views, which included a rejection of the ballot box as an organizing strategy. The Left Green Network critiqued the loose organization and consensus methods of the Spretnak/ecological

wisdom wing of the GCoC. The Spretnak/ecological wisdom grouping took the view that the Greens should be "neither left nor right, but out in front," and they tended to be more interested in exploring electoral strategies.

The debate included harsh attacks by the Left Greens on several women leaders, including Spretnak, resulting in their withdrawal from the movement. As a leading member of the GCoC, Rensenbrink attempted to resolve the conflict by proposing a "House of Green" – a formation with many "rooms", which could embrace organizational and ideological differences based around a common "space" (Rensenbrink, 1999). However, this was not to be, as activists in the Left Green Network continued to feel excluded (Fitz). The conflict escalated and grew into a formal split. As a Midwest State activist put it:

> The issue was […] kind of multilayered. […T]here were basically two directions of organization going on from the late eighties on and one was the Green activist and philosophical movement arm, and the other was the Green electoral arm. The Green Party organizers wanted to form legitimate political parties that would try to get ballot access to get people into office and run on a platform and agree on a democratically assembled platform, national and local and whatever. And the activist group said: No. […T]hey said they didn't believe that it would be possible for anybody to get elected and yet remain true to the principles that we were running on. So they felt that the whole thing, you know, if they're going to run for office they should do it only as a token or figurehead kind of thing. They shouldn't really be trying to get into office to effect change because to do so […] you would be corrupted (Kelly interview).

In 1991, after an increasingly antagonistic fight, the activists of the Left Green Network prevailed and voted for the GCoC to change its name and become The Greens/Green Party USA (TG/GPUSA). The response from the group more interested in electoral politics was to break away, and in 1992 they formed a new grouping: the Green Politics Network.

The work of the Green Politics Network eventually led, by 1996, to the first Ralph Nader presidential campaign and the subsequent formation of the national Association of State Green Parties (ASGP). A split that had its roots in the founding Greens' meeting thus defined this period. The leftist, "activist" arm of the Greens wanted the Greens to

concentrate on building an independent social movement, not tied to electoral party politics. They became The Greens/Green Party USA (TG/GPUSA), signifying by the first phrase their emphasis on movement-building. On the other side of this split developed the Green Politics Network (GPN) that became the forerunner of the now dominant national Green organization, the Green Party of the US (GPUS).

Elections, growth and consolidation

The next period saw immense growth in the Green Party's electoral presence, starting with grassroots organizing for local offices, and culminating in nationwide mobilizations for Ralph Nader's two presidential campaigns.

During the 1990s, and with the Green Politics Network providing a clear forum for electoral efforts, Greens ran hundreds of candidates for local, state and federal elective office. In 1991-1992 Green candidates ran in fourteen states. The New Mexico Greens, for instance, drew on a population of environmentally conscious progressive whites, and even achieved a degree of support from Latino New Mexicans, to win several local races by focusing on grassroots organizing involving both environmental and economic issues. In the process they gained a good deal of campaign experience (Sifry, 2003). However, when they ran for statewide races they were accused of being "spoilers" by Democrats, a charge that continues to be leveled at Greens when they step beyond strictly local elections.

1996 presidential campaign

On the strength of their successes, the New Mexico Greens called a national Green gathering in 1994 to bring together the diverse segments of the Green movement. It was at this meeting that they decided it was time to enter the 1996 presidential race, ignoring the Democrats' "spoiler" charges. They believed this move "would foster the development of Green state parties in the same way that high-level state races could nurture local Green organizing" (Sifry, 2003 p. 174) and proceeded to explore various potential candidates. Although he was not a member of the Green Party, Ralph Nader ended up receiving, and accepting, the Green Party's nomination.

He did so, however, in a somewhat idiosyncratic way, later referred to as "Nader's Rules". He refused to raise money in his own name indicating that he wanted the Greens to prove themselves: "The campaign will be run by the people themselves and will be just as serious as citizens choose to make it" (p. 176). While this caused many difficulties for Green organizers who were thus prevented, by FEC rules, from coordinating their work with Nader, it did, some say, help spur the evolution of the Green Party. New Green Parties were formed in several states during the campaign, and many people became inspired and involved with the Greens as a result. This included the eventual 2004 Green presidential candidate, David Cobb, who began his Green career after listening to Nader's 1996 nomination acceptance speech (Sifry 2003). The campaign resulted in state Green Parties now having lines on the ballot in ten states – doubling their previous count. Nader got on the ballot in twenty-one states, and ended up with .7% of the vote.

Immediately after this election, representatives from several state parties met and the Association of State Green Parties (ASGP) was formed. This now raised the opposition to TG/GPUSA to the level of a formal, national organization clearly focused on continued electoral work. Tensions once again increased. In 1997, a Unity group was formed which tried to mediate these tensions to get the TG/GPUSA and ASGP to work together. But these efforts failed and Sifry (2003) writes that, as of 2001, "the split between these two branches of the American Greens has not fully healed" (p. 152). Most state Green Parties have now affiliated with ASGP, with TG/GPUSA membership dwindling sharply. By 1999 the European Federation of Green Parties recognized the ASGP as their partner in the U.S. (Rensenbrink, 1999) thus cementing further their preeminence in the U.S. Green movement.

After the presidential race, the Green Parties grew in other ways—for instance beginning to pay staff in certain areas, and improving their fundraising operations (Sifry 2003). However, they still lacked a stable financial base, with "most state parties operat[ing] on a budget of five thousand dollars or less" (p.197).

2000 presidential campaign

By the year 2000 the growth of the Greens' influence nationally could be measured by the growth in media coverage: over 200 press outlets attended the Green Party convention held in Denver. Once again the party nominated Nader, along with Native American activist Winona LaDuke as his running mate. This time Nader ran without his "Rules" in play. A new campaign tactic was also developed: the Super-rallies, which capitalized on Nader's name and national reputation as a consumer advocate. "[T]housands of volunteers flocked to the campaign" (p. 190) and "hundreds of student [Green Party] chapters formed" (p. 201). But, having started campaigning and raising money late in the game, and still lacking national political experience, the campaign had trouble managing the resources that did come in.

Nader was excluded from the presidential debates as he did not meet the threshold of support determined by the Commission on Presidential Debates. He responded to this with legal challenges to the commission, while his supporters mounted various grassroots actions in his support. These included nonviolent civil disobedience in Washington, D.C., Madison, and Boston. A rural-based Midwest State activist described one such event, involving a wheelbarrow and a cage containing two live chickens representing Bush and Gore:

> Well, probably the high point was the chicken debate. […] I thought, you know, Bush and Gore were just fair game and it was just gutless of them to be refusing to debate Ralph Nader […] And so I was outraged at that, that he was being denied to debate and the free speech of what we supposedly have in this country. And, you know, things were so stacked against him and the Greens that in a way, that was something I could do to speak out, was by organizing this chicken debate. […] We went in front of the Republican headquarters and did it and tried to get the Republican candidate to comment to the […] Republican chicken. Then we marched to the Democratic headquarters, and we had warned both of them that we were coming and they were both of course closed, but the media picked up on it, front page story, colored pictures of the chickens…(Greg interview).

During the campaign there was serious push-back from Democrats who feared that Nader's share of the liberal vote would throw the election to the Republicans. Nader, apparently, was also concerned about this potential. Although he did not say so publicly,

Nader's goal was to get 5% of the vote so that major party status would be granted the Greens, thus ensuring them federal funding for the subsequent 2004 election (Sifry 2003). He also, late in the campaign, encouraged people to vote strategically—"Vote Your Conscience"—using a "safe states" strategy. That is, people in highly partisan states where the results would not be affected by a vote for Nader/LaDuke, should, indeed, vote for them; those in disputed states should not, in order not to "spoil" the Democrats' chances. Despite this endorsement of a "safe states" strategy, the spoiler charge and the subsequent recriminations when Bush won the presidency, caused many to leave the Green Party.

While Nader failed in his overall objective, gaining only 3% of the vote, and in spite of the growing tension between Democrats, other progressives, and the Green Party, the ASGP still showed continued growth, having "active affiliates in 39 states, and […] official lines on the ballot in a total of twenty-three, up from ten after the 1996 election." (Sifry. p. 212). New state Green Parties had also formed, including in conservative states like Nebraska, Kansas and Utah.

In 2000 ASGP changed its name to the Green Party of the United States (GPUS), and in 2001 filed for national party status with the FEC (Green Party of the United States n.d.-a). Growth in the 90s had been steady and considerable: "After running candidates in fourteen states in 1991-1992, and eighteen states in 1995-96, the party's reach took a big jump in 1999-2000, with office seekers in a total of thirty-four states" (Sifry p. 147). By 2001 Greens held 91 elected positions across the nation.

Nader was certainly a charismatic figure and these first two presidential races were a catalyst that dramatically increased the growth of the GPUS. However, his role was limited to these races and he did not control the party as such. In fact, he was not ever a member of the Greens. Thus he did not take on the role of a charismatic authoritarian leader of the party as a whole, and the Greens continued to develop without such a figure. It should be noted, however, that given the great autonomy of local GP chapters, there were some cases where a local chapter was dominated by a charismatic authoritarian figure. This was the case, for instance, in the late 1980s in a local in Midwest State, as reported by a participant in this study. However, at a certain point this

particular leader became frustrated and quit, and the local fell apart. What is key for this study is that the Greens as a whole had not, so far, come under charismatic authoritarian leadership and local chapters continued to maintain considerable autonomy.

Regrouping: 2001-2006

By the time of the 2004 presidential elections, Greens were smarting from the bitter criticism of progressives and liberals resulting from Bush's win and subsequent entry into the Iraq war. The spoiler charge had considerable effect on Green supporters. As Sifry wrote after Nader's 2000 run, "[T]his charge has only gotten more explosive. GREEN just stands for "Get Republicans Elected Everywhere in November" (p. 147).

Despite the Greens' slogan of "neither left nor right, but out in front," Sifry, along with other critics, believed that Greens, and those active in the Nader 2000 campaign, were largely of the left, with a base of progressives, students, "crunchy granola" types: "It was celebratory, it was exuberant, and it was—in too many places—in a self-indulgent cultural cul-de-sac" (p. 218). In their leftist isolation they "took on the comfort of a persecuted sect" (p. 219).

In 2004, there was another effort to draft Nader to run as the Green Party presidential candidate. However, after considerable inner-party tensions—with many voting for "None Of The Above" in a form of protest against running a presidential candidate at all—David Cobb was finally nominated. Cobb ran a quieter campaign, strongly based on the safe states strategy. Some Nader supporters now felt excluded from the Party and even withdrew on that basis—although Nader himself had refused to even solicit the Green nomination[53].

As of this writing, the GPUS has affiliates in 44 states while TG/GPUSA lists only three "affiliated local organizations" on its website. In 2006 at least 223 Greens held elective office in 28 states and the District of Columbia (Feinstein 2006). The GPUS

[53] In another interesting overlap with the Newman story, Nader went on to run as an independent in 2004. The Newman-controlled New York Independence Party threw their weight behind Nader's campaign and when his access to the ballot was denied in several states, went so far as to provide their lawyer, Harry Kresky, to represent Nader in his fight to get on the ballot.

maintains official contacts with Green Parties internationally through its International Committee which is run at the national level. A Midwest activist described the last national Green Party conference she attended in 2004 as being inspiring particularly because international Greens were represented, such as a delegation from Peru: "It made me feel that the Greens are a global phenomenon" (field notes).

The Greens continue to operate in a highly decentralized manner, with a strong focus on process, open debate and inclusion of diverse opinions. Although Cobb ran as the presidential candidate in 2004 he, as with Nader, does not represent a charismatic or authoritarian leadership figure. Though impassioned debates, both internal and external to the GP, take place concerning the viability of a third party and other related electoral questions, the GPUS remains the dominant Green network, and continues to field candidates at all levels.

Midwest State Greens

The bulk of the Green Party participants for this study were active in Midwest State – mostly spread between Capital City and the rural and college town of Northland. Therefore a few details on their history are provided here as, given the decentralization of the Green Party, each state's Green Party has certain unique features and history.

The Green Party of Midwest State was founded in 1994 and they affiliated with the ASGP in 1998. By 2004 Greens held elected office in Northland, with one member of the city council there, and held two Capital City council seats and one seat on the Park Board. There are currently 16 local Green chapters in the state, but many are struggling. Only about 6 locals are seriously active (field notes from winter conference).

Green Parties in Capital City

From 1987 to 1990 various Green groupings formed and split in Capital City reflecting the splits at the national level between the Left Green Network and the Green Politics Network. Capital City Greens was the first such group and they were part of the Committees of Correspondence. As on the national scene, this more electorally-focused local survived the eventual demise of the more radical left Green groups which included

an anarchist Greens group, and a Marxist group with a strong, charismatic leader (Leonard interview). The Capital City Greens became the first Green group in Midwest State "with staying power" (Kelly interview). Eventually this group grew into two chapters formed along electoral boundaries. Candidates now routinely run in local and state elections, with, as mentioned above, some success at the city governance level. What Greens consider to be Democrat-led gerrymandering resulted in two Green Party city council members being redistricted before the last election. This, along with other factors, has led to the recent loss of those seats, while another city council seat was picked up by a different GP candidate in 2006.

Northland Greens

The Northland Green Party was founded in 1998 by a local group of mostly rural-based activists. Most of these activists had been part of a Green Caucus within the local Democratic Party (MJ personal communication), but had become disillusioned with their lack of voice and influence within that party. In this sense they fit well with the idea that social movements often are formed from pre-existing social networks (Lofland 1977; McAdam 1986). The person who initiated the first organizing meeting of the Northland Greens describes the process below, illustrating on a local basis some of the structural and leadership dynamics of the party:

> L. was offering to come down if people were interested in having a meeting. And he contacted me and so I got Park Center lined up and, I think I probably wrote a press release and letter to the editor. And about 50 people showed up and on the newspaper report it had a lot of good coverage. But since I'm the one who like, called the meeting, I felt obligated to be on—I don't know if we called it a steering committee or something—to actually create a local Greens. And so it went to a number of meetings just about the by-laws and just how the party was structured—because there's a lot of autonomy within the Greens and it's like you can be a local Green Party without having to be affiliated with the state or national at all, and the state not be affiliated with the national. And it's just a very loose structure which is you know, fundamentally democratic. But it's kind of counter-productive, or you spend a lot of time re-inventing wheels, instead of just being handed the playbook, and you know: here's [what] it means to have a Green Party and what you need to do and how

> you need to file your papers. There wasn't much guidance from anyone on how to do those mechanics. […]
>
> I never intended to be a leader in the local Greens, I was just interested, I saw that it was a good thing and in need. [… P]eople tried to draft me to […] chair it. It was like, no thanks, I really can't because of my other commitments. I wasn't going to you know, put myself forward and not be able to follow through and I knew that I didn't have the time. […] I said, well I'll be on the committee but I'm not going to chair it […] I always had sort of a bit of a standoffish attitude, I never just threw myself into it [John interview].

In 2002 the Green candidate for the Northland county commission won a seat on the commission. However, as of this date there is ongoing controversy about that candidate's work on the commission, and whether he is, in fact, upholding the Ten Key Values in certain of his votes regarding agricultural practices. In fact, local Greens are now actively campaigning to offset that commissioner's votes, by offering a new Green candidate in the 2006 election. The Northland Greens remain one of the most active locals in the state, often bringing the largest number of delegates to the annual state convention.

Conclusion

The Green Parties in the U.S. developed in a decentralized, bottom-up manner. From their early roots in the West German Green movement there has been a conscious focus on preventing the development of a cult of personality or hierarchical, anti-democratic structures. Strong, charismatic leadership is absent at the national level (and largely at the local), and Greens retain a primary focus on maintaining democratic (some say hyperdemocratic: Sifry 2003) processes. These processes are examined further in subsequent chapters. The Greens' many hundreds of local chapters continue to function in quite autonomous ways, only loosely affiliating with state and national organizations. The Green Party of the U.S. and its affiliates now routinely run candidates at all levels of government, and are slowly building success in that arena, especially at the local level. While some activists may suffer from burnout (see Chapter Ten), there is no evidence of systematic exploitation of members. Similarly there is no planned program of coercive persuasion, nor any other systematic manipulation. Dissent and disagreement over

strategy and focus are alive and well in the various groupings. In one case these disagreements resulted in a 1991 split which continues to exist despite attempts to resolve it. However, all U.S. Greens are (loosely) ideologically united behind the Ten Key Values which have been in place since 1984.

In the next three chapters I describe the processes of recruitment and entry into the Greens compared to the Newman Tendency. I look at the life of group members within each party, and, lastly, at the differing experiences members have of leaving these two groups. In this way I compare the reported experiences of members of the Newman Tendency—a group that I have argued demonstrates all the characteristics of a totalist organization—to members of the Green Party, a group shown in this chapter to be lacking the attributes of totalism.

Chapter 8

Recruitment and Entry Processes

Sydney, NT member:
I came to New York in part to find a radical Marxist group to join […] I responded to an ad in the paper that said, "Come to a meeting," and I just went to a meeting to check them out.
[…]
They offered Social Therapy. I didn't feel I needed it…but when I was asked to become a cadre, they said one of the conditions of your becoming a cadre is you must *go into Social Therapy.*

Doug, GP member:
I wanted to get more involved in some political activities, so I called up the local Green Party contact and she told me about a coordinating committee meeting, and I went to that and learned a little bit more about how the Green Party worked and then, after that, the next big event was the state nominating convention and platform convention, so I went to that. And at that point I was nominated and elected to serve on the coordinating committee.

Introduction

The quotes above provide an illustration of the different types of experience that occurred once individuals encountered, respectively, either the NT or the GP. In the above cases each person approached the group in similar ways: looking to become politically active, and wanting to "check out" the group's activities. But, as the next three chapters will show, starting with the initial point of contact with each group, participants' trajectories through their group membership differed dramatically. In the example above, the act of "checking out" the NT led to Sydney's recruitment to an intense, total involvement that included mandatory therapy with other group members as part of a process of coercive persuasion. For Doug, on the other hand, recruitment to the GP was a self-directed process which led to rapid involvement in leadership and decision-making processes, but

never total immersion: he maintained all his social relationships, and many other interests, outside of the GP. This chapter examines these differences in recruitment and entry processes. Chapter Nine looks at experiences during group membership, and Chapter Ten focuses on exit processes.

In this chapter I trace the journey of the study participants from life prior to involvement to becoming active group members. I compare the two groups of participants in their pre-group life, looking at their demographic profiles, background and lives before entry. I then focus on the recruitment process of each group, or what Zablocki (2001a) terms the "obtaining function". The recruitment process is divided into three sub-phases: initial contact, recruitment, and induction. The recruitment process as a whole maps to the first four of Lofland's (1977) seven conditions leading to what he terms "total conversion" (in other words, becoming a deployable agent), namely: ongoing acutely-felt tension; types of problem-solving perspectives, seekership, and being at a situational "turning point" and these will be discussed below.

Much has been written about the predispositions of cult members, but there is no conclusive evidence of particular dispositional features leading people to such group involvements (Singer and Lalich 1995). Zablocki (2001a) suggests we move beyond the "mutually exclusive" dispositions versus situations dichotomy and look instead at "what predisposing traits of individuals interact with just what manipulative actions by cults to produce" the outcome of "uncritical obedience" in deployable agents (Zablocki 2001b p. 171). This chapter will begin to address aspects of this, but discussion of this interaction is largely left to a subsequent chapter on attachment.

The overall framework of the theory I develop in this study states that coercive persuasion, resocialization or brainwashing, succeeds when persons are detached from existing attachment relationships, and through a process of assault and leniency conducted within an isolating social structure, form a disorganized attachment, or trauma bond to the group in question. The subject of the disorganized bond exists in a state of permanent fear arousal causing them to seek comfort from the source of fear itself, which is perceived to be a safe haven, in the absence of any other (Main and Solomon 1986). The nature of the disorganized attachment bond is that it causes cognitive impairments in

being able to think about or evaluate that relationship, at the same time as strengthening the relational bond to the person or group (Herman 1992). The opportunistic introduction of an absolute ideology shores up and supports this condition of cognitive impairment, thus further cementing the bond and setting the stage for the creation of a deployable agent.

The first stage of creating this disorganized attachment bond is two-fold: on the one hand to create a new perceived safe haven in the form of the group, and on the other to begin to detach the recruit from prior attachments to prevent access to alternate safe havens which might function as escape hatches from the disorganized bond. Thus we expect to see these effects in the NT's recruiting process, but not in that of the GP.

Demographics and background of participants

I interviewed thirteen ex-members of the NT, and twelve formerly active members of the GP[54]. All participants had been active members of their group for a minimum of one year. There is, first, a demographic bias in the sample. The center of the NT is in New York and most participants were from that area, although some were clustered around satellite centers in other regions. The GPers studied were generally from the Midwest. This may affect the ethnic differences in the participants: all GPers are white, while of the NTers, ten are white, with three being from other minority groups. The NT as an organization, does, however, have more minority participation than does the GP, so to some degree this distribution reflects the reality of these organizations.

In most respects the two sets of participants have similar demographic attributes – they are about the same generation, with an overall average age of 46 (with a range from 34-64) at the time of being interviewed for this study. Both groups were divided about equally between middle and working class backgrounds, with one NTer being from an upper class background. At the time of entry into their groups, seven GPers were married or had long-term partners while only three NTers were married or in a relationship.

[54] [54] I refer to them as formerly active, because many did not conceive of themselves as "former members" or "ex-members". The whole question of who is and is not a member of the GP remains an open issue in many locals. Additionally, as one respondent put it, people don't leave the GP they "just fade away."

However similar numbers were either married parents (one in each group), or single parents (two GPers, one NTer) at time of entry.

There are three notable demographic differences between the two groups of participants at the time of their encounter with their respective groups. First, NTers had their first contact with the NT at the average age of 26 years, while the GPers were almost 39, a difference of over 12 years. Thus they met their groups at very different life stages. The majority of NTers entered the group in the 70s and 80s, with a few becoming involved in the late 1990s. GPers largely entered in the 90s and 2000s, with two entering in the late 80s. This reflects the timing of each group's arrival on the U.S. political scene: the NT in the late 60s, and the GP in the mid-80s.

This difference in age at onset of group involvement can be expected to have follow-on effects in terms of the life trajectories of participants. The second demographic difference (though a weak one) – educational level – is one example of this. The GPers, generally being a decade older, were further along in their education at the time of recruitment, with six having achieved BAs, and one holding a post-graduate degree. This compares to three NTers having completed BAs, and one holding a post-graduate degree on entry to the group. Even here, though, we see that this is less of a difference than it might seem as four NTers were in undergraduate programs at the time they were recruited. Thus a total of seven GPers and eight NTers had some current or prior involvement in higher education.

The final difference in background between the two groups is that three NTers reported (though did not detail) abuse in their family of origin, while no GPers did so. However, an important caveat must be noted here: the interview schedules did not probe for early experiences of abuse. This information was volunteered by NTers at some point during the interviews. Given that social therapy was a core part of the NT experience, and that such topics would therefore be subject to much discussion in the NT, it may be that these experiences were more likely to be volunteered by NT participants rather than GPers. For GPers there was no indication that such personal topics would ever enter in to the work or discussion of the group. Therefore even if a GPer had abuse in their background they would likely see it as inappropriate to bring up in the context of this

interview. For NTers, however, such boundaries between private life and political work did not exist, and so it would be seen as a natural part of the discussion. (As Arendt 1948/1979, states, the very essence of totalitarianism lies in this type of collapsing together of private and public life.) One member of each group reported being estranged from their family of origin.

Three NTers discussed relatively recent deaths of loved ones prior to recruitment. Of these NTers, all were recruited directly into social therapy, and two (and possibly three) saw these deaths as issues they wanted to deal with in therapy. Two GPers also discussed recent deaths and of these one saw her involvement as directly related to her decision to become involved in the Green Party. Similarly one NTer discussed the mental illness of her mother, and one GPer discussed that of her husband. Another NTer was on disability due to neurological problems.

Thus it is hard to clearly pinpoint key predisposing factors that differentiate these groups. (Lofland's predisposing factors will be considered in the next section.) This finding fits with the current standing of research on predisposing factors predicting cult membership. Singer (1995) found that most cult members come from normal, functioning families and Sageman (2004) came to a similar conclusion *vis-à-vis* terrorists stating that: "Experts have tried in vain for three decades to identify a common predisposition for terrorism" (p. 91). Both, however, do note that there is often an—at least temporary—instability in the lives of those who enter cultic groups, and this is also supported in Lofland's (1977) concept of the turning point. As Rose and Lewis Coser (1979) stated in regards to the Jonestown murder/suicides: "answers about the characteristics of the members are not satisfactory. At best they tell us who was attracted to Jim Jones, but they cannot tell us why they obeyed him unto death" (p. 158).

Regarding this study, my sense is that NTers did have somewhat more complex backgrounds; the abuse number itself—notwithstanding the caveat already expressed—seems significant. However, I did not see this complexity across the board in NTers, nor was it entirely absent from GPers. Additionally, the fact that NT recruits through therapy, as discussed below, assures some leaning towards those experiencing emotional difficulties at the time of recruitment. Reflecting on Zablocki's (2001a) suggestion that

we look for interactions between predisposition and group manipulation, and following Singer's (1995) observations, it is possible that the younger age of the NTers—thus being at a less stable stage of life, including having less stable partnerships—contributed to an overall predisposing (though likely temporary) instability greater in NTers than in GPers.

Overall, however, these two groups are demographically relatively similar and thus provide a good basis for comparison.

Life immediately prior to entry

As indicated above, there were many similarities between the two groups in their lives prior to joining their respective groups. Participants' social networks, employment and educational situations are detailed below.

Social networks

Prior to their first contact with their respective groups, NTers reported an average of 3.0 close relationships in their social networks while GPers had an average of 3.36 close relationships, representing a slight, but not statistically significant advantage. This compares to the 1985[55] General Social Survey that found that the average American had 3 people close to them in whom they could confide. As mentioned, more than double the number of GPers than NTers had stable romantic partners and this is likely related to the later life stage of GPers at time of entry into the group, rather than to some internal dispositional lack of NTers.

Equal numbers – about one third – of each group clearly stated they were isolated prior to involvement. For example, NTers stated: "I was painfully shy before I went in" (Ruiz); "It's like I was sort of isolated in the city and, and I found a community with them" (Sidney). GPers reported: "I'd been laid off from that just before so then I didn't have work, I didn't have a church, I didn't have anything up here" (Sherman); "I didn't

[55] NTers interviewed for this study were recruited from 1970 – 2000. GPers began their involvement in the years ranging from 1987 – 2001. Thus the 1985 GSS is used as the comparison for the size of participants' social networks *prior* to recruitment, rather than the 2004 survey mentioned below.

have a social network, I didn't have a social circle at all. I basically kept to myself" (Peter).

Both NTers and GPers, then, had an average amount of close relationships relative to the U.S. population. The quality of these prior relationships is still a question that could be usefully researched in the future: were these close relationships stable and secure, and thus available as countervailing influences (Snow and Phillips 1980) or insecure and therefore less effective as such?

Baumeister and Leary (1995) make the statement, in their study on belonging, that "Cults mainly attract people who are socially isolated or lonely" (p. 522). While this may be true, it could also be stated that social isolation may lead people to join, not only cults, but in fact, groups of any kind. As Arendt (1948/1979), Fromm (1941) and, more recently, Pescosolido and Rubin (2000), remind us, atomization continues to be a condition of contemporary life. In fact, the 2004 General Social Survey showed a drop of one-third in the average number of close relationships (persons in whom one can confide) held by Americans—an average of three close ties in 1985 has now dropped to two (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Brashears 2006). Further, the 2004 GSS reported that 20% of their surveyed population had *no-one* in whom to confide. Although weak social networks present a vulnerability that can provide an opportunity for cults to recruit, they can equally provide opportunities for other kinds of groups to grow as well[56]. It is not so much the size of participants' social networks on entry that is of note, therefore, but it is rather in *what happens* to these social networks once participants join their respective groups (as detailed below) that we begin to see definite variation based on the type of group involved.

Education and employment

As regards education, four NTers were recruited while in school fulltime at the undergraduate level. In fact, their educations were interrupted by their NT involvement as

[56] Knoke (personal communication) notes, however, that the 2004 GSS does not show any corresponding increase in voluntary association membership along with this increased social isolation. Thus the idea that social isolation leads to increased membership of groups needs further consideration and study.

all dropped out of school soon after becoming involved in the NT. No GPers were in school during recruitment, again, likely related to being much older. With only a couple of exceptions, members of both groups were employed (or in the case of NTers in school fulltime) at the time of recruitment. One GPer had just been laid off, another had a part-time job. One NTer was looking for work, and another looking for career-related training. Employment and education, were not, therefore, areas of difference between the two groups.

Dispositional and situational attributes

Lofland (1977) described seven conditions of conversion. The first three relate to dispositional attributes of persons entering a group: ongoing acutely-felt tension; types of problem-solving perspectives, and seekership. The final four are situational, one of which is the situation of the convert at the time of recruitment, which Lofland refers to as a "turning point". The first four stages of conversion will be discussed here. The remaining situational factors will be discussed in the next chapter.

Ongoing tension was a factor in several of the participants biographies, and there may be indications that this was somewhat more of a factor for more NTers than GPers. These ongoing tensions can be seen in the ongoing family difficulties experienced by several, concern about political issues such as the environment, racism and so forth, or feelings of social isolation. As Snow and Phillips (1980) point out, however, these are the types of tension that any person in contemporary life might experience, and it is hard to find, with one or two exceptions, among these group members, particular difficulties that stand out. The three clearest exceptions would be the three members who reported abuse in their family backgrounds.

In terms of Lofland's concept of problem-solving perspectives, there are major differences between the two groups. GPers held essentially two problem-solving perspectives: the major one being political (ten participants) and the one held by two participants being social in nature (by which I mean a desire to reduce their isolation through involvement in locally-based activities). Lynn is an example of someone who had a political problem-solving perspective: she came from a union family and had, from

an early age, helped her father with union activity, and her mother with Democratic party political activities. She was accustomed to thinking of politics as a way of solving problems and sought out the GP in this context.

Some NTers came from a prior political or social problem-solving perspective: George and Jack, for instance had already had several political involvements on the radical left. They tended to view problems through a political lens. But almost half of the NTers came from a therapeutic perspective: for instance, Juliet, Denise and Celia all found social therapy through advertisements, and were looking for therapeutic solutions for what they considered personal problems. This had direct implications for recruitment as discussed below.

The third dispositional attribute Lofland describes is “seekership” where each person “came to see himself as a seeker, a person searching for some satisfactory system for interpreting and resolving his discontent” (p. 44). For the purposes of this study I will consider this as political or therapeutic seekership. GPers seem to fit this model better than NTers. All GPers were interested in, and looking for, political involvements and solutions and thus we can consider they were in a mode of political seekership. NTers, on the other hand, were seeking a range of goals from employment to therapy to a romantic relationship, and so cannot be considered to be in a political seekership mode. Some were, however, seeking therapeutic answers.

Lofland’s study described converts as being at a turning point, looking to move forward in life in different directions as “old lines of action, had failed, or had been or were about to be disrupted,” (p. 50) and were, as a result of this, looking for problem-solving mechanisms that fit within their prior problem-solving perspective. Most participants in both groups in this study had recently experienced some event immediately prior to their involvement that could be interpreted as Lofland’s turning point. These turning points were very much normal life events: moving state, a job change, loss of a relationship, death of a loved one, or change in developmental life stage (i.e. going to college), all the kinds of factors that Singer (1995) describes as personal crises that occur in the lives of normal persons. Both NTers and GPers reported such turning points about equally. However, given the difference in problem-solving

perspectives of people in each group, GPers were clearly seeking political involvement to a much greater degree than NTers. Of those NTers seeking therapy, three wanted to work on issues related to recent deaths of loved ones, one sought help over a relationship breakup, one for health problems, and one was dealing with a difficult transition to adulthood—all issues within the range of typical life problems for which many people seek help.

The key difference in the lives of participants immediately prior to recruitment seems to be that the GPers were more actively seeking political involvement. Only two or three NTers were doing so. The bulk of NTers were seeking therapeutic help, or were looking for work, training or a relationship. Thus, Lofland's first four conditions of conversion, while generally present for our participants, do not help us differentiate between those who ended up being recruited into the closed, authoritarian system of the NT versus those who entered the open, loose formation of the GP. In fact, NTers were *not* dominantly seeking political solutions to their problems, nor were they necessarily seeking to even join a group. Nonetheless, this is the situation in which they found themselves immersed. That this was not made explicit during recruitment is one of the key ways that the NT hid its actual structure, ideology and goals from new recruits, as we shall see below.

Initial contact

Some scholars emphasize linkages via social networks as being key to recruitment into social movements (McAdam 1986) or terrorist groups (Sageman 2004), but this is not borne out in the current study. About half of the participants within each group were recruited through their social networks. However the remainder found their group through "cold" contacts: fliers, phone books, advertisements, or stranger contacts in public places. So, while the social network does have a place (though not a dominant one) in making the initial contact, it is how this first contact is managed that differentiates the two groups.

Seven of 12 GPers made proactive decisions to look up the Green Party, and did so, following that up by attending a meeting. For example, Doug describes his approach to the GP:

> I had just kind of reached the point where I wanted to get more involved in some political activities, so I called up the local Green Party contact and she told me about a coordinating committee meeting, and I went to that and learned a little bit more about how the Green Party worked and then after that, the next big event was the state nominating convention and platform convention, so I went to that.

The other five GPers were invited to participate in a GP meeting by someone in their social network, either a friend or family member.

Seven of 13 NTers were seeking therapy and found it through an advertisement, or were referred to it by a friend, family member, or, in one case, were brought into it by their current therapist. A former cadre describes her recruitment via social therapy:

> I came across an advertisement for "Social Therapy" in the National Alliance newspaper, in which the practice was described as "non-racist, nonsexist and non-homophobic." […] As treatment, I was told that the trouble wasn't "in my head," but "in the world" (Ortiz 2003b).

Another typical case follows:

> My mother had passed away - - probably two years before, I think it was about [year]. I was very depressed, just because the sudden death and my father adjusting to it and it was just a big shock and a big change. And I was looking for therapy, so I called a place through the Yellow Pages and they said that there would be a very long wait and I said, well I'd really like to see somebody soon. They said, well we can give you a referral and they gave me a referral to a Doctor K. at the Bronx Institute for Social Therapy and Research. I made an appointment and I didn't show because I was so nervous. And they sent me a little letter saying, you know, you made an appointment and you didn't show, it's OK if you want to come back and see us, that's fine. And it was very reassuring. It just felt like a - - like a little bit of an opening, a little bit of an invitation. So I called them up and I rescheduled the appointment and then I started individual therapy with my therapist at that time, E.N. (Juliet).

Other recruits came in through various channels. One was "sexually recruited" through a relationship set in motion by Newman. This was a known NT recruitment method:

> Actually, sex is- is a big part of how they draw people into the group too. A lot of people have come in off of relationships with other people from, you know, on the outside. People who were attracted to the politics- you come to a meeting, whatever, you've got all these gorgeous men or women, you know, come on, you know, they use sex to draw people in (Celia).

One member was recruited through a street solicitation to the political theater, and another by a friend inviting her to a Lenora Fulani speech. Another was looking for work, and yet another looking for training. Only one NTer in this study came to the group by actively seeking political involvement and responding to a flier to attend a political meeting:

> I came to New York in part to find a radical Marxist group to join. So I would go to bookstores that sold left-wing literature. I saw one of their papers and picked it up. […] I responded to an ad in the paper that said "come to a meeting", and I just went to a meeting to check them out (Sidney).

Looking further at the recruitment process we see another difference in the way in which people were approached by each group at, or soon after, the initial contact was made. GPers report going to their first meeting and perhaps being welcomed, but recruitment to further involvement was essentially self-determined, with very little input or effort made by existing members, and certainly no concerted or orchestrated group effort. The most concerted effort reported of recruitment at a GPer's first meeting follows:

> Near the end I remember W. came and sat down by me and they were talking about you know, "Now the next meeting" and all the stuff that was going on and he looked me and said "You've never been to a meeting before, what'd you think tonight?" I told him essentially what I told you that there was a lot of stuff and I was impressed…and so I kind of felt like I was being involved in a process there, and there were plenty of times where sign-up sheets where being sent around, so you know, if you're free on March 3rd, can you help out? And I'm like, I have nothing but free time, sure I'll do it! (Sherman).

However in no case did a GPer report being followed up by phone, or explicitly being asked for contact details. In my field work I attended four public GP events. At none of

these was I ever approached to give contact details, although I could voluntarily provide them, for instance at a table with sign-in sheet. Further, I never received follow up phone calls, and only received occasional subsequent mailings, perhaps three times a year, announcing Green events.

In the case of the NTers, however, one quickly sees a picture of coordinated, planned recruitment. For instance, in the case of political recruitment, Sidney reported that a woman stationed at the door to the meeting room obtained all his contact details as he entered. In my field work, when I went to buy tickets to a performance at the Castillo Theater box office, I was not sold the tickets until I had had a 15-minute interview with a group member who was later described to me by an interviewee as a fairly high-ranking "lifer". She solicited my contact details, my reason for wanting to see the performance, how I'd heard about the theater and so forth.[57] Two weeks later, on return from my research trip, I received a long distance call from a Castillo volunteer soliciting my further involvement, followed by another call shortly thereafter, at which point I explained that I lived in another state and could not participate in any events. Later, when my research was further advanced, and at a point when the NT had learned about my study, I tried to purchase a ticket for a publicly-announced fundraising awards event for the East Side Institute for Group and Short Term Psychotherapy. My university-issued check for $250 was returned, and on further inquiry, the Institute stated in an e-mail that: "The University's transmittal did not contain information needed to determine that the person who would use the ticket requested by the University would be an appropriate attendee." Thus recruitment effort is targeted and not wasted on those deemed not "appropriate".

Typically, an initial contact with the NT resulted in a rapid (sometimes surprisingly so) response as shown in Bernice's experience when seeking therapy:

> When I called them up for an appointment I was over at my girlfriend's house and then I got home and it was about ten o'clock at night [and he was] calling me back for an appointment. And that just struck me, that

[57] Similarly, when I attended a public meeting of the Independence Party in Albany, NY, I was approached by an NTer shortly after arrival and "grilled" (though in a friendly way) as to my purpose in being there, how I'd heard about the meeting, my name, and so forth. No non-NT-affiliated Independence Party members approached me or seemed remotely interested in my presence.

> struck me really weird. I mean what kind of psychologist or whatever is gonna—you know I just said I wanted, I was recommended by S. to set up an appointment—and he called me back at ten at night. And I mean, so that was kind of my first contact with him.

Thus there was immediate attention paid to new contacts, which included gaining contact information, then efficient, responsive and immediate follow-up. One can see in the NT examples the first signs of establishing a kind of safe haven—a comforting, responsive approach to a person, whether through attention, sex, or a responsive therapist. We will see later the importance of setting up this sense of a safe haven. This is similar, and related to, the classic "love-bombing[58]" of many cults (Hassan 1988; Singer and Lalich 1995) and serves the same purpose of beginning to establish cult-affective ties. This early attention, however, does not always have to be positive attention (i.e. Stein 2002), but it does have to have a quality where the recruit feels valued and acknowledged in some way.

Initially, then, we have a clear difference in the way people came to the GP compared to the NT. GPers had a fairly accurate sense of what the GP was ahead of time, and went to an initial meeting as a result of a political interest, generally quite closely connected to the GP agenda – that is: environmental, peace, or social justice concerns. NTers, on the other hand, were generally not seeking a group or political involvement (which is what they ended up with) but largely ran into NT on their way to other goals: therapy, work, a relationship. Further, it was up to GPers to determine their follow-up steps, while NTers were subject to a planned and coordinated recruitment strategy.

Therefore we can see that, from the start of their involvement, the overall NT agenda was hidden and not the same as the agenda of these recruits. Taylor (2004) quotes *The Council of Europe's Report on Sects and New Religious Movements*: "While a religion implies free, informed consent on the part of those who join it, people joining certain sects may be free when they join it, but are not informed, and, once they are informed, they are usually no longer free." Although the study of cults and sects is

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[58] Singer (1995) describes love bombing as "the offer of instant companionship" (p. 114) as part of a coordinated recruitment effort directed by the group leader. Long-term group members feign friendship and interest in the new recruit.

sometimes constrained within the language of religion, substitute “political group” for “religion” here and the lack of informed consent from new NTers parallels that referred to in this report. GPers, on the other hand, were generally quite well informed ahead of time about the party and its goals.

Zablocki (2001a) differentiates the “obtaining” from the “retaining” functions of cults, noting that many are recruited, but only a few stay and become deployable agents. He states that the failure to differentiate these two stages causes confusion in studying these groups. I agree that it is important to see these as two separate phases, and that not all recruits are retained, brainwashed and deployed. Nonetheless, it seems clear from this study that we can observe the seeds of the retention process in the particular manner in which recruits are obtained. The lack of transparency in recruitment efforts, the early targeting of recruits, and the beginnings of developing affective ties can all be seen in the NT recruitment strategy. This may prove helpful in educational efforts in highlighting types of recruitment that might be more costly to both group members and the public (to use Zablocki’s rational choice language).

Recruitment

It is difficult to speak of recruitment in terms of the GP as the GP locals studied here did not engage in any form of active or planned recruitment. People certainly had initial contacts with the party, but it was then up to them to voluntarily choose how and when to become further involved. For NTers, though, the recruitment process, like the initial contact, was taken seriously and was carefully planned out. Once the initial contact was made and the person was established as a therapy client, or a volunteer in political work, then a slower, but steady process of complete immersion began.

When social therapy was used as the recruitment channel, the individual started in individual therapy and then was more or less rapidly moved to, first a single-sex “grouplet”, and then to a social therapy group—usually within only one or two months. Grouplets were often small, perhaps four to six persons, while groups might be larger, perhaps up to eight or ten patients attending. Sometimes clients attended more than one of these forms of therapy in the same time-span. Groups were led by a therapist and a co-therapist. The co-therapist

was generally a junior therapist whose role was to "support" the lead therapist. While some therapists were licensed psychologists, many others were not—notably Fred Newman. One social therapist trainee interviewed for this study reported providing services as an unlicensed therapist in a state in which this was illegal. This person stated that this was a common practice in the NT.

Therapy patients were strongly discouraged from staying in individual therapy for any length of time. Some therapy patients remained in group therapy for many years, being involved in the "periphery" only and never progressing to the inner cadre circle. For instance, for Louisa:

> It was just therapy. It was purely just therapy, as far as I could tell, growth and development and that somehow – they always use that word [development]- really, performing your life better, to help people with their suffering, and that Fred's technique that he had put together from Wittgenstein and all these other people was the answer to that. That he'd come up with this post-modern, revolutionary, progressive therapy that they were hoping would take hold and that they thought, I guess they thought they could literally change the world with it, like if they could get everybody in that mode of thinking that it would change the world for the better.

Juliet describes how patients were moved along in the process and then drawn in to other NT activities:

> So I got into the grouplet and then eventually—the grouplet was with N. and a few other people—she was the only therapist, though—and then I was in the grouplet for a while and as I say, they moved me out of individual into a group. So I had the group with Z. and N. and the grouplet with just N. and sometimes Y. would visit, would sit in on our sessions—our grouplet sessions. But the receptionist, G., she used to like ask, "Could you leaflet? Could you give out these leaflets?" Or, you know they would sell tickets to things, raffles […]

> There would be literature all over the place for different upcoming events and both political and non-political, both therapeutic and NAP—New Alliance Party—events. So she'd just, you know, she was very nice and she'd just ask you in a very innocent way, "Could you just give out a couple of these?" or, "We're petitioning. Could you gather a couple of signatures for us?" Or, you know, there was always something going on, like a fundraiser, "Could you come?" And as I got into the grouplet and then the group, I started to meet people, other patients who were there and we'd do this as an activity—we'd go to a fundraiser together…because they were starting to become friendly.

Ruiz explains the role of social therapy in his recruitment prior to becoming a party cadre, and further describes the development of affective ties (including meeting his future partner, Sylvia, in a therapy group):

> So I went for one [session], you know, I was a recluse, I was very quiet, very shy, so I thought I needed some help getting out of that. So I started going – my whole goal at that point was to develop a circle of friends. I was very, very, very shy. So I was pretty much just you know, very into myself. I had like one or two friends, but nobody I could confide in and stuff, so I started going, joined with Y. [the therapist]. Y. put me in a group. Sylvia was in that group, Brian was in that group, you know there was like five or six people that were in the group that we became really close friends, and a lot of us actually joined [the NT].

Some therapy groups included both consolidated cadres, new recruits and non-members, while others were strictly internal, for cadres only. In the more public groups, the focus was more on individuals' problems, but involved a gradual shift to the political and "developmental" paradigm of the NT. We see this in the quote below, as well as getting a glimpse at how social therapy discouraged extra-cult ties:

> Some people were very new like I was, and some people were, I would say, "plants", you know, more advanced […] There was another patient who was more advanced—she had been around maybe a year—so she was probably in already, but I didn't even know that existed. She came in one day into the group and she was upset because […] her lover was upset about her losing so much time with her work with this group and she wanted help with her relationship. So basically what we came to the conclusion was that her lover was inhibiting her development, her lover was oppositional to her development, her lover was being, you know, was not good, was standing in the way of her development of her—you know, all that stuff, and that she was concentrating too much on "doing family",

> and that that brings you down and inhibits your growth and your development, so people in your life should be supporting you, growing, development…(Celia).

In a planned progression, then, social therapy patients were moved from individual therapy into grouplet and then into group therapy along with being invited to theater events, political events, to give money or volunteer in some way. The NT encouraged the further development of friendship, or affective, ties in the group, while discouraging extra-cult ties (Lofland 1977). The therapy groups were well-suited to this function, being an environment where people were both physically and emotionally available to form such ties, and to listen to relational advice from therapists and other group members. Activities—preferably with these new-found friends—outside the therapy groups were also encouraged. At the same time, political language and ideas were being introduced, thus introducing the linguistic, cognitive and ideological aspects of recruitment:

> They asked me to start petitioning and that's when the group started to talk about more political issues, issues about who we were in the world, and working class versus middle class, classism, this type of thing. […] We [group therapy clients] were all friends, so afterwards, like on Saturday night we'd all get together and we'd all accuse each other of being this or that and we had no clue what we were talking about—it was just flinging out these words cause we were just learning them. Actually we became unbearable—it really was like a very strange time. […]
>
> But these words—these other words started to pop up: "sexism", "racism"—the "isms", the—you know, and it was hard because I had no understanding of what that meant or what it meant in relation to me—I just really didn't know.
>
> **Interviewer: You hadn't been political before?**
>
> No. No. No, I hadn't been exposed to that before (Juliet).

The increase in involvement continued until a volunteer was entirely immersed:

> So I started petitioning and I got much more involved and really Z. played a key role in that. He is a therapist and he was also a very popular candidate for them in New York. He ran several campaigns, […] and organizing us to get signatures for this. Then we were asked to raise money. While we were asking for signatures, we were supposed to ask for

> a dollar or two or more or whatever…during that time, right at the beginning, some people were already asked to join. I might have already been asked to join or not, I can't remember, but they asked me and a friend who was also social therapy, to go to [another state] and work for the campaign there. We went. […] We gathered signatures, we worked on the campaign. Shortly after that, if not already, I was full-blown (Juliet).

For those whose initial contact was through a political channel, an important step, then, was to get them involved in social therapy. This could occur before their induction as a fulltime cadre of the party, as below:

> So not only did I become involved in [Fulani's] campaign, and again—I don't know if that was first—I might have been involved in all these other campus groups and that's how come T. asked me to go to Fulani's meeting. […] I remember getting involved in the feminist group and the gay group […] I ended up joining them all. So it became a part of all of that and not necessarily the only thing I was doing. […] The difference was after I started, at some point after I met Fulani, I was told that they have a therapy center and a therapist who was seeing people. So what ended up happening was myself and T. and a couple of other students from college, including my roommate E. ended up going into social therapy and seeing this therapist.
>
> **Had you been looking for a therapist or was it…like you wanted therapy and you found it, or did they offer it?**
>
> They offered it but…and I don't think I was actively seeking it but then I needed it and they might have mentioned it but, like in my first year, I went to the school's counselor so I had already been in counseling. […] I might have even expressed interest in it after I heard Fulani speak, cause she was talking about social therapy. But T. probably even pushed it and said, "There's a social therapy center here in [the city]", which is not really near the campus. I mean I had to drive or whatever to get to it. But it was attractive enough to me so I started therapy with a woman, who I remember, was G., so at this point, there was a large group and quite of few of them ended up being College X. students…well, there was like at least eight of us in the group, that we were going to on a weekly basis. And I was going to individual. It was certainly working for me much better than I'd had on campus, which was a disaster, but anyway, so I was in therapy and working on the campaign, is what happened (Grace).

Sydney was also recruited politically and, as described in the opening quote to this chapter, was ordered to attend a social therapy group as a condition of deepening his political involvement and becoming a fulltime cadre.

So, regardless of how recruits entered the NT, they all wound up immersed in the same set of situational conditions: a combination of social therapy, left-wing (later "independent" and "progressive") political discourse and activities, and a new and increasingly dense social network. Their pre-existing affective ties were discouraged, and their emotional and affective involvements became situated within the NT. They were also introduced to the NT's ideology and its use of political language and analysis. Thus recruitment proceeded along the emotional, affective and cognitive fronts more or less simultaneously.

Social therapy also functioned as a site for the inculcation of NT ideology. As Arendt (1948/1979) clarifies, ideology involves two forms: propaganda and indoctrination. Propaganda, in her definition, is aimed at the external world and involves communicating from the totalist group to the outside world. Its purpose is for recruitment, and to provide a "bridge of normalcy" between the real world and the "fictitious world" of the totalist group. The propaganda form of social therapy, therefore concerned itself with appearing, at first glance, like any typical contemporary group therapy, addressing problems of depression, relationships, anxiety and so forth[59]. All of this is wrapped in a cloak of "scientificality" (Arendt 1948/1979; Lifton 1961) and legitimacy.

Newman's (1997) use of the concept of "the end of knowing," which is currently a core element of his political and social therapy discourse, fits well with Arendt's description of propaganda: "demagogically speaking, there is hardly a better way to avoid discussion than by releasing an argument from the control of the present and by saying that only the future can reveal its merits" (1948/1979 p. 346). In announcing that there is "nothing to know", Newman takes this one step further and releases his arguments from the future as well, stating, "But what if knowing has now become an impediment to

[59] For a complete list of "difficult life issues" that Social Therapy offers to address, see the website of the Social Therapy Group at: http://www.socialtherapygroup.com/.

further human development?” (1997 frontispiece). There is nothing to know, there is only development and growth, which is arrived at through “performed activity” which one can engage in through social therapy[60]. Thus the client is led to believe that it is through “performing” that they will grow and develop and in this way achieve relief from their problems.

In addition to scientificality and the release of argument from the present, Arendt also discusses mystery and consistency as being core components of propaganda. Announcing “the end of knowing” is a suitable—and with its post-modern cachet, a legitimate—way to surround social therapy and the NT ideology with mystery. Consistency is arrived at by the endless repetition of the concepts of “growth” and “development” and by the mirroring of NT concepts throughout the encroaching NT world – through Newman’s plays, political work, other NT therapists and members, and other NT activities. Social therapists further introduced the Marxist/post-modernist-based absolute ideology to clients by quoting from and reading Newman’s written materials out loud, by the presence of Newman-authored and NT materials in Social Therapy offices and waiting rooms, and by encouraging clients to attend his speeches and plays.

During the recruitment process, all of these elements of the propaganda within social therapy were still couched in terms of therapeutic care for personal problems that clients presented to the group. It is from these real personal problems that “the lies of totalitarian propaganda derive the element of truthfulness and real experience they need to bridge the gulf between reality and fiction” (Arendt 1948/1979) p. 353). But once consolidated as an NT cadre, this therapeutic front was no longer needed as such, and social therapy became a means of indoctrination. This aspect of social therapy will be discussed in the next chapter.

Induction

[60] The mission statement of the East Side Institute for Social Therapy states: “At the Institute, we have created our own "non-psychological" psychology -- a cultural-performatory methodology known as ***social therapy***” (East Side Institute for Group and Short-Term Psychotherapy).

The NT was patient in its recruitment process, sometimes waiting as much as a year before inviting someone in to the inner party. Senior NT members invited selected recruits to become cadre in a formal process. This typically involved being taken to a restaurant by one or two members of the inner circle ("lifers" as they are termed by many ex-members) and being invited into the inner party. Juliet described the process thus:

> Karen Kessel was the person who invited me to join. […] She asked if I would meet her for a cup of coffee and she said that the Institute and the New Alliance Party and other organizations that they hired were all part of an underground party and that the underground party was a communist organization and they were inviting me to join to be cadre. I asked what that meant, you know, and she said that it was something like it was giving your life to the revolutionary cause of helping working class people…even though I had been brought up to understand myself as middle class—that's what my father would say, he was a hard core Democratic—middle class, middle class. In therapy, it turns out I was working class. So that was, you know, "Oh, working class, so this is for working class people—OK". She never really got into the specifics of what that meant financially or what that meant in terms of the impact it would have on my life or what my responsibilities would actually be or look like—that was all very vague. So I said, "Yes. Sure—why not?" (Juliet).

After accepting the invitation to fulltime cadre status, induction to the party took place. This was marked by a ritual, complete with sacred objects, whose purpose served to now reinforce the boundaries between those in the group and those outside (Durkheim 2001). Grace describes her induction:

> I was invited to a reception that Fred was present at. I was invited to a reception at somebody's apartment when I was brought in—a number of people were brought in at the same time and we were given books, a bookmark—some sort of communist bookmark, when we came in. And then we had our first class. It was sort of, you know, it was very formal, […] so in a sense I became a member of the entering class of new members, so there was like six or seven of us that were the new class. And we came in and started classes—[…] the process was extremely secretive. Oh, D. in that meeting, one of the things she made very clear to me was that I was entering a secret organization. She made it clear that it was a revolutionary organization so that it could never be spoken about to anyone.

Sidney reported that Newman welcomed the new cadres in what he termed "an informal ceremony" where Newman stated that "now all your questions will be answered." Thus the induction rituals created an aura of mystery with elements of secrecy and specialness, further setting apart the new members as they entered into what they perceived to be an elite.

Within the GP no such rituals of entering the party existed. This again reflects the GPs very fluid boundaries, which, we will see later, also caused problems in the group at times when it became necessary or desirable to sanction participants. While some would argue that a degree of elitism exists within the GP, this is not structured in, and in fact, what *is*, at least attempted, is to structure in flat, democratic (some might say ultra-democratic) processes that solicit and welcome participation. These are evidenced in, for instance, attempts to have gender balance in political positions, and to have rotating leadership.

Conclusion

The two groups in this study were found to be quite similar demographically: they had similarly sized close social networks, and were quite similar in terms of education and class makeup. They were of the same generational cohort, although the NTers joined at a younger age than GPers. No pre-disposing factors were found, supporting earlier work by scholars such as Singer (1995) and others (Almendros, Carrobles, and Rodríguez-Carballeira 2007; Coser and Coser 1979; Sageman 2004). The fact that both groups had an average (per the GSS) number of close social ties does not lend support to the idea that the atomized are more likely to be recruited to totalism (i.e. Arendt 1948/1979; Baumeister, and Leary 1995). Rather, the qualitative data presented here suggests that persons who are atomized or isolated seek out group involvement *generally* in order to mitigate their isolation. It may be a strictly situational phenomenon that determines whether the group they find is totalist or not. Thus we can suggest that isolation can lead to group involvement, but doesn't necessarily lead to cult involvement. However, given the lack of a robust social network, it may be that isolated persons are more subject to

retention in exploitative totalist groups as they may lack countervailing and critical social ties.

Lofland (1977) discussed how coming from a particular "problem-solving perspective" was a predisposing condition for "total conversion" to a group promoting that perspective. In this study we have seen that GPers generally shared a political problem-solving perspective, while NTers came from a variety of perspectives. Cult members are often stereotyped as "seekers", and Lofland posed this in academic terms in his study on the Unification Church, stating that being in a seeking mode is also a predisposing condition for total conversion. GPers, however, were far more likely to be deliberately seeking (political) solutions than NTers. Thus neither of these dispositional conditions for total conversion are supported by this study.

On the other hand, the situational differences of each group as encountered by participants in this study differed markedly from the very first contact until induction. The study so far supports, then, the dominance of situational factors in recruitment (and, as we shall see later, in retention) over predispositions of individuals, thus agreeing with scholars such as Zimbardo (1999; 2004; 2007), Singer (1995), Lalich (2004), Lifton (1961), Hassan (1988) and Almendros et al (2007). Further discussion is raised in Chapter 11 regarding the possible interaction of dispositional (as measured by prior attachment status) factors and social networks, with the situational forces seen here.

In the NT we saw an immediate, coordinated response to the first contact with the potential recruit, compared to the open, but neither aggressive nor planned response of the GP. Certainly many non-totalist organizations respond promptly and systematically to initial contacts—any non-profit or corporation worth its salt knows the value of a prospective customer. So while this alone isn't a marker of totalism, it is nonetheless one of the elements of totalist recruitment. Another element in recruitment found in the NT is the lack of informed consent: recruits did not know ahead of time what they were joining. Those who came in politically found themselves mandated to attend therapy. And those who came in through therapy found themselves introduced to a form of Marxist political ideology and being pressured into political activities. This was not so for GPers who largely had a quite accurate perception of the GP before approaching them. This supports

Arendt's (1948/1979), Singer's (1995), Asch's (1952) and others' view of the important role of deception in totalist recruitment to a "fictitious world." This is in contrast to the much more public and transparent activities of the GP.

The recruitment process in the NT consisted of a process of building affective ties internally to the group and beginning to weaken extra-cult affective ties. This fully supports Lofland's (1977) observations of the situational (rather than dispositional) conditions faced by the cult members he studied. It also supports the conjectures proposed at the start of this study: that NTers would find the group being held up as the source of emotional support and comfort—establishing it as a safe haven. At the same time, the diminishing of extra-cult ties would eventually remove alternate safe havens, thus setting up the situation in which to create disorganized attachment arising out of "fright without solution." With no external ties remaining, recruits would have no escape hatches from the group. The GP, on the contrary, did not affect close ties in the recruitment phase at all—either in creating new ties, nor in diminishing pre-existing ties.

Many of Lifton's (1961) eight criteria for thought reform can be observed in the NT during the recruitment phase. These effects will also be seen more in the next chapter as they develop further in the daily life of NTers. *Milieu Control*—control of recruits' environment—was achieved through changing recruits' social networks, and through immersing them in the group's political and therapeutic activities. The group's use of *Mystical Manipulation* can be seen in the process of induction: those who join are immersed in a special aura of secrecy while at the same time the NT carefully manipulates what the recruit sees at which stage, keeping the inner workings of the group hidden.

Lifton's concept of the *Cult of Confession*, implying a confusion of personal boundaries, takes place within the social therapy sessions, and will be shown further in the next chapter—but it is already established at the time of recruitment. During recruitment Newman is set up as the source of all wisdom in the group, be it therapeutic (social therapy is Newman's invention), political or cultural, and, as we saw, he promises newly inducted recruits that "now all your questions" will be answered. These are the first signs of the *Sacred Science* criterion we see in the NT. The *Doctrine over Person*

criterion is evidenced in the subjugation of the individual's experience to that of the group, which subjugation is a core tenet of social therapy. The *Loaded Language* of totalism is also in evidence early on, with the special NT language being introduced through social therapy and political and cultural activities.

Zablocki (2001b) suggests that the process of brainwashing, or retention, occurs along two paths: the cognitive and the affective. However, we do not need to wait for the retention phase of the process to observe this: we can already see evidence of these two paths during recruitment. The affective path has been discussed above in terms of the changes in close ties. Cognitively we see how NT recruits become exposed to loaded language, to the ideology of the group, and, in social therapy are offered a new interpretation about their lives and problems, one which begins to dissolve their personal experience into the NT's all-encompassing, totalist world.

In the GP, contrary to the NT, the focus was on political tasks and interests rather than on creating new affective ties. Cognitive processes in the GP will be explored more in the next chapter. Within the loose structure of the GP, it was up to new members to find a place in which to work. In the obtaining or recruiting phase, of the GP, therefore, the decentralized, flat, anti-authoritarian, and anti-"cult of personality" leanings of the GP are also already apparent.

The NT, at the time of recruitment has already demonstrated many of the elements of a totalist organization: the presence of a charismatic leader (though Newman's authoritarianism may not yet be observable by recruits), a closed hierarchy, processes of coercive persuasion, a total ideology that encompasses all aspects of life, and the manipulation of attachment relationships. The GP shows none of these features. Situational factors thus appear to dominate over dispositional factors in differentiating the experiences of NTers compared to GPers. It is interesting that so many features of totalism are in fact already observable during the recruitment stage. This gives grounds for optimism in thinking about prevention strategies for the future: if these signs and characteristics can be observed at the outset, presumably they can also be taught and thus aid prevention efforts.

In the next chapter we follow our recruits into their party lives, continue to compare the increasingly bifurcated experiences of each group and observe how these patterns play out in the daily life of each group.

Chapter 9

Party Life: Retention or Affiliation?

Introduction

Marina Ortiz (2003b) summarized her 15 years in the NT in the introduction to her article entitled “Slave to a Dream”:

> From 1985 to 1990, I was a "Social Therapy" patient, and for much of that time I served as "cadre" in Newman's underground International Workers Party. During that time, my mental and physical health were systematically damaged and my emotions and actions were controlled and corrupted by Newman (and his associates) through the use of Social Therapy-a fraudulent, coercive and manipulative psychotherapeutic technique he developed. Newman and his "therapist/activists" (cadre) also aided and abetted in my indoctrination into their underground, pseudo-Marxist/Leninist organization. In addition to the emotional (and political and professional) damage caused by Newman's reckless and dangerous therapeutic treatment, I endured five years of unpaid slave labor; was pressured to make private (and public) financial contributions; and was ordered to participate in secretive (and illegal) money-laundering schemes.

She then goes on to give specific details of her experience which were corroborated by participants in this study who reported similar experiences.

Peter was involved in the GP for seven years. He described his role in the GP thus:

> Going to meetings [laughs]. Doing, setting up either biannual conventions or their annual meetings. Setting up you know, I was in computers and so I could set up both the email list and their web site. I didn’t do a lot of campaign stuff. We didn’t have many campaigns—we had one, [Candidate Name], he’s pretty well known. He’s running now, but he ran in 96 for state rep. That was our one candidate race basically. But I didn’t, I never, never really [got] into doing campaigns. I think I did leaflet-dropping once, that’s about it. I figured it’s something else for me to do. And of course I probably staffed booths and events like the [Spring] parade something like that. Not very much, as little as possible, I didn’t like doing that either. […] I think I did some work on our newsletter, […] I did put it on the website. I, there was somebody else really basically in

> charge of that. Yeah, basically going to meetings, or organizing meetings, you know, setting up for meetings and stuff and writing agendas or whatever, and Coordinating Committee meetings [I was a] member for one term, I can't remember if it was one year, I think it was one year. So I was going to that, they had meetings regularly […] I established the first real budget for the Green Party, and the spreadsheet. […] I set up yet another office manual. So I worked in the office some, for a little bit, a lot of things I guess, whatever needs done, that I like doing.

In these two descriptions of life within each group we see how the NT enmeshed and exploited its members, colonizing the entirety of their lives. Peter's quote typifies GPers' experiences: he became active to the extent he wished in the GP, in the particular activities that he selected, and in activities that were restricted to the political, public realm.

In the previous chapter we saw how each group obtained its new group members. Now we move on to examine and compare the different aspects of life within the two groups. In the NT, this process becomes what Zablocki (2001a) calls "retention", while in the GP a much looser affiliation occurs. We will see the consolidation of the safe haven environment of the NT on the one hand, along with isolation from extra-cult affective ties on the other. These conditions occur in conjunction with the onset of elements of threat emanating from the group, thus initiating a cycle of assault and leniency (Zablocki 2001a). With no, or limited, alternate external ties or resources available by which the group member may sidestep the group-initiated threat, a situation of fright without solution (Main and Solomon 1986) is created, setting in place the conditions for forming a disorganized attachment bond to the group. Within the GP we will see neither the limiting of external ties, nor the creation of a safe haven, nor a cycle of assault and leniency. In fact, we do not see group members form a bond to the GP that rises to the intensity of an attachment bond.

In this chapter I focus on the integration of new members, Social Therapy (NT only), political study, schedules and activities, finances, organizational structure, members' relationship to leadership, and members' social networks (including romantic relationships, children, family of origin, and friendships).

Integrating the new group member

Once involved in their groups, the experiences of GPers and NTers diverged radically. In the GP, typically people could become involved to the degree that they wished. This often involved very rapid trajectories into positions of responsibility. For instance, seven of the twelve GPers became members of their local coordinating committees, several of them within just a few weeks of becoming active. Similarly, access to the position of chair of a local, or even the state chair, was quite open, with four GPers having been chair of their local at one point or another:

> Yeah, it was like a technicality. […] We sat around and said, "Well, someone's gotta be a chair. If the Secretary of State says we need a chair, what do we put here?" I kind of said, "Well I'll do it, if nobody else wants to." I guess that was a nomination of myself, so… [laughs] (Sherman).

On the other hand it was equally acceptable to simply attend a meeting with no further involvement, and many GPers attended no more than one meeting every month or two. One member described it thus:

> No, no there was no coercion as far as doing anything, anything at all basically because, I mean, 'cos that leads to the other problem as far as people who promise, say, "OK I'll help you do this", and things aren't getting done, and of course that's a chronic problem in this kind of situation. And it's just the way it is. Because […] it's all volunteer, you're not obligated to do anything (Peter).

Time involvement ranged from two hours a month for some GPers, to up to 20 hours a week for others (during election campaigns). In fact this wide differential in commitment represented quite a problem for some interviewees: Who really was a Green? Different locals had different criteria. As Peter said, regarding the open nature of the GP, "Even defining the membership of a party like the Green Party is very difficult. Is it the people who attend annual meetings? The people who vote?" This has been an ongoing point of discussion within the group and some locals have now established more formal rules regarding membership and voting rights. One local, for instance, required that members sign a form indicating agreement with the Ten Key Values as a pre-condition to voting. As Lynn describes the situation in another local:

> On the statewide level you just had to say, "I agree with your platform and therefore I can call myself a member of the Green party." Now, that might be different now but that's what it was then, whereas on the local level, you had to sign something and so I never signed it. It's like, I don't feel like signing that. So whenever I would go to a local meeting, I could not vote because I refused to sign that thing.

Even though Lynn did not sign the membership form, and thus did not vote, in all other respects she participated as, and was regarded as, a full member of the party.

In general though, there was no formal joining of the GP. Becoming a GP member involved simply going to meetings and volunteering for various activities. Contrary to the NTers none of the GP study participants ever mentioned paying dues, or any other monetary relationship to the GP, though undoubtedly certain of them donated money as well as time.

There was no such ambiguity regarding membership in the NT. From the 1970s onwards, new NT cadres generally went through similar, and compulsory, induction processes as described in the previous chapter. After induction, cadres were assigned to secret cells that met biweekly. These meetings were primarily for the purpose of channeling dues and other assets from cadres up to the party leadership:

> They immediately, at the first cell meeting, had a questionnaire for me about, for me to fill out, about money, you know, who had money, how much money, stocks, anything. And I had a small savings—well, it wasn't that small actually. It was small relative to other people…
>
> **Everyone in the cell got the questionnaire?**
>
> Just me, because I was the newest person in that particular meeting that time—but everyone gets one. I filled it out—I lied—I think I had $10,000 saved up and I said I had $1500 and the next cell meeting, they asked me for it and I flipped—I freaked out. I said—I lied again—and I said, well I can't give you all this money. My mother needs some money, needs me to pay some stuff for her, and the response came back immediately that I had to come up with this money and that I could do it in two installments, half that meeting, half the next meeting. So I spoke to G. about it. I was like what's going on? I really did not want to give up a dime, you know, money…in my family is like, you know—it's important—you save and save for a rainy day and you don't tell people what you have and you save.

> But I did give the money up…then…they told me how much I had to pay, you know, what my dues would be…and then I really started to get conflicted—then I was really, really feeling like "What the hell am I into here? What is this?" So I met with Karen Kessel and I talked about the conflict with the money—being asked for the money—and paying this money every other week and what was that going for…and she said something to the extent of, "Well you might be giving up this $1500 or you might be giving up this bi-weekly or whatever, every other week dues, but look at how much you are getting. All of this is yours. You know, the social therapy, all of these organizations, they are all yours, you are part of this, so while you are giving up something, look at all that you're getting." And that made sense to me… (Juliet).

Along with the financial form, new members sometimes also filled out a schedule form:

> Simply like, I don't know, six a.m to midnight seven days a week. It just fit on a one sheet of paper, 8x11, landscape format, and it just, I think, there must have been a line for each half hour. And then you just had to fill in where you were, work or school, or family or whatever else […] and then you handed it up to your cell leader (Isaac).

In the NT, each new cadre was assigned a "friend". Ruiz described the process thus:

> Whenever you joined the inner party, you get assigned a friend. And the friend is kind of somebody that's been in a long time, that can guide you through things, that's somebody you can talk to if you need to, or whatever. B. was my friend. And, there's no kind of end to the friend you know? His assignment kind of ended, but it was unclear, you know, when the friend ended. But, yeah, so he would guide you through things and talk to you. You'd meet with him once a week.

This "buddy" technique is commonly used in a variety of cults, from the extreme example of the "check partner" system in Heaven's Gate where every action was performed with another group member in tow[61] (Lalich 2004), to the Boston Church of Christ where a "discipling" relationship was set up between a new and a veteran church member (Giambalvo and Rosedale 1996). The NT friend formed a key part of controlling the environment (Lifton 1961) of the new recruit, providing a figure with whom to work through the predictable problems that might arise and thus pre-empting and discouraging

[61] Lalich (2004) states the purpose of the check partner was "to be a check on and reinforcement for each other."

seeking help outside the group. In these ways the new cadre was integrated into the daily functioning of the group.

The role of social therapy

Social therapy as means of indoctrination

Obviously the GP had no corollary to social therapy. But in the NT, social therapy served as the anchor of the entire organization, and had done so from its inception. Social therapy served three related functions: recruitment, indoctrination, and generating income for the NT. The recruitment function has been described in the previous chapter. The indoctrination function initially overlapped with the recruitment function, but as Arendt (1948/1979) states: "whenever totalitarianism possesses absolute control, it replaces propaganda with indoctrination" (p. 341). Indoctrination involved the further inculcation of the group's total ideology, with its three totalitarian elements as described by Arendt: it explains everything for all time; it is independent of experience; and proceeds with an absolute logical procedure. These elements will be discussed further in the later chapter on discourse.

The indoctrination function of social therapy explains why the group therapy was mandated for NT cadres: "When we were recruited it was told that we were assigned to a group therapy. And individual if we wanted. But we *had* to go to group therapy" (Myrna). Individual problems were no longer addressed as in the propaganda phase. Now the purpose of therapy was to get people to work harder for the group, and to keep them "tuned up" as regards their total commitment. Myrna describes the cadres' group therapy:

> We had to learn how to be political. Because everything we do is political and, if we have personal problems it's because we're not political enough. If we, if our focus is on our political work, we don't have time for personal problems [laughs]. But that, that's, that was their basis, that you had to be thinking and being political all the time. So there's no time to worry about your personal problems, and if you, you know, like with me, not being able to do the phones [for solicitations], I mean at first it was well, you just have to push yourself, you just have to do it. And I couldn't. I literally couldn't get myself to make these damn phone calls and, but they tried to tell you that […] if you are thinking of what you're doing, what the goal is, the revolution, you know, you have to give up your

> personal life, your personal needs, your personal wants, for the betterment of the working class, eventually, and the revolution. And, you feel guilty if you don't! If you want time, if you want a day off, you want an afternoon off to go swim in the summertime, want to go to the movies, you feel, you're made to feel guilty because you're taking away from, you know, helping people, helping poor people. I'm one of the poor people goddammit! [laughs]. *I'm* working class, *I'm* poor, *I* need help!
>
> […] Yeah, the biweekly cell meetings were more geared to information passing. The therapy groups were just more into, you know, buckle up! Work! work! work! work! Don't think of anything else.

Cadres who were on the road petitioning or away doing other organizing tasks were required to have phone therapy: "I did therapy on the road by phone and I didn't even know who my therapist was—and we had to pay for it" (Denise). Phone therapy was also often used for volunteers and for people training as social therapists. Sometimes, cadres also continued individual therapy and this might mean they went to one individual therapy session and two group therapy sessions a week, creating yet more financial and time constraints.

All cadres had to attend some amount of social therapy. But a few cadres eventually found ways to resist it:

> Was it allowed? [avoiding therapy] Not really. Was it tolerated? Yeah. You know. Nah, I took a lot of shit about not going on with therapy […] I had a lot of little stopgaps to deal with not wanting to go to therapy […] all kinds of excuses. The reality is I couldn't afford therapy. I made crap money (Ruiz).

Two participants who eventually resisted therapy saw themselves as strictly political NTers, and referred to others as therapy "robots" or "therapy zombies." Resistance was tolerated as long as these members demonstrated compliance in other ways—both were forced out when they no longer did so. But regardless of whether or not an individual resisted, the culture of social therapy invaded all aspects of NT work: "Everything was therapy-based. The conversations were therapy-based. […] You get bombarded with therapy-speak" (Ruiz).

In both the propaganda and indoctrination phases of group therapy, social therapists handled objections and questions to keep the focus on the client, or cadres', own weaknesses, rather than allowing discussion about the group. The mode of "attack therapy" was used in both settings. A non-cadre participant reported:

> They forced me out of my comfort zone. It was very intense. I mean, it was- it wasn't like a nudge. It was like, *"You will not do this anymore"* and they, it was like they pushed and kicked me out of my comfort zone. I mean, it was the most intense thing I've ever been through. When I think back, I'm surprised I survived, but it was real intense. […] they would push you on an issue past your breaking point (Louisa).

In many cases both cadres, and non-cadre volunteers reported that therapists lost control and resorted to intimidation and verbal threats and abuse in the group. The job of the co-therapist was to "support" the therapist, and as an additional voice useful in times when a client questioned or resisted too much. A non-cadre volunteer described the role of one co-therapist:

> But E. [the co-therapist] was the intimidator. She—if Y. asked a question and someone didn't answer his question, if someone spoke up and wasn't really answering his question directly, for instance…well one time I, it happened with me and she looked, she goes, "*Did you just not hear what Y. asked?!*" I mean in a very intimidating tone of voice (Bernice).

Therapy sessions with Fred were viewed as a privilege: "It was kind of an exclusive group […] You felt like you were in somewhat [of an] elite" (Denise). The inner circle had regular group therapy with Newman, and many cadres had at least the occasional experience of Newman visiting their therapy group, or even of having individual therapy sessions with him:

> He wasn't a regular therapist but he would come in sometimes and talk to us. It was always a trip because he was very entertaining and perceptive and he would point things out about people. And of course, he invented the whole thing so he should be the master. The thing with Fred, if I would have stayed in a while, is I really enjoyed Fred. He seemed to be so…um…alive intellectually. He was very charismatic. You could feel the pull. Very seductive. Very intelligent. He knew a lot. Very articulate. A pleasure to talk with. I did notice, now in hindsight, what he would do if at some of these meetings; […] people would tear each other up, [but] he was always the "nice guy". He would have someone else say, "You're a petty bourgeois scumbag!"…and he'd be like you know, a father figure—not really involved in it and maybe he would put his hand on their shoulder like, "All right, I think you've made your point. We all know he's petty bourgeois scum. You don't have to keep saying it over and over again." Like, sort of unleashing the dogs but not doing the biting and someone else would do it for him (Sydney).

The attack-style of therapy shown above is a key element in the establishment of what Zablocki (2001) terms the cycle of assault and leniency. Along with many other types of threat induced by the group (fatigue, hunger, financial instability and so forth—see below), the attacks in therapy contributed to the destabilization and overall arousal of fear in cadre and non-cadre members. This assault on, and intimidation of, the participant by the perceived safe haven is a critical element in the process of creating a disorganized attachment bond.

So, while social therapy functioned to arouse fear (the assault element), it also promoted the safe haven function (leniency element) of the group by strengthening intra-group social bonds (Lofland's cult-affective ties). Recruits and cadres in therapy groups often became good friends or romantically or sexually involved with each other: "I was pretty much with Sylvia the majority of the time that I was there […] we actually met in therapy" (Ruiz). These therapy-based sexual relationships also included client/therapist relationships, instigated by the therapist. Fred Newman set the model for this. Gabrielle Kurlander, his current wife, was initially a client in his therapy group, as was Kurlander's then partner. Newman's previous wives had all been in his therapy groups. Other therapists also were known to be sleeping with current clients: "So there was this woman in therapy and she was in one of L's groups – L. was leading the group, and he started screwing her" (George). Resulting relationship issues would be brought into the group sessions as for any other client. In another example of creating social bonds (and breaching generally accepted therapist/client professional boundaries) a therapy client was housed with a therapist, which, as this ex-member put it in the interview, "was totally unethical" (Denise).

Therapy sessions were far from confidential. In fact, as one cadre put it: "If I wanted to share it with the world, I'd take it to therapy" (Juliet). Thus, therapy, rather than being a "safe space" in which to explore personal issues and problems, became the location of public confessions (Lifton's "cult of confession") and of placing members on the "hot seat", pressured by other group members. As Denise said: "I used to beat up on the people in the group there. I was the bulldog in there 'cos I knew all about therapy and N. [therapist] used to push me on (laughs) I don't believe I did that…".

Social therapy as a source of revenue

Social therapy—meaning here the sessions themselves, rather than ancillary activities performed by clients, such as fundraising—has been one of the financial engines of the NT. Shapiro (1992) states that in 1992 the East Side Institute for Social Therapy—only one of social therapy's branches— reported $400,000 in annual sales. However this may include only a minor portion of actual income. Former cadres in this study stated that they paid for social therapy out of their stipends. As Grace said, she gave most of her stipend,

> back as cash under the table to the organization […] I would take my paycheck and give most of it back in therapy and back to the organization, other than the two fifty a month that I paid for the rent.

With an estimated cadre membership of 400 during the 1980s, and an average of $30 a session, the cadre contribution alone would thus be significant. Of course, as many cadres worked fulltime for the NT, this would result, not so much in income, as in a general lowering of outgo to the already minimal stipends given to cadres.

Social therapy thus had multiple functions. Beyond fundraising (seen by Singer 1995 as one of the key tasks of cultic groups), it served to achieve the final three elements of Lofland's (1977) seven conditions of conversion: the development of cult-affective ties, challenging of extra-cult ties, and intensive interaction with other group members. It was the key place where Lifton's (1961) cult of confession took place in the group. And threat was introduced through the mode of attack therapy. These elements worked together with other aspects of the group as discussed below, to create a situation in which the therapy "client" found themselves in a situation of fright without solution and thus sought the comfort of the NT or persons within it, as the only available safe haven. Social therapy, then, was key in the formation of the NTer's disorganized attachment bond to the group.

Political Study

Along with social therapy, new cadres also began a year-long course of weekly study meetings. These meetings were strictly internal events, led by inner core members. "Study groups were maybe twice a week. We studied the classics, you know, Luxemburg,

Engels, Marx, Lenin, everything—and of course, Fred Newman, Fred Newman's books" (Celia). "We'd look at internal documents that would be created for study. Fred's analysis of the world scene" (Sydney). Later, the Russian child development specialist, Vygotsky, was added to this list. At the end of the year the cadre would graduate, complete with an informal ceremony:

> After the year was up, we graduated. Our "friend" gave us a book, you know whoever your "friend" was got you a political book—I happened to get a book on Rosa Luxemburg, who they admired very much (Juliet).

Although I questioned interviewees about political study, this was not much discussed by them. Only those who led early study sessions (in the 1970s and early 80s) had much to say about political study, and these study sessions and workshops were often aimed at both cadres and the public—in other words they were likely aimed more at recruitment (at least during the early formation of the group). Few NTers mentioned additional study past the initial year-long program. Some non-cadre volunteers who came in through Social Therapy, were invited to political study groups—and even asked to host discussions on Marx in their homes—even though these volunteers were, at the time, largely apolitical. When looking at NTers schedules, as discussed below, it seems that perhaps fulltime cadres simply had no time for study. Although one might expect political cadres to engage in ongoing political education, this does not appear to be the case in the NT. Rather, working on "tactics" and various assigned tasks and projects, and attending social therapy appears to have taken precedence over study.

The study of political thinkers and theorists, then, was not a key or ongoing part of the NT program for cadres. Understanding Newman's ideas, however, *was* key, and this was achieved through social therapy, attending Newman's talks and plays, and reading his writings. In this way the Newman-dominated language and total ideology of the group was transmitted to cadres through multiple channels, not primarily through formal study. Thus the cognitive element of coercive persuasion—the internalizing of the group's total ideology—was accomplished primarily indirectly through systems of influence (Lalich, 2004) conducted through social therapy and other formal and informal points of contact with

consolidated NTers. Political education was a secondary and direct influence route, mostly limited to new cadres. This will be looked at further in chapter 11 on discourse.

In the GP various individuals took the initiative at different times to set up study sessions but there was no established political education program or orientation process. José, for instance, though not in a leadership role, led a study group on the book *Small is Beautiful* by Schumacher. Another local studied:

> corporations, to understand that whole phenomenon, corporations as a person, and how it affects our lives. We actually came up with some solutions that you could do to cut down on the power of corporations, I don't know if that will ever happen [laughs]" (Kelly).

This particular set of workshops was, in fact, led by a non-GPer who had approached the group with the idea. Similarly GPers from the same local attended a three month study series put on by a state agency on urbanization. Thus, study in the GP was not limited to internal events as in the NT. And anyone with energy to spare could propose and set up a study group. During the Nader campaign of 2000, some locals felt the need to educate the many new members who joined the GP based on their support of Nader. These locals made efforts to orient new members to the Ten Key Values through setting up workshops. Thus political study in the GP ebbed and flowed, depending on the level of initiative of individual members, on other available resources, and on the interests and needs of local members.

Schedules and activities

Once inducted, (and sometimes even well before formal induction) NT cadres were immersed in extremely full schedules. Their time was thus controlled (Lifton's milieu control) which provided yet more opportunity for intensive interaction (Lofland 1977), for the implementation of systems of influence and control (Lalich 2004), and generally served to limit the world of the recruit both relationally and practically, to life within the NT.

Above and beyond the weekly meetings for individual therapy and group therapy, meetings with assigned "friends", cell meetings and study meetings, cadres worked

fulltime on NT assignments: “I worked for a number of the organizations—I worked for the Castillo Theater, I worked for the People’s Law Institute, I worked for the East Side Institute for Social Therapy, I worked for the Rainbow Lobby” (Juliet). Most cadres started work from about 9.00 am until 6.00 pm, at their primary assignment. Juliet, for example did administrative and data entry work. Others might work fulltime in the theater construction shop, on one of the many publications, or on election and petitioning efforts. A cadre could be assigned to work fulltime in one of the group’s law offices, or as a driver for Lenora Fulani or another leadership person. Other cadres were assigned to work in Newman’s office:

> At that point I was working in his personal office, which didn’t mean I saw him very often. He might pop in there for one meeting a day, you know, but it was his personal office so my tasks included making sure he always had toilet paper in his bathroom and all this and dusting his office when he was there to use it, you know and, his little books and everything (Grace).

Only one of the participants in this study retained a job outside of NT activities.

On most evenings, after their day shift was over, cadres would go directly to another location and do either phone or street fundraising, or door-knocking for one of the projects. That four-hour shift would end at 10.00 pm and then there would be meetings until late:

> Then you’d have either a staff meeting or some other meeting or maybe you’d have a drink with some leadership people—leadership people were always organizing drinks—all of them had drinks, you know it was drinks—actually, Marge Tilsen even had something at her house called “The Saloon” [*sic*], after the Gertrude Stein Saloon, you know, where she’d have people over every week to discuss current events, who knows—I was never invited to that one. So there was always something [… It would involve] discussing the work, or discussing politics, or discussing your political development, or getting to know them—that was always urged, you know, “get to know the leadership” (Juliet).

Some cadres were part of the security team and they then reported for all-night shifts at various places (see below).

Sometimes cadres’ schedules were even more intense, especially during political campaigns, which might result in “all-nighters” and result in even less than the average

four to six hours of sleep normally allowed. Juliet, who was a member for eight years, said: "I did not take a week off the entire time I was there. In fact, I had, I barely even remember getting a Sunday off occasionally. I never ever took a vacation. It's just, it's not heard of—people didn't do it." The NT also required that cadres (and often volunteers) attend Newman's appearances, or other events such as plays at the Castillo, workshops, etc. Cadres and volunteers paid to attend these functions, both with money for buying tickets, and with time taken from already very busy schedules.

Intensive social interactions accompanied and contributed to this heavy schedule, such as the "drinks with leadership" described above. But social activity also took place with peers, again, often late at night at various bars and restaurants frequented by group members. Many interviewees mentioned that a great deal of drinking and drug use took place:

> I mean man, those people knew how to party, […] understandably, because we worked so damned hard. When we got a chance to relax and party, we did! I mean our parties were just, no matter where it was, who had it, the booze flowed, like you wouldn't believe. And drugs and the, you know, and the music and just, I mean, the p- we worked hard and we partied hard (Myrna).

These parties were part of the internal life of the NT and served to further enmesh cadres and control their time. NTers rarely socialized with people outside of the group unless it was for instrumental (recruiting or fundraising) purposes.

A cadre's schedule, then, typically consisted of a fulltime assignment, evening and/or weekend shifts for "volunteer" phone banking or other tasks, several weekly meetings for therapy, cell, staff or study meetings, mandatory attendance at NT cultural programs, and in the few remaining hours, late-night socializing with leadership or other NTers. As one participant described coping with the schedule:

> You never have control because there's too many things being thrown at you at the same time. You know, I mean, we were totally overworked. There was a period of time that I was running the print shop, the production shop, and the construction shop all at the same time. I mean, control- no, I felt like I was juggling, you know, knives. It was just, it was always like that. It was, it was constant interaction with different people.

> Constant- constant thought, multitasking at a high level—just, there was just too much going on to ever feel like you had control (Ruiz).

Heavy demands were also made on volunteers' time. Particularly in recent years it seems that many who are not deemed ready for recruitment as cadres, are nonetheless recruited as essentially fulltime volunteers. Bernice, for example, provided much free labor for the NT, ranging from filing and reception work for the therapy clinic of which she was a patient, to street solicitations (known as "street performance") for the theater project and performing in readings of Newman's plays. Social activities were also frequent for peripheral or volunteer members, with birthdays, for instance, being celebrated by the group. However, most of these events, where non-cadres were present, included some other aspect such as fundraising, or recruiting, or even study. Notably, for non-cadres, these events were typically held with their therapists and other clients from group therapy, further eroding the therapist/client boundary.

This control of people's schedules and their almost total immersion within the group served to restrict and limit people's experience outside of the group. The level of intensive interaction resulted in "destroying all space between [people] and pressing [people] against each other" (Arendt 1948/1979 p. 478.). At the same time, this intense level of involvement pushed out the external world. The group now appeared "like a last support in a world where nobody is reliable and nothing can be relied upon" (p. 478), a phrasing that mirrors the attachment concept of the safe haven in a disorganized relationship.

For GPers, schedule and activities were a much simpler proposition. Interviewees reported that their GP work took up anywhere from two hours a month to 20 hours a week during election campaigns. Activities included coordinating or other committee meetings, database maintenance, newsletter production, gathering signatures for election access, attending GP booths at state or county fairs, occasional demonstrations, distributing campaign lawn signs, or, in the case of candidates, campaigning for elected office. Occasionally GPers traveled to regional or national conferences, but generally there was little work done away from home.

No GPers worked fulltime for the group, and in fact there is no evidence that any were paid for their participation, though this information was not directly solicited in the interviews. There were two people who became involved during periods of under- or unemployment, and in at least one case their involvement tapered off on moving into a fulltime job.

One local in particular organized social events and was known for its "fun" parties:

> There were some really fun "get out the vote" parties with music being played and food. I think the [County] Chapter was really unique that if they had a party people would come down from the city and go, "I wish our meetings were like this," 'cause they would come to our parties and we'd all be dancing, people would bring their children and they'd dance (Hannah).

But even in this local, GPers spent only the minority of their time and had a minority of their friendships, within the sphere of the GP, and some did not participate much in the GP social life at all. In other locals, participants' social lives were quite separate from the group, with occasional social events after a project:

> Oh yeah. There was a, certainly, collegial, there was a camaraderie among the group. We would often, after a membership meeting, music and go to a bar, that kind of stuff so it wasn't you know, generally we all got along. There weren't a lot of strong personality conflicts. But I'm just kind of a natural, I'm a, I'm a like a three friend kind of guy. And so I had my kind of real close social group before and so when, I just didn't form any real close enduring bonds with the Green folks. But, you know, certainly went out with them now and then after a long night of canvassing or something (Sherman).

Thus the public and private realms were not collapsed together (Arendt 1948/1979) as in the NT, but GPers participated in political life as an activity separate, although not entirely disconnected, from their private lives.

Security and weapons

Several NT interviewees were part of the security team at one point or another, and also underwent weapons training—initially framed as part of the revolutionary struggle, but later to protect the assets and safety of the group:

> We did do weapons training. You know, there was a group of us that went into the woods once in a while. You know we'd do weapons training. We would do security training [...] The reality is, the reality of the situation at that point for us was that we were trying to create a revolution in the belly of the beast. Certain, at a certain point in time it would become a physical struggle, so weapons training was important. You had to learn how to deal with weapons so that you could teach how to deal with weapons, you know. In the early days there were discussions about where to put the bombs, when it came to that. Later on it didn't. It was more about fundraising, more about the emotional underpinnings and psychological underpinnings and how to move that to the left through culture, through propaganda. [Later on] it was a different look and feel so it became protectionist when we moved down to Castillo, when we moved to the office on Greenwich St., it was more protecting what we had (Ruiz).

Cadres who were assigned to the security team would stay overnight at various venues such as the Castillo theater, often sleeping on the floor, as part of monitoring the security of that particular program. They would also provide armed security to key figures such as Newman or Fulani. But primarily, according to another NTer (in whose house the weapons were stored): "the theory was, it wasn't so much that we would go, go gunning for the police, it was that we had so much money hanging around that it was necessary to defend our offices" (George). Despite the presence of weapons, and the alleged funneling of money for weapons to a variety of foreign guerrilla groups, some interviewees described the NT as non-violent, and that the ideology that was promulgated was one of peaceful revolution (i.e. Celia).

One of the GP's Ten Key Values is non-violence, and there was no mention of the organizational ownership or use of weapons, or support for violence, at any point during the interviews I conducted with GPers. Thus there seems to be a closer correspondence between their stated principles and their activities than those of the NT.

Finances

Finances for NTers were a topic that came up frequently in the interviews. Several former cadres reported a great shortage of funds. The typical stipend for a low-level cadre during the 1980s and early 1990s, in New York City, was $250 per week, paid in cash (Grace). Cadres had to pay not only food, rent and transport out of this stipend, but also therapy

fees and ticket purchases for the various events they were made to attend. They also potentially had to pay fines for lateness to cell meetings, and had to make up the difference if they failed to make their assigned quotas when fundraising, or selling newspapers and other group products. On entry to the group they had already given up any other assets, and even access to credit, to the group and so lacked any savings. Three participants reported resorting to illicit solutions to the strains, deprivations and simple hunger caused by the lack of financial resources:

> Fundraising you know, the stories I have about fundraising are really kind of like icky. 'Cos I'd be put into things and I hated fundraising, I didn't want to do it. But I was also a security officer. I'd open up the safe, I'd take out money from other people's envelopes, I'd put it into my envelopes, say I'd made the money. I resorted to other ways of putting that money in. I had a checkbook from an old account, and whenever I didn't make quota I just wrote out a check from the checkbook and put it in with my own money. Bounced like hell, but I didn't have to take shit about not making quota that week. […] I was a fulltime member so I didn't have a job, so you know. I added it up once, so between my dues, my therapy, my rent, I was $200 in the hole. I just, you know, you're paying me, you know how much I make, you know. So, to me it was just crazy. I mean there were times I was living on papaya, you know the dried papaya stuff. It was, just this lunacy that would go on (Ruiz).

Many cadres were also involved in, and discussed, various illegal financial activities of the NT, such as money-laundering (Ortiz 2003b), election finance fraud (Grace) and tax evasion (Myrna). Their participation in illegal activities may also have added to their dependency through implicating them in such activities (although, as former members several also blew the whistle on these activities). Financial control was therefore another means by which the NT created a dependency on the group. Cadres were dependent on the NT for their income, and had generally surrendered any other assets to which they may have had access. This formed another element in the NTs system of control (Lalich 2004). Financial controls on members were entirely absent from the GP.

Organizational structures

The NT maintained a secret cell structure typical of underground groups (Sageman 2004), with secret biweekly meetings. However, this cell structure did not actually serve the usual purpose of segmenting the group in order to protect it. That purpose was undermined by the gathering of the entire membership together for biennial organization-wide plenums.

The secret cell meetings consisted of about four to eight members headed by a cell leader who then reported further up the hierarchy. Members did not know who were cell leaders, nor who was in which cell. Cell meetings were "ten minutes long, tops" (Juliet) and generally held in bars or restaurants with the location rotating frequently. One interviewee described the painful humor of sometimes running into another cell at the same restaurant and having to feign ignorance about their activities. These meetings were typically held either very early in the morning or very late at night in order to accommodate members' packed schedules. Missing a meeting was a serious offense. And being late was punishable by a fine. Grace describes the cell meetings:

> She met with me and we were told how these little cells worked, that we meet once every two weeks and were given a time and location and we can't be late—if it's past the exact second of the hour then we'd have to pay a ten minute late fee and then you'd get a note from your—from the secretariat—that everyone passes around and then the cell leader destroys it. And you meet in a public restaurant, oh, and it's in an envelope—in a white envelope—the message that everyone reads but also, at that time, once every two weeks, your allotted amount that you'd have to give to Fred—but they don't say that—but the organization…you have to put in cash in a white envelope and pass it under the table to the cell leader. And if you don't pay on time you also have a ten dollar late fee (Grace).

There was no political content to these meetings—they were strictly for the passing on of dues, for collecting personal financial information from cadres and for disseminating information on new members and those who had left. This was accomplished by the cell leader handing around a piece of paper on which would be written the name of a member who had left with the notation of whether they were now "hostile" and "unsupportive" or "friendly" and "supportive". If hostile it was understood that cadres would no longer communicate with that person, in effect shunning them.

At the higher level, cell leaders met weekly as described by Juliet:

> Then when I became sort of like a cell—not the cell leader but the cell liaison—I would meet with these six or seven or eight cell leaders weekly for about an hour to discuss which people were having issues paying the money. Was there anybody being oppositional to this? If people were asked for money based on their income or savings that people knew of, if any issues came up, they would report that to me and then I reported it on to my contact. Me being, I had eight people or so under me, they were about eight people who had eight people or so under them and we all would meet to discuss and transfer the money over to one person. That person would take the money on to the next level, whatever that may be.

The biennial plenums, on the other hand, were gatherings of the entire membership. These events were held secretly in hotels and all cadres were required to attend. An 1990 internal memo from the IWP "Secretariat" prepares cadres for a plenum and states:

> Read the following memo very carefully. All instructions must be followed to the letter. […] Comrades' behavior must be coherent with the cover of the meetings. You are attending meetings sponsored by New Alliance Productions, Inc. a media entertainment corporation who's [*sic*] specialty is community based entertainment functions, such as the national All-Stars Talent Shows.
>
> General Security Guidelines:. KEEP A LOW PROFILE. Your behavior should reflect that of professionals attending a seminar. Err on the side of conservatism: no conspicuous reunions in the hotel lobby of comrades who haven't seen one another for a long period of time […]

An NTer described the events:

> We would rent hotel rooms under the guise of something else but once there in the setting, we would create very dramatic productions and presentations and speeches about the work that each different department, so to speak, had done (Celia).

Cadres might be assigned to new projects at plenums. Some central committee members would be elected at the plenum (from a list of nominees selected by Newman), while other central committee members were simply appointed by Newman, so this was far from a democratic process. One cadre described how the combination of the secret cell structure, and the illegal activities such as money-laundering, together with the entire group meeting to celebrate their accomplishments, resulted in a feeling of "exciting euphoria" (Celia). Thus the plenums served as rituals for the generation of "collective effervescence" (Durkheim

1912/2001) that kept members feeling they were part of the larger revolutionary project. As with the plenums, central committee meetings focused on Newman: “Central committee meetings—held increasingly infrequently after 1989—tended to be day-long lectures by Newman, punctuated by questions from the floor designed to support Newman” (Pleasant 1993).

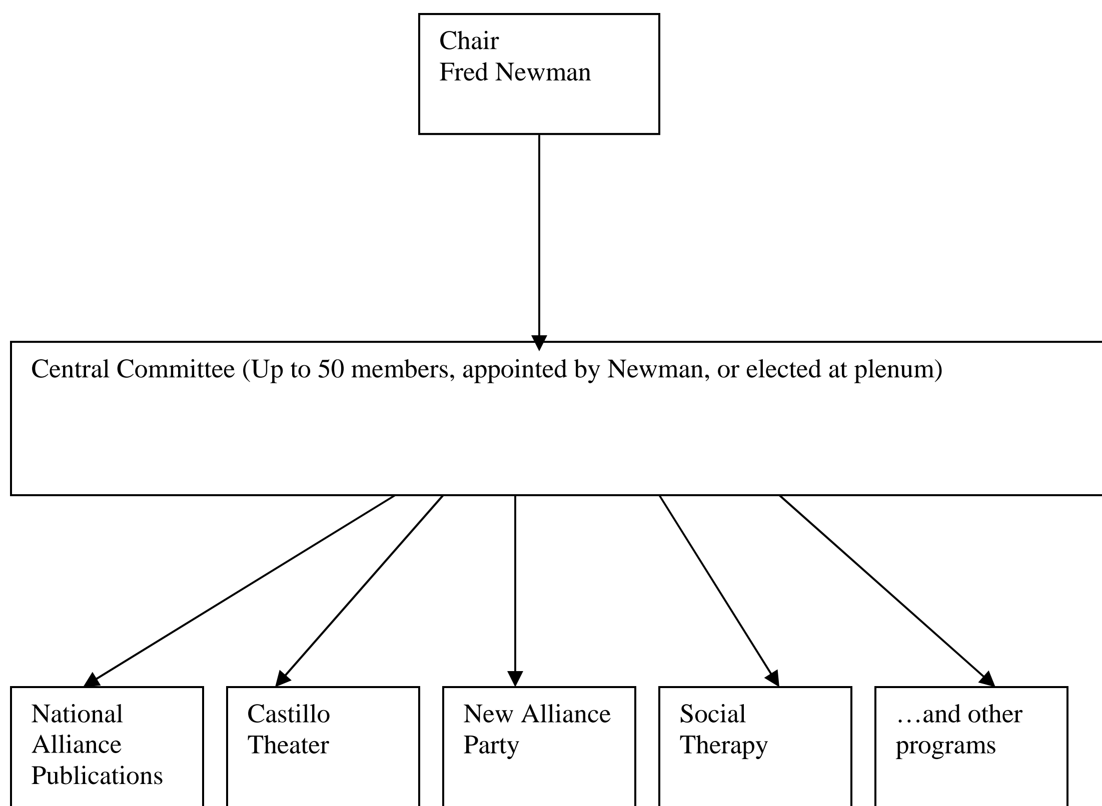
Within the NT a strange combination of openness and secrecy thus existed. Clearly, maintaining real security and secrecy from the outside world was not the primary goal of this structure, since that would be defeated by the gathering of the entire organization at the plenums. However, the cell-based secrecy would serve several useful functions. First, it kept the financial mechanisms of the group secret. Second, it symbolically maintained a romantic aura about underground political work and the “need to know” principle. In this way it met Lifton’s (1961) criterion of "mystical manipulation” where the follower takes on the psychology of the pawn in relation to the omniscience of the group. The cell structure was also a ritual that created an aura of secrecy and elitism and established a boundary between utilitarian, daily activities—the profane—and the sacred, secret world of the NT (Durkheim 1912/2001). Finally, the cells were an infrastructure that could perhaps be converted successfully should the organization ever need to actually go underground. Grace addressed this contradiction:

> Our understanding was, that was the case, we were having these meetings and the government could never figure out where these meetings were because if somebody got caught, the cell leader would change the location of the meeting. You would lose your cell and you would no longer—you couldn’t jeopardize anybody else. In theory, since you actually knew who all the other IWP [NT] members were, if someone wanted to torture you, they could get out from you every—even though you never had an official list of who the IWP members were, but—we never thought about that question and just never, it was never discussed with us. It was that the cells were designed so that we could convey specific instructions […] I can’t say I understand it because looking at it now, it seems you could change the cell meetings but you know everyone in the cells…it’s bogus.

Beyond the cell structure, the formal structure in which cadres worked was based on the particular program (or “tactic” as they were known internally) they were involved in. This was a simple hierarchy, with a cadre in charge of each program. Appointed or elected central

committee members represented each program, however these central committee positions did not necessarily translate to actual power or influence within the NT (Pleasant 1993). See Figure 2 for the stated or formal leadership structure of the group. Note that program names used are only examples as these changed frequently over the years.

Figure 2.
Formal (normative) leadership structure of the NT

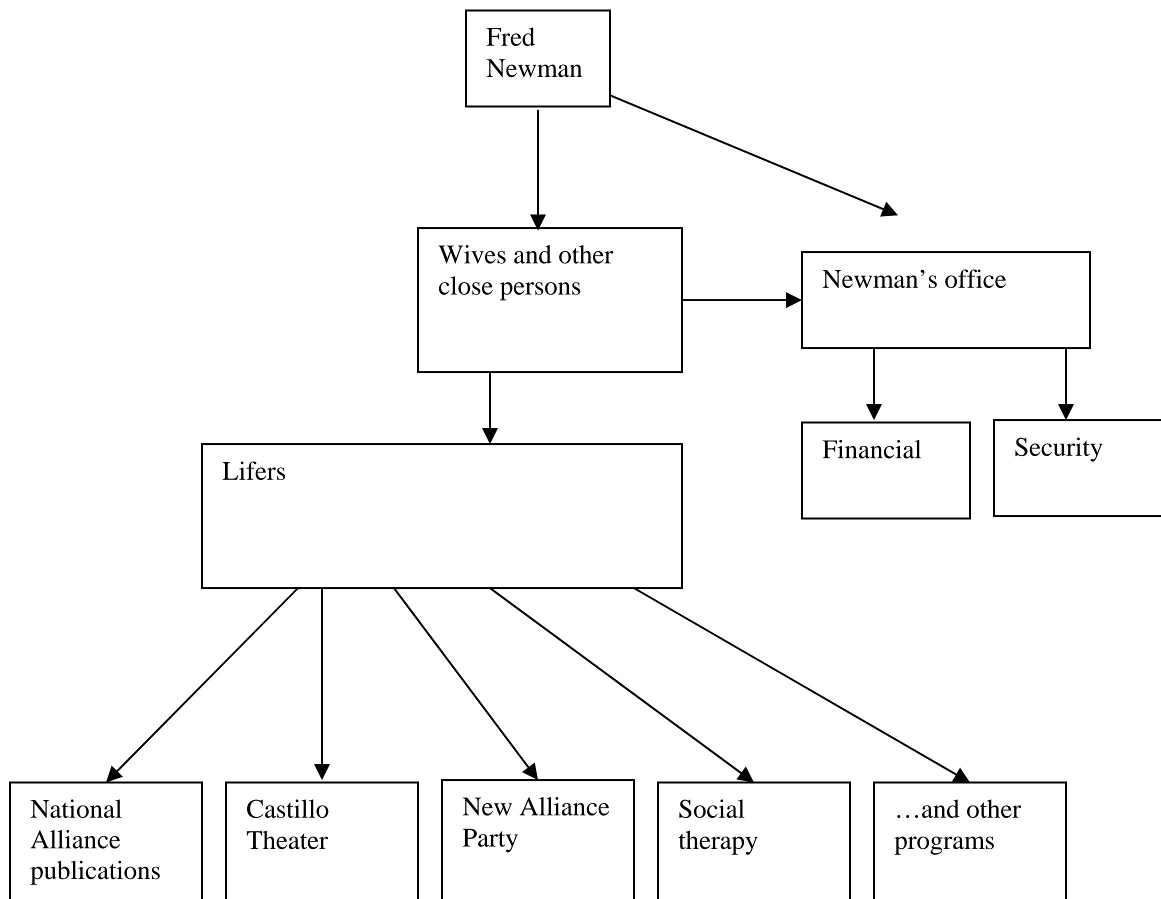


Not all elements of the NT structure fell into this hierarchy. The security and financial units, for instance, were outside of this formal central committee structure, and reported directly to Newman or his top lieutenants. Thus the central committee was essentially a show structure that gave people the feeling they were represented, and also allowed Newman to promote and demote cadre onto or off the central committee as a further method of control. Arendt (1948/1979) makes the point that totalitarian movements do not operate along strict hierarchical lines where authority is dispersed down the chain of command. Rather, she says, "The will of the [leader] can be embodied everywhere and at all times, and he himself is not tied to any hierarchy, not even the one he might have established himself" (p. 405).

When asked to discuss and diagram the *de facto,* as opposed to formal, power structures in the NT, study participants were quite consistent in their analysis. They placed Newman at the head of the organization, surrounded by his "wives" or "harem" as these participants referred to them. (Two other women with a close relationship to Newman were also in this inner circle, although they were not "wives".) The next circle was composed of the "lifers" who form the bridge from Newman to the more public aspects of the NT: the Social Therapy centers, the All Stars and Castillo Theater, and so forth. Newman's office, the financial team, and the security team were described as core, but secretive, units of the NT, not represented on the central committee[62]. See Figure 3, and also the diagram of the NT in Chapter Six. Thus, there was quite a large gap between what Scott (1987) refers to as the normative (or formal) leadership structure and the actual behavioral leadership structure of the NT.

[62] Arendt (1948/1979) says, in regards to the totalitarian state: "the more visible government agencies are, the less power they carry, and the less is known of the existence of an institution, the more powerful it will ultimately turn out to be" (p. 403). This seems relevant to this dual structure of the NT.

Figure 3.
Informal (behavioral) leadership structure of the NT



The GP structure, on the other hand, was, in both principle and fact, flat and decentralized, following two of the Ten Key Values: Grassroots Democracy, and Decentralization. Some former GPers found the level of decentralization frustrating:

> [T]here's a lot of autonomy within the Greens and it's like you can be a local Greens Party without having to be affiliated with the state or national at all, and the state not be affiliated with the national. And it's just a very loose structure which is you know, fundamentally democratic but it's kind of counter productive or you spend a lot of time re-inventing wheels, instead of just being handed the playbook, and you know here's how it means to be to have a Green Party and what you need to do and how you need to file your papers. There wasn't much guidance from anyone on, you know, how to do those mechanics (John).

As indicated above, each GP local is autonomous, and may or may not relate to regional or national structures. Some GPers were involved at more than one level, but most stayed active within their local. Kelly, however, described her involvement at the national levels:

> The national gatherings I used to really enjoy because of meeting a lot of people from around the country working on different things who yet shared a commonality and they were, they were always very intense events because you had a few days to work out a lot of stuff and meet a lot of people and so it was, you know, it was a very adrenaline situation. You know, you'd stay up all night and so that was exciting to me (Kelly).

Alan described going to one regional meeting: "I'd never been to Chicago and it was fun to be with all those different people- all progressive Green activists from all over the country, you know, and share experiences and kind of party". Attending national or regional meetings was strictly voluntary. At certain times delegates were elected to attend, for instance, nominating conventions.

Otherwise GPers attended Coordinating Committee meetings (and as mentioned previously, access to the Coordinating Committee was very open) usually on a monthly basis. The term for the Coordinating Committee (CC) was two years, and this brought in another core GP principle, that of rotating leadership. This principle, combined with the relatively small number of active members at any one time, meant that most active members would likely have an opportunity to serve on the CC of their local. Other GPers might attend specific committee meetings, or simply work on particular projects. The formal network ties

between members were voluntary, less frequent than for NTers, contingent on each person's level of activity, and, in terms of leadership, time-limited.

Some GPers named *de facto* leaders—generally people who had been involved with the GP for many years. One person expressed some resentment that just because L. was a founding organizer, he was always nominated for certain electoral positions. This person stated that "a sense of obligation" shouldn't be a guarantee of a nomination. Another mentioned a local leader who galvanized the group and kept it moving forward. A couple of interviewees mentioned small groups of long-time activists as being the *de facto* leadership whether or not they were on the CC. But overall, interviewees stated that *de facto* and formal leadership were essentially one and the same. Also, when they discussed leadership positions it was clear that they were generally discussing local leadership, and, beyond the mention of Ralph Nader, who is not a Green, no study participants discussed, or even seemed much concerned with, leadership beyond their chapter. Thus the GP structure was basically local, overt, and lacking the dual structure of the NT.

Relationship to leadership

Arendt's (1948/1979) description of the totalitarian leader closely fits Newman's leadership role:

> In the center of the movement, as the motor that swings it into motion, sits the Leader. He is separated from the elite formation by an inner circle of the initiated who spread around him an aura of impenetrable mystery which corresponds to his "intangible preponderance" (P. 373).

Newman's "wives" are the inner circle, with the "lifers" being the elite formation. The NTers interviewed for this study had varying relationships to Newman. Some had relatively close relationships with him—two saw themselves as having been recruited for the specific purpose of providing political know-how to Newman, and as such felt they were his intellectual peers. But in both these cases, at a certain point, Newman exerted dominance over them in a power struggle that ended their group membership. One early NT member described his relationship with Newman thus:

> I have the, the sense, the feeling that during my three some years as a member of that organization, I just, I feel, you know, the, this swirling

> feeling about Fred's power. I really felt that you know, I worked one on one with him at the beginning, that there was a reciprocity about things, that he learned from me. He was very eager to know about the movements, about politics and so forth and the movement and that's, some point a couple years later things started, moving in ways that I probably wasn't even completely aware of until they really started— another concept is the spiral, it's a spiraling thing and that might have been the word I was really looking for, a spiraling ascendancy of his ego (Jack).

There were different points of conflict over the years where people then left, or purges occurred, and some NTers, not being fully aware of the entire sweep of NT history, saw these moments as turning points where, they felt, the group ceased doing bona fide political work and "became a cult". But looking overall Newman always had essentially total control, perhaps with intermittent periods where more input was allowed but predictably, at the point that other centers of power might emerge, he would then act to quash any dissent:

> You know, I think before, he won people over – the guy is charismatic, the guy knows his shit, he's smart as hell, so he wouldn't win by force of will. [But] after that it was just force of will, it wasn't discussion, it wasn't conversation, it wasn't, there was this whole Fred had to be part of every moment in time. […] After the "Want Fred" period there was nothing. There was the imposition of will only. And you know, there are, there are other folks that have been around longer that said they had gone through this kind of stuff before, during the Newmanite-LaRouche era and [another] era, supposedly you know Fred imposed his will on you know, young members at the time (Ruiz).
>
> Sydney described Newman's social style:
>
> I liked him! I would have a problem disliking him now even after I already know about him. If he sat down right there next to me, I'd say, "Hey Fred, how are you doing? Are you still corrupting people?" [laughs]—"Are you still screwing eighteen women at the same time?" or trying to. But you know, he was a likeable guy! It's true. He had a different aura than a lot of the traditional cult leaders, not like he was unapproachable—you could approach Fred and he would talk to you at whatever level was appropriate and he never made you feel like you were nothing or that you were insignificant. He didn't do that, that's not how he ruled—he was much more sophisticated in how he got you.

Along with those who felt a certain equivalency with Newman, several others felt they had a "special" place in the organization. Of these, two women described how they thought they were being groomed for leadership, and were thus treated differently than the rank and file (though this is not entirely evident from the interviews). What is interesting here is Newman's ability to make almost half of the interviewees feel elite, special, privileged, within an overall context of overwork, underpay and generally poor living conditions. This seems to be the essence of a charismatic relationship. Not only is the leader endowed with saintly, heroic and exemplary characteristics (Weber 1968), but in becoming an adherent, members then also have potential access to such characteristics—at a minimum members become part of an elite.

At the same time, Newman was equally authoritarian, as shown in this transcript from an internal financial meeting:

> I'll bet you if they were losing money, I would get exact figures as to how much was going. But when I say well, how much is being made?—the answer is: I'm not exactly sure, $100? Maybe $200? I don t know. How come you don't know? If you were on the phone asking for an emergency loan, people would know the exact figures. You goddamn well know they'd have exact figures. They'd be on the phones saying: We need $210.07, that's the figure. When someone says to me we're taking in a hundred subscriptions I say, that's nice; what kind of money is that? I don't know. We're plowing it back in. What kind of bullshit is that, we're plowing it back in? What's the fucking money? What does it come to?" (Office of Economic Development 1983 meeting transcript).

The non-cadre NTers had more a more distant relationship with Newman, learning of him largely through others, reading his books, perhaps attending his speeches, watching him on video, or listening to his tapes. At speeches, or social therapy training sessions, Newman only allowed questions if they were written out and submitted beforehand, thus ensuring that he controlled the "dialog". Gillian describes how her interactions with Newman flipped from charisma to authoritarianism when he was challenged in these settings:

> I never felt sort of seduced by his charisma or anything like that. I was always a bit kind of repulsed by him. He definitely struck me as a real egoist. I mean, he was up on a chair, and there was always distance between us. Always a young woman scurrying around him to make him comfortable, pour his drink. That was in the bigger lectures. The colloquia

> […] were a little more intimate, people sitting in a circle, but Fred again, had a very comfortable chair. That struck me – he's got this wonderful throne, everyone else has the hard chairs. He's got someone giving him a drink. He's so special, and everybody else you know, has to sort of adore him. I, that was just plain to me, plain and clear, and I, that just didn't feel right. But, I think it was my first colloquia. I had a list of questions I was supposed to ask in advance. And I thought about them, and Y. of course helped me with, 'cos you were supposed to like, they were supposed to be good questions. Because if you didn't ask good questions like that would embarrass Fred and so we worked on the questions and... Oh, and he answered them! And he was just being charming! And oh! that's a good question, Gillian. […] But I think it was the next colloquia or a couple after that, I didn't get approval for my questions […] I think I asked if like, there was any contradiction for him you know in being the leader of this movement and at the same time his whole philosophy of not knowing and there's no-one in control. I don't remember what my question was, but he didn't like it, he didn't, he just started to get really pissed off by my questions and he would answer like in a harsh sort of "Yes!", "No!", and "That's it!" kind of thing. So, you know. I didn't like that anymore.

Gillian's description also shows how Newman created an aura of charisma and worship around himself, through the physical setting of the meetings. This extended to other seemingly mundane areas:

> You were never ever, ever to discuss with anyone, even your fellow staff, if you knew anything about Fred's schedule or what Fred was doing, you were never ever to discuss that. So there was a big secret about Fred, his household, what was on the food list—no, nothing to do with Fred (Juliet).

Similarly, he exerted his dominance in the therapy sessions. The following quote illustrates the subtle combination of authoritarian dominance with charisma and the resulting impact on a group member:

> We were made to wait outside, you know, after the appointed time of our, you know, sessions. We had group sessions and we would just be sitting outside fidgeting and waiting and then his secretary would come and say "He's ready now," and we'd all go in and he'd be sitting there eating a pastrami sandwich and, you know, or she would bring it to him and we'd have to wait for him to eat and I remember feeling- starting with every, almost every group where this kind of happened- starting out feeling extremely pissed off, but by the end of the group, I was so elated and happy and thankful for the wisdom that I thought he had imparted and it was like, you know, dependent on whether he picked me to make a point

> or asked me a question or said “Yes, you’re right!” you know, kind of thing or something I had said, and those were the moments of, you know, elation in therapy where- where I did something right or I said something right or I got it. […] I just remember that- that by the end of the group, I – I mean, those feelings of uneasiness in the beginning would turn into feelings of guilt. Why are you feeling this way towards him? Look at what he’s saying or doing. You know, and that would turn into feelings of love and euphoria for our- the work we were doing. It was just this weird roller coaster ride…(Celia).

Newman maintained his position of leadership through a combination of charisma and authoritarianism, by using social therapy as a process of coercive persuasion, and by successfully creating a lieutenant layer that surrounded him and implemented his wishes. While there have been phases during which individuals attempted to challenge his leadership, he has defused these challenges through expulsions and has thus maintained total control of the NT for its entire 40 year existence.

In the GP, the relationship to issues of leadership is central, in that emphasis is put on preventing a “cult of personality” at all costs. This principle goes back to the earliest days and struggles of the GP in Europe. Although in Europe certain leaders have emerged as the GP has developed a position of some political power, this is not the case in the US, and, particularly in the locals studied here, no strong leadership is entrenched. Kelly puts it well:

> Well the Greens are very anti-leadership [laughter] and we follow the consensus decision making model as much as we can and we are strongly committed to accountability in leadership and shared responsibility, so leadership has always been a really difficult balancing act in the Greens. And obviously there are always people who come forward as leaders, because they either have the time or the energy or the expertise to get things done so there’s always this tension between those people and the rank and file who are trying to maintain a more level kind of culture in the party. So as a result, very rarely do we have individuals who you can identify as leaders, at least initially. Once we became a political party, that got a lot harder. For one thing, once we organized we were forced to elect a chair, because the state requires that there be a chair. […] And once you have a chair, the media starts going to the chair, or you know, any official business starts going to the chair because that’s the person on the form.

> So the chair role has always been a little bit…we've been careful about who we elect as a chair because of that.
>
> **And what do you mean by "careful"?**
>
> Well, trying to find a person who understands that they should not use that as a bully pulpit [laughs], and understands that they need to be very accountable and very sensitive to the group in their inevitable dealings as a leader. […] Locals and the state organization, most of them tend to follow that model of having a weak kind of leadership, if they can handle it. People who are too pushy just get eaten alive.

Leadership in the GP fluctuated greatly at all levels, local, state and national. The only single figure one could point to as a leadership figure was not even a member of the GP, namely: Ralph Nader. Thus, the structure of leadership really does seem to follow the stated principles of the GP—decentralization and grassroots democracy—even at the potential cost of effectiveness and efficiency of organization. However, this does not mean that everyone feels represented, and in fact, the "tyranny of structurelessness[63]" (Freeman 1970) can be seen as a cause of certain members departing where they have felt that the level of openness and the lack of clear leadership allowed troublesome and dominant individuals to be disruptive (e.g. Hannah, Terry).

Social Networks

It is in the manipulation of NT members' personal social networks within the totalist structure that the crux of the retention process takes place. As discussed, this involves detaching members from their prior close ties and creating or reinforcing within-group ties. The NT thus removes any safe havens external to the group and establishes the group as the new safe haven. Without external safe havens available, people have nowhere to turn when faced with the group-induced threat, and thus they turn to the group, creating the strong, disorganized bond. If external safe havens were allowed to remain available, the entire retention process would fail.

[63] This refers to a lack of formal structure allowing informal power structures to develop.

Typically, on joining the NT, prior close relationships fell away, and the new recruit became relationally enmeshed (Zablocki 2001) within the group. We have seen how this often began in the social therapy group with people developing friendships and sexual relationships with fellow group therapy clients and sometimes even therapists themselves. The ego-centric network data I gathered show that, while recruits typically had an average of three close relationships at the time of entry, once they were consolidated in the group they lost nearly all of these pre-existing relationships. (The three NT study participants who were not consolidated as cadres, did not lose all their close relationships, although they did all describe some weakening of these relationships.)

In the NT, cult-affective ties (Lofland 1977)– that is, within-group relationships—more than replaced these abandoned extra-cult affective ties. NTers reported an average of 6.10 close relationships once they were in the group, compared to the GPers 4.27—a statistically significant difference[64]. However, for NTers the ratio of within-group relationships to total relationships was an average of 81%, compared to GPers whose in-group affective bonds made up only 39% of their social network (see Table 5 below). This pattern is even more extreme if we consider only NT cadres (excluding non-cadre volunteers), which raises the ratio of within-group ties to 90%. Thus we see that the density of ties of NTers increased, as expected. NTers' gain in relationships was nearly all new NT relationships, and prior relationships were, at least temporarily, abandoned. For GPers, however, while an average of about one new close relationship was formed during their tenure, nearly all pre-existing relationships were maintained. The sample size is, however, very small, (n=21), and so these results should be viewed cautiously.

[64] This difference might actually have been even greater. NTers often had very long lists of people they identified as "close relationships" while in the NT, but in the interview I asked that they cap the list at four to six. Even so, some went over that cap. One GPer did so.

Table 5.
Close ties prior to and during group membership

Group Name	N	Close ties prior to group membership	All close ties during group membership	Total within-group close ties	Ratio: Within-group / All close ties
Newman Tendency	10	3.00	6.10*	4.6***	81%**
Green Party	11	3.6	4.27*	1.82***	39%**

* 1-tailed p < .05
** 1-tailed p < .01
*** 1-tailed p < .001

Following Emirbayer and Goodwin's (1994) discussion of the importance of examining the content of network ties I attempted to inspect the quality, as well as the quantity, of these affective bonds. My expectation prior to conducting the study was that NT members would share fewer doubts about the group with each other, would have fewer emotionally trusting ties with their co-members, yet have stronger instrumental (mutual helping, generally of a practical nature) ties than GPers. These expectations were based on attempting to define the particular qualities of densely-networked cultic relationships which have, as Zablocki (2001) puts it: "a low level of differentiation" among affective ties with alters. If people in totalist systems were able to freely express doubts, they may then either form internal "islands of resistance" or find enough support—both cognitively and affectively—in order to leave. Thus, the expression of doubts to others is a form of both expressing dissent, and trying to establish a safe haven in which to process what one is experiencing. In a working totalist system I would, then, expect the expression of such doubts to be discouraged or suppressed. Similarly, if strong emotional ties are developed with alters, these could also develop into potential safe haven relationships, or alternate attachment relationships. But even undifferentiated alters can offer instrumental help which members might need in order to function effectively as group members. Thus I expected to find evidence of instrumental helping in the NT, but not of close emotional relationships, as operationalized by sharing of private feelings, nor of internal dissent operationalized by sharing of doubts.

For all these measures, I coded narrative responses to the relevant Close Relationships Schedule questions (see Chapter Five) on a zero to three scale (e.g. participant

shared doubts with alter never, weakly, moderately, or strongly). For each participant I calculated the average strength of each quality of relationship across all their close ties. See Table 6. I will take the results I found one by one:

Sharing of doubts

GPers shared doubts about the GP with close persons at a much higher (and statistically significant) rate, than did NTers share doubts about the NT with their close alters. In other words, GPers discussed their questions and doubts about the group openly, whereas NTers were much more isolated in considering doubts. As Asch's (1951) work on the majority effect shows, there is a "fundamental difference between the condition of being alone and having some source of human support." Alone, one's perceptions can be drastically altered and manipulated, whereas even having one or two confidants can greatly increase one's ability to believe and verbalize the sensory data that one is perceiving. The NT, therefore, was successful in isolating members from discussing, and therefore verifying, their sense perceptions.

Emotional trust

NTers did report a slightly weaker level of emotional trust (sharing of problems and private, inner feelings) for each of their close relationships than did GPers, although this was not statistically significant. However, in the context of the NT being centered around therapy, where sharing of feelings was mandated, this result perhaps should have been expected. In fact, one of Lifton's (1961) criteria for cultic thought reform is the "cult of confession" which is clearly demonstrated in NT. This enforced closeness and sharing of inner feelings may have been what was being reported by participants, and thus perhaps should have been an expected result. When emotional trust is created in such a forced and public context, this can be seen as another means of collapsing the private and public realms together. Thus there develops a contradiction between trust in other group members on the one hand, and a lack of any personal privacy on the other. This was well demonstrated by Juliet who felt that social therapy was very helpful to her, yet she would

not bring anything to the therapy group that she did not want to “share […] with the world.”

Helping

Measuring helping separately from the more emotional connection of sharing feelings and doubts was an attempt (based on my earlier discussion of Portes’ 1998 analysis) to differentiate dense network ties as a potential source of emotional support or “expressive returns” (Lin 2001), from instrumental support as part of a system of repressive social control. Contrary to my expectation, NTers reported slightly weaker levels of instrumental helping in their close relationships, although this also was not at a statistically significant level. Again, with this small a sample, these results should be viewed cautiously.

Table 6.
Qualities of close relationships

Group Name	n	S. receives help from alter	S. helps alter	S. shares feelings with alter	S. listens to alter’s feelings	S. shares doubts with alter	S. listens to alter’s doubts
Newman Tendency	10	2.0	1.8	2.00	2.0	1.3*	0.9**
Green Party	11	2.18	2.36	2.18	2.27	1.9*	1.81**

* 1-tailed $p < .05$
** 1-tailed $p < .01$

The relational enmeshment of NTers, therefore, can be seen as a quantitative phenomena, more so than qualitative, in that it was based on having many close ties, spending a lot of time together, having many multiplex ties through work, therapy, living together, study meetings, and so on. This supports the view that multiplex ties strengthen group members’ bonds and make them “more resistant to complete dissolution than are ties in a single-stranded network” (Kenis and Knoke 2001), such as were more typical of GPers ties. There was also, in some cases, a sense that everyone in the NT was a “close relationship,” showing a kind of interchangibility of relationships rather than attachments to specific others. Grace, for instance, stated:

> The people that I was particularly close with? Well I was friends - - with most of the people in the IWP. In other words I, I describe the group as a close knit group. We were in therapy together, we knew each other, we, we had to be, you know, "non abusive" in the way that we relate to each other, we were very - - intimate with one another.

In the NT there is a paradox in the lack of trust in sharing doubts about the group along with a lack of personal privacy and boundaries and high degree of intensive and intimate interaction (Lofland 1977). Strong ties were formed, but in a sense, given the individual ties were somewhat interchangeable, the ties were to the *group* rather than necessarily to specific individuals. This fits with Zablocki's (2001a) view of relational enmeshment in cults where there is a "low level of differentiation in affective ties between one alter and another" (p. 184). In this way our picture of NTers developing an attachment to the group becomes clearer. Not only were extra-cult affective ties discouraged and detached, but strong, individual within-group attachments were also discouraged in various ways, as we shall see further below. Certainly some relationships were allowed, but, as we shall see, if those relationships became too close, steps were taken to break them up or at least loosen the attachment bonds. Multiple, dense, weakly differentiated ties to other group members, and a lack of external ties can thus result in a primary tie or attachment to the group as a whole, rather than to individuals within it.

In the following sections I look at particular types of close ties and analyze the impact of the group involvement on these relationships. We will see how in the NT these individual attachment ties were systematically challenged, whereas in the GP there was, on the whole, little impact on GPers' personal relationships and social networks.

Romantic and sexual relationships

Of the NTers interviewed for this study, nearly all were single at the time of recruitment. Only one participant was married on entry, and his spouse joined as well. Thus, for these participants, the NT did not have to contend with the problem of pre-existing romantic relationships presenting a counter-weight to joining the group. Once in the NT, Newman's doctrine of "friend-o-sexuality," (a euphemism for non-monogamy and/or casual sexual relationships) dominated relationships. As one participant described it:

> [Newman] specifically was trying to explain it to the other IWP members […]. So he came out with all these dissertations and stuff […] about how he was a "friend-o-sexual". It's really very self explanatory [laughs]—some have sex with men, some have sex with women, some have sex with bulls and some have sex with trees, but he has sex with friends [laughs]" (Grace).

Not only did Newman "have sex with friends"[65], but this doctrine was extended to the rest of the group as well, which resulted in a group norm of "bed-hopping" (Jack):

> [M]ost adults share beds and relation- they swap- like they fuck like bunnies, okay? So yeah, they don't have boundaries. Therapy in the 70s, I understand, was to become, performed, you know, nude sometimes, sexually other times. They come from that generation, you know, and I mean, [if] that's cool with you, you know (Celia).

Newman or other social therapists would at times manipulate sexual relationships more specifically – sometimes via *diktat* although at other times more with implications or "advice" that was dispensed within the group therapy sessions:

> Well, my understanding is that there's a number of situations that Fred broke up relationships, that he broke up Gabrielle and her husband and then ended up with her…and his relationship was therapeutic […] with everyone in the IWP, more or less. I mean I ended up in therapy with him and […] most of the IWP members ended up his patients (Grace).
>
> They discussed this whole thing in therapy and […] they all decided that she should date my ex-husband, who I was dating at the freakin' time, so she went out and asked, you know, asked him out, to hang out, and he got into, you know, a brief relationship with her, but she wasn't ordered, but she was "advised" to do that (Celia).
>
> Fred Newman's reaction to me in therapy- because she was my therapist in the grouplet and he was my regular therapist in the group. He told me to

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[65] See also Newman's interview on NY1:

> Newman calls them his dearest loves, the women he lives with in his West Village townhouse. He admits some of the women initially came to him for psychological help. Newman treats patients in Social Therapy, his self-created field of psychology.
> "Some of them were in therapy, yeah," he says. […] "I think that people's sexual relationships should be something very personal between the people who are engaging in it, and I think if people love each other, care for each other, are attracted to each other and decide together that they want to have sex, they should," he says. "[Does it matter that it's a patient and a therapist?] I think sexual relationships are relationships between human beings, not human beings under certain descriptions or in certain categories. I believe that people should fall in love as they so desire, and if they want to include in that sexuality, they should include that" (Nissan 2005).

> get over it- that I should go out and have a few affairs of my own, go fuck around (Celia).

Even for NTers who were not yet cadres, it was implied that experimenting with extra-marital relationships would be a positive thing. Gillian, for instance, describes an incident when she was discussing questions about her marriage with her social therapy supervisor:

> And he said, "Well you know, could you have an affair or something? Have you thought about having a sexual affair with someone?" And, he, he had a straight face, and I looked at him and I said, "I don't think I could do that." And he said, "I didn't think you could." Isn't that weird? Isn't that strange? We were in a cafe, we were at a cafe, having some coffee (Gillian).

Most NTers had several sexual relationships with other NTers while in the group. Experimenting with one's prior sexual orientation was also encouraged, as was bi-sexuality. Some sexual relationships were with peripheral group members but only occasionally did NTers report sexual relationships with people outside of the group. Only a few NT sexual relationships discussed by study participants were long-lasting.

"Friend-o-sexuality" served to prevent, or at least slow down, the formation of strong, trusting sexual attachments, which might then become islands of resistance which would attenuate the "condition of being alone" (Asch 1951) in relation to the NT. However, at a certain point, with fully "deployable" and loyal inner circle members, stable couple relationships became allowed, along with an easing up of the restrictions against having children (Celia). This control of sexuality is a typical feature of cultic groups, although it may take different forms depending on the leader. Williams (1998), for instance, reports both enforced promiscuity and prostitution in the Children of God cult, while Betz (1997) describes another group's norm of celibacy, broken only by the leader with various female group members as a holy act of "spiritual meditation". Other groups, such as Heaven's Gate (Lalich 2004) demanded an extreme celibacy and asexuality. In the case of Jim Jones' Jonestown sexual relationships were also broken up: "members had no place to go, no place to go to test reality, no place to go with libidinal cathexis except to one man, no place to go to obtain or receive support except from him"

(Coser and Coser 1979). Whatever the direction of control, the effect is the same: the prevention of emotionally close sexual relationships developing and thus increasing dependence on the leader.

GPers describe very little, if any, impact of the GP on their sexual relationships, although two of the study participants did meet romantic partners through GP activities. In one case a GPer's romantic relationship with another GPer later caused tension between her and other group members as her partner was distrusted and disliked in the group given his controversial views and tactics that many viewed as divisive. In fact, this was part of why she ended up leaving the GP. But overall GPers experienced very little impact on their sexual relationships from the group. Nearly all of those who were in pre-existing romantic relationships stayed in those same relationships during, and after, their tenure in the GP.

Reproduction and child rearing

According to Lalich (1997), Singer (1995) and Stein (1997) the control of sexual relationships is part and parcel of a system of control that leads to and includes controlling the realm of reproduction and child-rearing. The following uses a framework I developed in an earlier study (1997) to investigate the processes of controlling reproduction and child-rearing in cults. Once again we see the theme of the cult discouraging the formation of a special attachment bond, in this case between parent and child, with the cult inserting itself into the midst of the relationship. Clearly this is a difficult task for the cult to take on given the strength of the parent-child bond. But in order to preserve a singular attachment to the group, and thus ensure retention, it is a critical element to be managed.

<u>The decision to conceive:</u> Several NTers discussed the fact that having children was frowned upon in the group—this was to the extent where women would be instructed (sometimes by their therapists) to have abortions if they became pregnant:

> The woman that I lived with, she had to ask permission to keep her child when she got pregnant. She also had to ask permission to get married. Most people were ordered to have abortions when they got pregnant […] There was also a very general sense that the organization didn't want children and that they were a burden on the organization (Grace).

Women were told that children would get in the way of the group's work. At least one couple broke up as a result of this, with this being at least part of the reason the man left the group. One NTer observed that few of the "lifers" have children. Most of these lifers are women who are now in their 50's, and thus past child-bearing age. Thus they have sacrificed their fertile years to the demands of the group. Within the group this is seen as a noble act, necessary for the success of the revolutionary project.

<u>Pregnancy:</u> No information was gathered on how pregnant women were treated in the group as there have been very few pregnancies carried to term among group members, as indicated above.

<u>The mother-child bond is impacted through restrictions on time and living arrangements:</u> Women who brought children into the group had much less time to spend with their children than before entering. It was not simply childcare that was collectivized, but the entire living situation for families:

> Most children, if there was children in the, if the person had a, a child, they had houses for the children. BA was one of the house mothers. I mean she was great, and she loved the kids and she was good with the kids and everything but the mothers, I mean, they didn't have time. They couldn't be home at 5 o'clock to feed them, they couldn't be, pick them up from school, 'cos they were doing whatever they were doing. So the kids lived in these—not all of them, but most of them—lived in these houses that were set up for the kids. R. refused to give up her child.
>
> **Were they actually living separately from the parents?**
>
> Yep. Yep. R. had, when I first met C. she was oh probably 3 months old. I've known her all her life, and, when she was in New York she lived with R. I lived with them also at one point, and even when I didn't live with her I babysat for R. sometimes in the evenings, if I could, and, but she, she didn't, it's not that they were doing anything wrong, but she did- R. did

> not feel that she should have to give up being a mother to be an organizer and so she refused to have her child stay at one of these houses (Myrna).

As with many elements of group life in the NT, there was some room to negotiate, or avoid group practices for members who felt in a strong enough position to do so. So, for instance, while many of the children attended the NT school, a couple of NTers did eventually pull their children out of that school. These boundaries of if and how one could negotiate, are interesting to note and will be discussed later. (In general, however, if the group member showed an overall loyalty and compliance, then they might get around certain rules. But if this was perceived as a challenge to Newman's dominance, then he would rapidly assert his authority and quash the threat.)

But overall, the raising of children was seen as a group responsibility, a means to make the group more efficient:

> Children [were] unique in regards to that, were not considered your problem—they were considered something that was collectivized, that the organization worked on so families with children would live together and they would take turns being at home watching the kids. So indeed, the parents had lots of time away from their children—more so than other people because there was never any question or complaint if one IWP member was going to watch the children or another—it was merely a matter of time and if the organization more needed one person to be doing something else, then the other would very easily be watching the children. […] There might be a few people in the organization who you wouldn't have watching the children if they were, you know, using a drug or drinking during the time that they would be watching the children—you wouldn't want that or allow that but…if, basically under normal circumstances, there wasn't a question that somebody else would do the task. So like everybody else, their budgets and their schedules would be worked out but in addition to other scheduling issues, their babysitting schedule would be worked out. So there was certainly a collective sense (Grace).

Another NTer who brought children into the group discusses the amount of time she had with her children:

> **So maybe how many nights a week would you be with your kids?**
>
> Two probably, three, I mean I always came home and saw them. Like I didn't get home at like midnight every night or anything like that.

Would you mostly put them to bed then?

No.

Maybe two or three nights a week?

Yeah.

And they were how old?

> My son was one and my daughter…four and a half I think. […] Well, yeah, you were discouraged from seeing your family. Like I said, the family was holding you down, you know…the family unit was not encouraged (Celia).

Spending too much time with family was referred to as "*doing* family." The group norm was clear: "Give to the collective" don't "*Do* family". This extended to one's family of origin and to romantic relationships, as is discussed below.

<u>The group monitors the mother's relationship with her child; the mother's position in the cult is judged by these processes:</u> An NT mother of two described Social Therapy's response to her troublesome teenager:

> [S]he started cutting school and causing trouble in the house, fighting, so social therapists were brought into the house for a household meeting—not a family meeting but a household meeting—and…it was…not my regular therapist. I don't know why they—these two women—were called in but we met with the two roommates, the mother and father, and myself and not the children. Basically what the session amounted to was them asking me if I had relatives I could send them to live with...and then...would I consider putting her in foster care? And they said, "You know, she's getting in the way of your work as a revolutionary" and that was just the thing that snapped me, like, just of all of the stupid—you know, things that I overlooked, that was just a big slap in the face that helped me just to get the fuck out 'cos I left a few weeks later, you know, like even then, at that moment, I said, "I'm doing this for our future and you're asking me to throw away our future"—just like that (Celia).

A non-cadre member whose time was getting increasingly eaten up by the cult, and who was worried about lacking time with her young children brought this up with a social therapist. She describes the therapist's response:

> [M]others in our society get such a bad rap for doing political work or social work if they had kids and that, that it's such a noble thing to do, that mothers who choose to, to work for causes should get more respect and that kind of thing. Like, she would really just pump it up that you're, you're, you're not - - neglecting, you're, you're doing this noble thing, that people should appreciate. […] You should be respected for that (Gillian).

Here the therapist was trying to inculcate the group norm of not "doing family" in favor of attending to the group's supposedly revolutionary work.

<u>The group establishes child-rearing practices that may be abusive and pseudo-scientific:</u> Child-rearing practices that clearly do not serve the children's health and well-being often simply have instrumental purposes, such as collectivizing childcare to maximize available labor time of the parents, as in this example:

> We had a crazy setup where, like George had kids, other women had kids and all the kids would stay in one house for one night, and then the next night move to the other house, and then the next night move to the *other* house and that lasted maybe two, three weeks [laughs] (Grace).

The control of child-rearing is also a way of establishing the leader's control over group members by cementing his authority and supposed superior wisdom in this (Singer and Lalich 1995), as in all areas of knowledge. For instance, Jack's infant son was not treated when ill with an ear infection and was instead put on a macrobiotic diet following Newman's advice. This then resulted in malnutrition and a doctor's subsequent diagnosis of severe neglect. Parents were ordered to put their children in the group's various schools, one of which Celia described as a "rathole".

NT members' relationship to reproduction and parenting was thus closely controlled and influenced. For several members it was this attempt to control their relationship with their children that finally caused them to leave the group. The attachment bond to their children trumped that to the group. Within attachment theory

there is discussion of a care-giving behavioral system that operates in a complementary way to the attachment system: parents' care-giving systems are activated in response to children's attachment behaviors with the outcome of child-parent proximity (Cassidy 2000). If unsuccessfully controlled by the group, this care-giving behavioral system will likely generate countervailing forces to the attachment to the group, as was the case with Celia. However, as most members did not have children, given the group pressures against child-bearing, the NT avoided many potential conflicts that may have arisen for, particularly women, when forced to choose between proximity to their children (and their children's well-being) and "giving" to the group. Thus Newman's strategy of limiting child-bearing looks like a successful one. In later years (after 1995), according to a former member, there was some loosening of this constraint against children. This can be seen as a reasonable modification of this strategy once members were fully consolidated and deployable. It may also have been a practical response, as in Stein's (2002) experience in a political cult, where as loyal members approached the end of their fertile years, allowing a few to procreate would prevent unnecessary defections of otherwise loyal and useful followers.

In the GP interviews the subject of children rarely came up. GPers' children were not seen as part of their life or work in the GP. Those who had children did not mention any changes in their relationships with their children during their tenure in the GP. There was certainly no effect on their parenting that was brought up, nor any instance of the GP in any way trying to influence parenting, or the parent-child relationship. Two mothers did, however, mention children as part of the reason they ceased being active in the GP:

> I was pregnant, too, so it's more like I could just focus on this whole new baby thing I knew nothing about, actually it was probably more of it [i.e. leaving the group]. I said, I can't do it…with a baby on the way (Hannah).
>
> L. was getting ready to go to school, I think, go away to college, and I just wanted to spend some time with her, be a mom, rest, try and work things out with K (Kelly).

Thus there is no evidence of the GP stepping into the parent-child relationship within any of the categories set out above. In this way the boundaries between political life and private life were maintained, with GPers retaining autonomy in their relationships with their children.

Family of origin relationships

NTers reported that their relationships with their parents were severely impacted by their group membership. Sidney, an early member of the group, describes how he had managed to maintain a relationship with his family during his tenure with the group, seeing them fairly regularly, although infrequently. But when he was ordered to forfeit spending a long-planned holiday with his parents in order to continue with group work, he confronted the group and this was the catalyst for his eventual resignation.

Three NTers reported great distress in neglecting dying parents due to their NT involvement. Juliet described her feelings about her mother's last days:

> In terms of regrets, I mean aside from political assignments that I- - had to do that I didn't want to do, I felt very bad about the impact, that my decisions [had on my mother…]. That was a particularly vulnerable period for her and I was not at all available—not at all.

Jacob was refused permission to attend to his mother during her final days. However, after her death, he was subsequently allowed ten days leave to close up her affairs, and on his return he gave a sizeable sum of money to the group—money she had left him. Another member gave up his disabled father's life savings to the group (Jack interview). Thus parents were seen as financial resources on the one hand, and on the other as distractions from group work, and so access to them was strictly discouraged. Relationships with siblings were treated similarly: either recruit them, bring them into the periphery for instrumental purposes, or largely withdraw from the relationship.

As Sidney paraphrased Newman's statement: "The family is bogus because it enables one to escape dealing with your problems because you have somebody to take care of you […] and so you don't accept that". In other words, the family might represent

a safe haven, and having a safe haven outside of the group would provide an escape hatch, and threaten efforts at retention.

GPers reported no such interference with their families of origin. Kelly discussed taking a four-month leave when her father died, and stated the GP understood and supported her in this: "I just told them, you know, my father died, I had family things going on, and I just couldn't do this stuff for a while and there was not, there was no negative, um, fallout from that." Another GPer reported a rift with her sibling over her support for Nader's presidential run. This, however, was a political disagreement rather than a group-directed act of withdrawal from the relationship. In fact it was the sibling, in this case, who withdrew from the relationship, rather than the GPer.

Close Friendships

NTers generally dropped pre-existing friendships entirely, although there were occasional exceptions to this. Sydney kept in touch with one friend, who continued to criticize his NT involvement (as had his parents). It appears that this dialogue about the group may have helped Sidney finally leave, and demonstrates why leaders of totalist groups attempt to curtail extra-cult affective bonds—such relationships allow for discussion and doubts to be raised, and provide possible escape hatches from the total nature of the group bonds. But most NTers were more like Juliet:

> Well, I mean the thing with that was that while I was in the organization, you didn't, everything you needed was there, was - - within the organization. You had a whole community of people, a whole community of friends, you know, there was the doctor, Doctor D., you know, if you were sick you'd get an appointment right away. There was - - the legal team, if you were having an issue you could talk with them. I mean - - it, it's, it felt like you know, you, if I, if I think about it was a very, very large family, even though we weren't family but - - they, it was - - like you didn't really, I didn't really associate with anybody outside of the group at that point, you know. I associated with people only inside of the group.

Some of the non-cadre members claimed during the interview that they kept all their pre-existing friendships. However, as the interview progressed, and data was collected on the

frequency and quality of ties with these pre-existing friends, it was notable that in fact, contrary to the first response, these friendships did substantially decline in both quantity and quality of contact. However, the decline was not as drastic as for cadre members.

GPers, on the other hand, reported almost no change in the quantity or quality of their friendships, and, in fact, sometimes, could barely understand the question being posed, or were impatient, apparently wondering why I would assume their GP membership would affect their other relationships.

As expected, all close relationships in the NT —from family of origin, to romantic relationships, and from friendships to children—were dramatically affected by membership in the group. In this way the safe haven function of the group was consolidated while any external relationships that might compete as alternate attachments or escape hatch safe havens were systematically pruned away. As regards the GP, there is no evidence of the development of the group as a safe haven, nor of the either systematic or unintentional removal of external attachment relationships. Neither is there evidence of interference with parenting or family of origin relationships.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have focused on the experience of group members once established in the group. The patterns that were established in the recruitment phase are now consolidated. The table below summarizes these findings.

Table 7.
A comparison of individuals' experiences as consolidated group members within the Newman Tendency and the Green Party

	Newman Tendency	**Green Party**
Integration into party	Assignment to secret cell and to "friend" for oversight. Surrender of financial assets. Fulltime cadre under discipline "24/7".	GPers often rose rapidly to positions of responsibility on open Coordinating or Steering Committees. All assignments voluntary.
Social therapy	Site for cult of confession, development of cult affective ties and detachment of extra-cult ties, intensive interaction and cycles of assault and leniency. Pressure to identify with and work harder for the group. Source of revenue.	n/a
Political study	Centered on Newman's works. Focused on cadres' first year as part of planned integration of member.	Many sources. No controls on study – any member (or even non-member) can initiate and lead study sessions.
Schedule	Members' time entirely taken up with NT activities. Late night meetings, little sleep, vacations rare. Parties and socializing with other NTers.	GP-related work ranges from 2 hours a month to 20 hours a week during election cycles, depending on the member's interest.
Security and weapons	Secret security team, some trained in weapons use. Armed bodyguards. Cache of automatic and semi-automatic weapons. Funds to foreign guerilla organizations.	None discussed by interviewees. Core principle of GP is non-violence.
Finances	Small stipend paid to fulltime cadre, often inadequate for basic needs. Cadre paid out for mandatory therapy, NT events and fines. Many cadres involved in illegal financial activities (i.e. money laundering).	Nearly all positions voluntary and unpaid. No GPers discussed problems with GP finances.
Organizational structures	Significant difference in formal structure versus informal sites of power and control. Cell structure for control of members rather than for security from external forces.	Flat, decentralized structures with autonomy at regional, local and individual levels. Rotating leadership. Small variation between formal and informal structures.

	Newman Tendency	Green Party
Relationship to leadership	Newman as sole leader with ultimate authority. Surrounded by deployable lieutenant layer. Challenges met with expulsion.	Active efforts to prevent "cult of personality". Some concern about lack of clear leadership being a point of vulnerability.
Social networks	Individuals' social networks become enmeshed within NT. All close ties to be secondary to tie to the group. Development of "low level of differentiation" among affective alters. Low level of sharing of doubts about the group.	Some friendships developed as a result of GP membership, but social networks largely unaffected by membership. Doubts about the group shared with those within and external to the GP.

The picture that emerges from this chapter, is one of the NT as a group that totally consumes the life of its members. The GP certainly has room for its members to become quite involved (up to the point of burn-out in some cases) but members volunteer at the level of, and in the areas of activity that interest them. Once in the NT, however, NTers have no such autonomy. They are under discipline "24/7". Their lives become entirely subordinate to, and dependent on the group. A cadre's time, money, intellectual assets and control of social relationships is given over to the NT under the ideological premise that the individual must be subjugated to the political needs of the working class and the revolution. This illustrates Lifton's seventh criterion for totalism: "Doctrine over person." This is not the case in the GP, where individuals may moderate their activity as they wish, and where respect for individual differences and opinions is structured in (though not always ideally implemented) through the process of consensus decision-making.

In the NT we see evidence of Lifton's (1961) other criteria for totalism: the control of members' environments, the pseudo-science ("sacred science") of Newman's worldview, the cult of confession within social therapy, the demand for purity in pushing members to conform and sacrifice for the group and the working class, the use of loaded language, and the practice of deception (mystical manipulation). We will see the final criterion, the "dispensing of existence" most clearly in the next chapter.

Structurally the groups differ markedly. NT is a steeply hierarchical group led by Newman who is the driving force of the group, sitting "in the center of the movement, as the motor that swings it into motion" (Arendt 1948/1979, p. 373). He trained and

provided therapy to the other social therapists, and often to cadres as well. He personally enmeshed his inner circle in intimate relationships with himself. More broadly, his works and thought were studied by cadre. Social therapy was his invention, and he controlled all the publications, most of which were dominated by his writings. Attendance at his lectures was mandatory and he led the underground plenums. All questions and decisions about group activities ended at his door.

The NT was organized as a series of concentric circles, corresponding to Arendt's (1948/1979) layers of the onion. Newman is surrounded by a fluctuating lieutenant layer (largely comprised of his wives) that serves at his whim. Beyond this is an elite formation, the "lifers". Then come the rank and file members, and the front organizations, and, finally, the periphery, or fellow travelers. The GP structure, on the other hand, is flat, decentralized, overt, with a fluctuating leadership, and, rather than being a total environment, demands only a partial, not a total commitment from its members.

The NT does not have absolute control over its members however. Individuals find ways to resist, sometimes to the point of expulsion (as we shall see in the next chapter), sometimes staying for years, but managing to negotiate micro areas (or niches: Savelsberg 2000) where they assert autonomy and attempt to make life more comfortable for themselves. For example, Ruiz and George refused to continue attending social therapy at a certain point. Some, as previously stated, refused to put their children in the NT schools, or found creative, and illicit, ways around the financial constraints and demands. Sometimes these acts of resistance were quite small, but nonetheless meaningful. Myrna described sneaking off between shifts to a restaurant to get a few moments alone:

> So I'd go down to 57th St., and there was a McDonalds about a block away and I would go over there and I would sit and eat and read while I was eating, and enjoy my meal and then go. And it was like, I need time, I don't want to eat on the run. […]
>
> **So it was a luxury to go to McDonalds?**

> Yeah, oh yeah. Well, they, nobody knew. They did, nobody knew when I finished work at Harlem, so they couldn't say, "Well you took an hour, you know, there's an hour missing!" So, that was handy [laughs].

Sydney kept up an extra-cult friendship, but did so secretly, under the radar of the group. He also refused to live in a group household. These acts of resisting the constraints on his social network likely enabled him to leave, and made that process easier than for some others.

Newman seems to have a finely-tuned sense of how far he can push people and if he feels they can be of use without following all of the group demands, he will allow a certain amount of flexibility. However it is also clear that when substantive issues of control come into play–for instance of the financial resources of the group (as described by George)–or when smaller acts of resistance are part of a general trend of non-compliance, then Newman does not hesitate to take strong measures up to and including expulsion in order to reassert his control.

The NT initially took charge of members' cognitive development through a year-long course of study. But in general the cognitive impact involved, as Lifton (1961) puts it, *restriction*. Cognitive inputs were restricted to group-sanctioned materials (largely limited to Newman's discourse) and, importantly, limited due to time deprivation, as members worked so intensely on group projects. Sleep deprivation and lack of time overall also played a role in limiting members' ability to process new information–lacking the time to think about their experience or to study and take in new, non-group related sources. Finally, Newman's ideological stance that there is "nothing to know" compounded the cognitive restriction within the NT.

In the GP, some group study took place, but this was organized from the bottom-up, on the initiative of various GPers, and not necessarily those in leadership. GPers also often engaged in study led by persons not in the GP. Thus cognitively, GPers had access to a variety of sources, and, not being sleep or time deprived, also had time to consider their own experience and alternate sources of information. GPers experienced an expansion of cognitive opportunities in contrast to the restriction experienced by NTers.

I have stressed in this chapter the effect of group membership on social networks, looking at a variety of elements from close friendships to sexual relationships to reproduction and child-rearing. In the NT all these close ties were under pressure from the NT, while this was absent in the GP. The pressure within the NT had the overall effect of loosening these ties, and of nudging internal relationships towards a weak differentiation of affective ties. Emotional sharing was encouraged in the form of confession to the group, particularly through group therapy. All emotions were framed within the ideological view of the group, which cast them as merely reflections of political processes, resulting in pressure to "resolve" emotional issues by committing to, and working for, the group. Thus, as Zablocki (2001) says, allegiance developed, not to individuals within the group, but to the collectivity. In the GP membership is a relatively loose affiliation, whereas in the NT it is an entirely different type of relationship—one which results in retention of adherents and extreme control over their lives. In this chapter we have seen the types of conditions at work that create this allegiance. These conditions in the NT support Lofland's (1977) three within-group situational conditions for total conversion: intra-cult affective ties, weakening of extra-cult affective ties, and intensive interaction within the cult. As stated above we see evidence of Lifton's (1961) criteria for totalism. And we also have evidence of relational enmeshment described by Zablocki (2001), the stripping of a sense of one's self as an individual and the taking on of the cultic ideology (Lifton 1961; Schein 1961).

What is the nature of the allegiance to the group that develops in this context? In the NT the result of these differences in organizational structure, affective network structures, and cognitive practices between the two groups is that NTers were retained for longer periods of time—a significantly greater mean of 7.1 years, compared to GPers' mean of 4.25 years ($n=25$, $p < .03$)—within the total environment of the NT. Relational enmeshment and allegiance to the collectivity set the group up as the safe haven, while extra-cult safe havens were disrupted. Meanwhile, the stresses and deprivations (of sleep, food, money, privacy and so forth) of group life, including the attacks on individuals that occur in social therapy, comprised the threat, or assault aspect of the cycle of assault and leniency, causing the group member to seek proximity to the group as safe haven (thus

strengthening the bond), and, given the group is the source of threat, to disorganize in the face of this unresolvable fright without solution. This will be further developed in Chapter 11. This supports Zablocki's (2001) formulation of emotional enmeshment and hyper-credulity leading to eventual deployability. This is dramatically evidenced in a former cadre's comment that: "I got to the point where I would have gladly taken a bullet for Newman" (Ortiz 2003b). GPers, on the other hand, had shorter tenures within the GP, had far less intense and consuming experiences and retained basically all their external relationships. This resulted in only partial commitments and an affiliative, rather than an attachment relationship, to the GP.

In the next chapter I look at exit processes, which will shed further light on the nature of the allegiance formed to each group.

Chapter 10

Exit Processes: Traumatic Loss or Fading Away?

> *[Y]ou actually thought that not being a member would be death itself, you couldn't even conceive of it really. You know you just had to be a part of the revolution and you couldn't be, you couldn't step out of history, you know? You would surely die if you stepped out of history and the only history there was was with Newman* (Grace).
>
> *IWP cadres were later told that "the Ortiz you knew no longer exists. She is, for all intent and purposes, dead to us." I become a pariah in Newman's world. All the talented, passionate people with whom I'd shared my most intimate feelings, I'd lived with, worked with-everyone I'd grown to love and respect-refused to acknowledge my existence. I'd "disappointed" Fred and was therefore not to be trusted* (Ortiz, 2003).

Introduction

Exiting the NT was a traumatic and fearful process. The difficulties in leaving such groups are often poorly understood, yet in many ways these difficulties are key to understanding the social-psychological dynamics of totalism. In this chapter I will delineate the multiple aspects involved in leaving and relate these to the disorganized attachment bond group members formed to the NT.

The NT demanded a total commitment from its members. It achieved a cadre of deployable agents who were both hyper credulous and hyper obedient (Zablocki 2001), working intensely for the group, and eschewing personal goals and relationships outside of the NT. The GP, on the other hand, required only partial commitments from its members, resulting in a fluctuating active membership, weak leadership (by design), and members who remained generally firmly anchored in personal lives outside of the GP.

As a result of these differences of life in the two groups, exiting involved very different exit paths and strategies. GPers often simply "faded away" from active membership, sometimes neither notifying others of their exit, nor even themselves having

a clear sense of disaffiliating. In the NT leaving involved three related problems resulting from the disorganized attachment bond formed in the NT. The first problem is how to break the strong attachment bond? An attachment relationship is defined as one which causes great distress upon loss (Weiss 1991), and is irreplaceable by any other relationship[66] (Rholes and Simpson 2004). Thus, by definition, *any* attachment bond is difficult to break. Second, if the attachment is a disorganized one, then the implication is that the member has dissociated and disorganized thought processes regarding their relationship to the group. How then does the leaver reintegrate these thought processes? The third problem results from the total nature of NT involvement: how does the exiting member cope with the multiple losses of almost all aspects of life that have been consumed by the group[67]: social ties, work, living situation, belief system, individual and collective identity (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994) and so forth?

As for the GP, given their only partial commitment, and the continuity of extra-group ties and interests, we expect leaving to be a generally much smoother transition, with no strong bond to break and no reintegration of thought processes required. We would expect that GPers dropped GP activities, and perhaps some related social ties, along with taking up other non-GP related activities. Since the relationship with the GP is not expected to rise to the level of an attachment relationship, great distress on loss is not likely to be seen, and replacement activities or groups should be relatively easily established.

Given the strength of the disorganized bond formed by the member to the group, leaving the NT therefore presents extraordinary challenges. Zablocki (2001a) refers to these challenges as "subjectively elevated exit costs" (p. 192), which then contribute to deployability: "as soon as exit from the group (or even from its good graces) ceases to be a subjectively palatable option, it makes sense for the individual to comply with almost anything the group demands" (P. 192). While Zablocki does begin to get at what he

[66] The nature of an attachment bond is that it is to a particular other (Bowlby 1973; 1980; 1982).
[67] This element is the only one similar to the release processes addressed by Goffman in his work on total institutions (1962). He refers to this as "anxiety about release" (p. 70).

correctly calls the "panic or terror" that swamps most individuals[68] who contemplate leaving such a group, using the cost/benefit language of rational choice theory prevents us from understanding the impact of fright without solution on the very ability of the cognitively and emotionally isolated individual to engage in rational thought about their condition. It is not merely whether people weigh the emotional and material costs and benefits of involvement versus exit, but whether *they are even able to think about such choices*. An attachment, or trauma, view of this states that such thought processes themselves are hijacked by the means of splitting apart the emotional and cognitive processes (Herman 1992; Main 1991). The NTer quoted above gives a vivid example of this disorganized thought process: "[Y]ou actually thought that not being a member would be death itself, you couldn't even conceive of it really" (Grace). Thus, in understanding the exit process, we must look for how people resolve this block to thinking about the relationship with the group: how do they reintegrate their thought processes enough in order to be able to arrive at the point of making a choice?

The fear arousal aspect of disorganized attachment is thus the essence of totalist deployability. There are three different types of fear that make up the "panic or terror" of which Zablocki (2001a) speaks. The first two types can indeed be understood within a rational choice framework. First is the fear of leaving a total world—the "anxiety about release" of which Goffman (1962) speaks. The leaver faces the often overwhelming, but primarily practical, tasks of having to reestablish social relationships, employment and housing (Goffman 1962). Second is the fear of retribution by the group: will the group retaliate against the individual's defection? These two types of fear are real and present, but they have potential practical solutions for which plans can be drawn up. In other words, one could plan how to look for a job, even how to hide from the group should that be necessary.

However there is a third, and more critical element of fear that the group member who is considering leaving must struggle with: this is a type of existential fear, or what

[68] To be clear, I am considering here only the exit process of those previously highly committed members – not those who may have been only briefly in the group. All but one participant (a GPer in the group for only a year) discussed here were in the group for at least two years, and most for more. For more on this see discussion of the Bainbridge shift in Zablocki (2001a).

van der Kolk (1996c) refers to as "speechless terror". This third fear is the element that is specific to a relationship of assault and leniency or a trauma/disorganized attachment bond, and reflects the unresolved state of fright without solution. It is a generalized terror that cannot be clearly thought about or articulated (hence van der Kolk's characterization of this as "speechless"), given the dissociation between emotional and cognitive processing that characterizes the disorganized relationship. It reflects the first two problems of leaving described above: breaking of the attachment bond, and the disorganization of thought processes. Thus two types of paralyzing fear co-exist in an inchoate manner: intense separation anxiety in parallel with a fear of total loss of meaning, a feeling of being cast into a void. It is a fear of both relational and cognitive "nothingness". And it is the glue that binds the group member to the group. Lifton (1961) describes this in his eighth criterion for totalism, the "dispensing of existence":

> For the individual, the polar emotional conflict is the ultimate existential one of "being versus nothingness." […]The totalist environment—even when it does not resort to physical abuse—thus stimulates in everyone a fear of extinction or annihilation (P. 434).

This is the element that cannot be reduced to a rational choice analysis. As Johnson, Larana, and Gusfield (1994) point out, the individual's identity has been almost entirely taken over by the cult, and certainly extensively changed. In leaving the group the individual faces a potentially terrifying absence of identity until a new identity can be established within a new social context, a process that can take years. The group member cannot draw up plans to deal with this third type of fear, precisely because the emotional-cognitive links have been disrupted by the situation of fright without solution.

So how do members break this bond? Attachment theory leads us to two major pathways. First are mitigating relationships that both provide escape hatch safe havens that attenuate the condition of fright without solution, and allow discussion of doubts in order to reintegrate emotional perception with cognitive processing. We would thus expect to see that breaking the disorganized attachment bond goes hand in hand with at least some reorganization of thought processes. Second, we might look for a reduction in other aspects of the disorganized bond—i.e. a failure of the group to maintain the

situation of fright without solution by a weakening in the function of the group as either a safe haven and/or a threat.

To take the first point—mitigating relationships: several avenues may exist where escape safe havens are, or become, available. The safe haven may even sometimes be internalized in the (presumably especially securely attached) group member, and that person may simply need a certain amount of time to observe and critique group practices, before making the decision to leave. Perhaps Jack's defection at the point where Newman led the NT into an alliance with the LaRouche political cult is a case in point? Jack also took action to protect his neglected child, thus resolving that fearful situation which would lend support to this. Importantly, however, this internal resistance depends on the strength of the situational forces. The securely attached do demonstrate more resilience and quicker recovery from trauma (Siegel 1999b; Sroufe 2005), but security of attachment alone does not guarantee resistance to coercive persuasion (Lifton 1961, 1986). The securely attached may also become disorganized given the right conditions (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996).

More commonly, former members represent an alternate safe haven. They may contact the group member and assist them to come out through emotional and cognitive support: sharing experiences, knowledge and feelings (perhaps particularly an understanding of the "panic or terror" that accompanies leaving). Both Juliet and Myrna had former members help them in this way. Another of these pathways to exit may be where the group has not effectively eliminated contact with prior (or even new) attachment figures and these persons remain available as safe havens at the point of a crisis in the group, or for the individual. Sidney's continuing connection to an old friend and to his family exemplify this pathway.

Another possible mitigating attachment is where the attachment of the follower to his or her children—which Bowlby referred to as the caregiving system (see Chapter Nine)—trumps that to the group, as in the cases of Celia and Louisa. In other words, where the group is directly threatening the member's relationship to their child, the emotional and cognitive split may (it doesn't always) resolve itself in favor of maintaining proximity to, and safety for, the child. A conflict is set up: continued

integration of thought processes in relationship to the child and its well-being, versus the dissociation of thought processes in relationship to the group. In some cases the attachment to the child and associated emotional and cognitive processing overcomes the dissociation in relation to the group—at least enough to enable the parent to leave.

In terms of the second point—the failure of the group to maintain the safe haven/threat elements—it is not clear if any of the NT participants demonstrate this aspect. It is possible, however, that the excesses of the "Want Fred" period (where followers were essentially ordered to proclaim their sexual desire for Newman and his newest wife) resulted in certain members no longer being able to perceive Fred and/or the group as a safe haven. In Berger and Luckman's (1966) terms, they may have experienced a breakdown of the "strongly affective identification" with "significant others", without whom the "radical transformation of subjective reality" (p.157) was no longer possible to maintain. This breakdown in affective identification came along with being asked to make too great a cognitive leap – i.e. to accept Newman's newest wife (formerly their peer, and well known to them as an unprepossessing rank and filer) in her new promotion to top leadership. Only the assaultive element may thus have remained in their perception, thus potentially loosening the dynamic of the disorganized attachment bond, and so easing the exit process (i.e. Ruiz, Denise).

Finally, another exit pathway may exist for individuals who are themselves charismatic and authoritarian. In this case, there is likely to be a struggle for dominance in the group. The charismatic authoritarian follower is less likely to be susceptible to the threats of the group and more likely to themselves respond in a threatening manner, thus avoiding forming an attachment bond to the group, and often eventually splitting off and forming their own group. One participant in this study may fit this model. This would also explain, for example, Newman's rapid exit from the LaRouche group.

Keeping these points in mind, we now look more closely at the empirical data of group members exiting the NT and the GP. The data gathered for this study are not adequate to determine all possible exit paths for participants. However some general conclusions are suggested. In addition, the participants I interviewed for this group were

all former members. Data are not therefore presented to compare their experience with those who remain in the group.

The exit process

As with entering a group, exiting is a process rather than a single act. NTers either walked away from the group or were kicked out. None of the GPers in this study were kicked out—all walked away. None from either group were counseled out by either exit counselors or mental health professionals. GPers tended to "fade away" and not formally resign as members of the GP; instead they just stopped coming to meetings, or gave work over to others, or did not run again for a position once their term was up.

The exiting process for NTers was quite complex and varied. Leavers sometimes stayed in the organization's periphery, loosely associated with the group, for a period of time ranging from just a few weeks, to up to two years, with one being in the periphery for several years. Others left directly to the outside world without passing through the periphery. Of those in the periphery some stayed only because their housing, or job, were still part of the NT, and there was a process of untangling these commitments. Several left with help from former members who remained in contact and raised doubts through discussion of their experiences and knowledge of the group and providing information about fraudulent group practices. Others had family or friends still in contact who provided critical support. A subset of NTers left on their own with little external support. Three of the NTers were kicked out—that is, the NT blocked them from further participation in group activities. Of these, two were in a relationship together and had formed an island of connection.

The stated reasons that the NT walkaways left varied. They described certain breaking points that generally built on long periods of (usually unexpressed) doubts and questions. One cadre left when she was being told to put her child in foster care. One felt her child's life was becoming endangered due to her neglect brought on by excessive involvement. Another's process of leaving started when he was not allowed to see his parents when he had promised them he would do so. Two left after the "Want Fred" meeting, feeling that this bizarre loyalty ritual went too far. As Ruiz said wrily, "I really

didn't want Fred. I mean, I wanted [female leader] once in a while, you know, but I didn't really want Fred". One said he left because he directly caught a senior NTer in a series of blatant lies and manipulations. One member left on political principle to protest the alliance with LaRouche. Three left after former members stayed in contact and talked to them, verifying their perceptions about the group and providing a support base to which they could leave. Juliet described the effect of this contact with former members:

> My sister who was also an organizer, had resigned not too long before. She hadn't told me she was going to resign. It was like a little shock. And then every-, a lot of, there was a, it was a very strange time, it was like, a lot of the people that I was organized with, that I sort of came in with, suddenly started to resign, leave, and, I, I really wasn't feeling like that close to the people. I was having a hard time with my political work. I was having a hard time understanding what the hell we were really doing, if anything at all, and I was questioning a lot of the stuff and of course I maintained my relationships with these people because they were close to me before I was a - - you know, they were people that I knew like my sister, you know, and other people that I'd met through therapy, where we were therapy patients before we were organizers. And they, you know, we became friends and, and they would talk about why they left and that would have even a bigger impact on me. And then one day, I don't know how it happened, I just went downstairs to see GD, who was my overall political leadership, and I just said the words "I resign". And it was like, I mean, I came out of there shaking.

Of the three kick-outs, two were a couple and had formed an island of connection, and then resistance, from which they launched opposition to Newman's financial dealings and control. A third was a non-cadre volunteer who questioned Newman's control and other practices and was gradually excluded from NT events and meetings. The various conditions contributing to exit can be summarized as followed:

- Support and encouragement of former members
- Pre-existing ties to family and/or friends not fully ruptured
- Bond to children trumped that of the group
- Islands of connection and resistance formed within the group
- The group failed to maintain adequate safe haven and/or threat
- Ideological disagreement or repeated evidence of clearly corrupt practices
- Kickouts due to questioning and conflicts with leadership

- Power conflicts between charismatic authoritarian member and leadership.

In summary, while there are various conditions leading to exit, nine of the thirteen NT participants did report mitigating, strongly affective attachments as being key to their exit process—either family, friends, children, or former members. Two left as a result of the "Want Fred" period, one due to ideological disagreements and the reason for one member's exit remains unclear.

Unless one was labeled "hostile" by the group, the NT encouraged ex-cadres to remain involved on the periphery. These NTers stayed on the periphery for a number of reasons. Many had various ongoing ties to members still in the group—a romantic partner, a sibling, or other very close person. Others were still living in NT housing, or had NT jobs, and there was a transitional period (usually very tense) while they reestablished themselves. In other cases the person felt the group was doing worthwhile work, and while they no longer wished to be fulltime, they felt they could support, or felt somewhat obligated to support, aspects of this work. Isaac, a cadre who stayed in the periphery for several years, described himself as a "disgruntled loyalist". He had remained quite isolated after resigning his cadre position and it was only after many years that he finally broke the remaining ties.

Typically leavers of totalist groups are shunned on exit. But some cults manage to keep former members in some kind of contact as long as they don't directly oppose the group and its dogma. Given the wish of the leader to maintain attachment to his followers, it is perhaps not surprising that many leaders find ways to keep followers involved at some level even when they reject fulltime involvement. Newman, in particular, has shown considerable skill in keeping people on the periphery of the NT as long as they leave without becoming hostile and continue to provide material support of some kind. In this way the group achieves a "cultural victory" (Goffman 1962 p. 13) over fellow travelers in the periphery, some of whom, along with "lifers", may never truly move away from the group's sphere of influence. In short, shunning is reserved for the "unsupportive", while those who no longer wish to be fulltime cadres but remain "friendly" can stay on the periphery helping in various ways.

Being on the periphery, however, was a low-status position in the NT. Periphery members described how they were no longer trusted by insiders, and while their labor and money were still accepted, they were clearly set apart:

> People that I was used to speaking to fifteen times a day, or seeing all day or working side by side with all day, no longer spoke to me. Did not—couldn't care less if I was dead or alive, really […]
>
> I mean, after I left it, you know, it was like I was dead. You know, it was like I was dead literally. I did go to, um, a few plays at the beginning. I really, I really wanted to find a niche [in the periphery]. I didn't want to just walk away. I wanted to find a niche. These people were people I was close to, - - and - - it, it encompassed my whole identity, you know. But it didn't work that way (Juliet).

Generally some new breaking point then occurred that finally severed the relationship and at that point those who had stayed on the periphery cut ties altogether, or the group cut ties with them. Sidney described his final exit:

> My total complete break took a couple of years, but I was definitely out of the group- the, the cadre. I resigned my cadre position in [year], and I said I would continue to be supportive of the mass work they were doing, and I was for a little while […] I knew I was out of the group when I did not vote for their candidate in [year], and they were upset. One guy was upset at me because I told him what I was doing- because they, they wanted me to work- because I still was doing some stuff with them. Every now and then I'd show up and help them with something- and elections were always big. They always needed all their help on elections, and some fellow called me and said, "You know, we're doing our election work and, and you know, are you gonna help us?" and I said, "No, I'm gonna vote for [Democratic candidate]," and this guy got upset with me, "How can you do that?" […] Yeah, but that's when I knew I was out and I never came back. I was done with it.

Those who were considered hostile were immediately shunned by the group, but even those who left via the periphery lost close ties with most members, as described above. Either way, once members left the result in terms of their social network was dramatic:

> Well, you go from this band of three to five hundred people who are your life, and then you go from that to zero and the only thing [you're] looking at on the other side you've been taught to hate for the last five years. You've been taught to fear, mistrust (Celia).

Once they were all the way out, nearly all close relationships with group insiders ended completely. The exceptions to this included ex-members who deliberately maintained contact with current members in order to help them leave, and some other relationships that can be considered as part of an ongoing peripheral membership in the group. The exit process was somewhat easier for those who had either extra-cult affective ties (former members, or pre-cult ties which had not been fully cut off), or who left with another person, thus having an "island of connection" within the group. These ties meant the person could share doubts and discuss or plan an exit strategy to some degree. Some, however, left without any such support and experienced extreme isolation in the early post-NT period.

Lofland (1977) stated, in relation to joining a group, that: "in a manner of speaking, final conversion was coming to accept the opinions of one's friends" (p. 52). The condition for becoming a "total" convert, as he put it, was being surrounded by cult-affective ties, and having intensive interactions with other total converts. The opposite happened on exit: leaving the group and questioning its beliefs and methods meant coming to accept, not only the loss of all one's friends, but also the loss of one's opinions, meaning, and belief structure. Most of the interviewees for this study focused on their loss of relationships when asked about leaving the group, rather than the loss of their belief system. Celia, however, did describe how she struggled to overcome the way of thinking she had learned in the NT: "The black and white thinking—the extreme thinking is extremely hard to get rid of."

All NTers described the leaving process as exceptionally difficult, with many expressing ongoing trauma about it. Several expressed a feeling that there was "nothing to live for now" while others felt "terrible", "devastated", "zonked", or that life was "flat". Former members were deeply confused. Some described having suicidal feelings. These statements illustrate the "existential" fear described earlier. Others described severe depression and/or anxiety. Most NTers talked about fear: of what life held for them "outside"[69] and of the loss of group relationships, as well as fears of possible

[69] Goffman's (1962) "anxiety about release".

retribution from the group. A majority were angry or "furious". A feeling of relief was also expressed by four participants. Table 8 lists the feelings both NTers and GPers stated they experienced immediately after, and in the first few months of leaving the group.

Table 8.
Emotions felt on, or in the months after, exit

Emotion	Newman Tendency	Green Party
Fear	7	2
Guilt	2	2 (slight)
Shame	1	
Anger	7	1
Anxiety	3	
Relief	4	3
Confusion	6	1
Depression	4	1
Felt "terrible", "very bad"	3	
Felt suicidal or "Nothing to live for"	5	
Will not get involved in any political or therapy group again	6	1
Disillusioned/disappointed		3
Neutral/mixed feelings		2
Felt good about own accomplishments		3
Felt fine/good		3
Would consider becoming involved in the group again		5

One NTer described how she felt after leaving. She said it was:

> unbelievably bad. I can't even begin to explain. It was just, I, I, I honestly don't know how I did it, how I didn't end up in a hospital or something. I mean I really performed well. I mean, I kept up with all my kids, and my responsibilities but […] oh my god, I would just, I couldn't stop crying. I could not. I mean, just.... I can't even, I just felt like screaming, I, it was horrible for the first few months, just horrible (Gillian).

The quote above vividly portrays the intensity of feelings common to many NT leavers. The social, emotional and cognitive structures of NTers had been ruptured, and in leaving the group the former group member had to somehow deal with this fact, and move on to rebuilding these aspects of life.

The practical details of life also presented significant obstacles for NTers on leaving the group. All but one of the fulltime NT cadres lost their jobs, and most had to eventually find new housing. Nearly all were in debt. Certainly all former members had to develop new social relationships. Those who had not been fulltime cadres had fewer of these practical difficulties, although they did also have to redirect job/career directions as those aspects of their lives had been subsumed in their relationship to the NT as volunteers or trainees (i.e. Gillian, Louisa).

Finally, some NTers feared retribution. However, direct retribution, beyond shunning and verbal put-downs, was absent. The fear, nonetheless, was real. Gillian, who worked to expose the group in various ways described this:

> I was scared for a while that they'd kill me. I mean, I was scared that they'd hurt my family. I was scared that they'd destroy me and I, and I have to say that sometimes those fears come up again because we're dealing with a lot of people who are, are mentally unbalanced and their supporters are people who are pretty, have a lot of problems and you know, would do anything for them. So I don't, I, I, my fear at this point, I don't think I'm, I don't stay up at night anymore worrying about it but I did, for a long time. I was also afraid I'd, you know, there was mention of guns and stuff in the group at one point [sighs] (Gillian).

Leaving a life of total immersion in the NT, then, was in itself a traumatic experience. Leaving meant giving up core elements of life: one's social network, sometimes a romantic relationship, one's sense of purpose and meaning in life, along with practical issues of employment and housing. NTers experienced enormous loss, and most experienced great fear, on exiting the group. This loss and fear on leaving the NT indicates that these members had formed an attachment bond to the group, according to the aspect of the definition posited earlier: that an attachment bond is marked by great distress on the loss of that bond. In addition, exiting NTers did not simply feel that the NT was not right for them, and they thus should get involved in a different therapy or political group. In fact they generally did not wish to have further group involvements. This suggests there was an irreplaceable aspect of the bond they formed, the second element of our definition of an attachment bond. Thus we have evidence showing that

these participants' relationship to the NT did, indeed, meet both criteria for being an attachment bond.

GPers, on the other hand, were all walkaways. Some never formally left, but just stopped being active at that time, and many still would consider becoming active at a later time. GPers mostly didn't see leaving as a dramatic event, but as either a hiatus or a quiet retreat:

> I wasn't really too active but I wasn't like, I didn't, like, say, I'm not a member of the Green Party, I'm not going to pay my money. It wasn't until the […] election that I finally said, I've had enough. I mean I'm just on sabbatical, I'm not, I didn't, like, leave and say, I don't like the Green Party, I just, like, said, well I'll just step away and see what it looks like [laughs] (Lynn).

GPers were able to openly discuss doubts with both fellow GPers and/or family and friends while still in the group and this meant they tended to process disagreements and problems more or less openly during their group tenure. This greatly reduced the tension they felt in making their way out. Several GPers left due to being "tired of it" or "burnt out", or, less dramatically, simply feeling they had done their share, and now it was someone else's turn. A typical comment was: "The Green Party should be more about a group rather than five people, the coordinating people. So a lot of us are just like, let's back off, you know, let some other people handle it" (Hannah).

Alternately other life priorities were making themselves felt as with Hannah who became pregnant, or Sherman who bought his first house:

> And there's something about the psychology of a house that just... Well there's the maintenance side, and I just stayed in a lot more. And so probably between fulltime work and house and just, I just stopped being as involved.

Two GPers left after an incident where younger group members were somewhat threatening, and frightened them. They felt the GP local was unable to ensure they felt safe, and they therefore resigned. As with many of the GPers they did not see this as a problem with the entire party but more a "personality" conflict with particular individuals. One of the people involved in fact expressed regret that she could not do

more to help the young people in question, and said rather ruefully, "but I'm not a professional psychiatrist." She did see that the GP needed to find ways to deal with such situations, and that its openness sometimes presented a problem in this respect:

> I think that when, when you're working on such serious and important issues, you get these fringe people in there. In order to be credible, you gotta be jerky I guess, you gotta say, there's the door - - and I don't know how the heck do you do that, you know. How can you do that?—you can't. […But] you have, you have to do that. It's just the deal. So maybe [the Green Party] would learn that and you know, sometimes you gotta say no (Sue).

On the other hand, another GPer left when he felt that the group wasn't open enough and that certain members were not being taken seriously, and that there were serious limits to free speech in the party. Others left due to political differences, particularly the GP's lack of support for Nader in 2004. Finally, one left due to questions over leadership style. Almost half of the GPers mentioned that they may become involved in either the same, or a different, local at a later time. While they may have expressed disappointment that the GP had not met their expectations as a political group, they did not express a sense that this was their *only* avenue of involvement. Even one of the most angry leavers quickly got involved in a new social grouping, stating that:

> You know, we [new social group] are not trying to change the world, and I found that refreshing. Also […] it was myself and three other people showed up one day to just donate our labor […] to upgrade the park and, and it was weird because even as I was doing it, you know, it was hot and I'm throwing sand and gravel and dirt and some concrete. In, in all of that, I was only partway through that day and I realized I'd actually done more being part of that group than I'd done with the Greens, you know, and I'd done something that was actually sort of green. It's in a park, you know, it's outdoors. I'm putting down grass seed [laughs] (Doug).

GPers tended not to discuss loss in their narratives, but instead often focused on the positive things they had gained and an upbeat assessment of their experience. They had some anger or regret about their experience but did not have major life disruption as a result of exiting the group. The majority expressed the feeling that someday they might become active again. They did not even clearly identify themselves as ex-members as a rule, or when that was raised they found it an odd characterization. Some felt mildly

guilty that they were no longer contributing. Only a minority seemed to harbor any ongoing anger or bitterness. These GPers tended to frame these feelings as a response to political differences with the GP, or seeing the GP as ineffective, rather than as a result of GP manipulation or exploitation of themselves personally.

GPers reasons for leaving can be summarized as follows:

- Tired or "burnt out"
- Life course changes
- Political disagreements
- Personality conflicts
- Disagreements on process (leadership, issues of free speech)

The experience of leavers of the NT and the GP thus differed enormously. While many NTers expressed a feeling after leaving that there was "nothing left" for them anymore, in the sense of nothing at all *in life*—that their entire meaning in life had dropped away—the only comments from a GPer close to this actually expressed an opposite sentiment: that there was nothing left for her *in the GP* anymore. Thus in the first case the very identity and belief structures of the NTer were shaken to their core, while for the GPer their identity and belief structures tended to remain intact, with perhaps slight modifications. Not only were NTers' identities shaken, but the material elements of their lives were fundamentally disrupted requiring a rebuilding of social networks, employment and housing. For the GPer, much remained the same in their lives, and membership in the GP did not fundamentally shatter the continuity of their lives. The subsequent processes of picking up life after group involvement are further discussed below.

Life after exit

After exiting the NT, most ex-members were faced with rebuilding every aspect of their lives. The average tenure in the group was seven years, and so there was a considerable gap to fill. This study did not focus closely on the long-term life course outcomes for group members, and so only a few elements are considered here. (Certain emotional and

cognitive impacts of membership are considered further in the next chapter.) However, the short- and long-term effects of membership in the NT are considerable, often taking NT members many years to rebuild lives and get re-started in new directions. These effects include symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), as well as the disculturation and stigma that Goffman (1962) describes, on top of numerous material setbacks. Many have successfully made this transition, continuing on with professional or semi-professional careers, but others continue to feel long-term loss and distress.

Social Networks

For NTers, leaving the group resulted in a net loss of 50% of their close relationships, whether formed before or during their group tenure. Of those relationships formed *during* group membership, only those with other ex-members survived into post-exit friendships. Some, though not all, found helpful support after leaving in clusters of ex-members, or in renewed ties with family and friends but even so, they still felt isolated on leaving. Others had no-one to confide in at all after leaving and found themselves extremely isolated.

GPers, on the other hand, showed considerable stability in their relationships. After leaving the GP they retained 91% of their pre-group and GP-based close relationships. Thus they had almost no change in their relationships, either during their GP tenure, or afterwards. Basically their core close relationships were unchanged by their GP experience. Even when there were political differences with others in the leaving process, current GPers did not shun former GPers, and often friendly or collegial relationships between current and former GPers continued.

Table 9.
Change in total number of relationships after exit from group

	# of close relationships during group membership	# of those relationships remaining post-group	Ratio of relationships during/post group membership
Newman Tendency	6.10*	3.10	0.50***
Green Party	4.27*	3.91	0.91***

* p < .05
*** p < .001

Although the totals of remaining relationships from the pre-group and group periods are similar between the NT and the GP (3.10 and 3.91 remaining, respectively), NTers' pre-group relationships generally weakened considerably after exit, when they were able to maintain them. Close relationships they had prior to entering the group, then, either did not survive the group period, or, if they did, they were often not as close afterwards. The data, however, are not sufficient to analyze this further.

Careers, employment and financial status

After leaving the NT, cadres were almost universally broke, and most were in debt. Ruiz describes a typical situation: "When I left, I left with no job, no income, no money, in debt, close to bankrupt uh- forget bankrupt, I had no credit to be bankrupt with [laughs] and with very few prospects." Isaac wrote:

> I became a resident apartment manager in [city name] (the biggest ghetto in [region]) and very humbly and unglamorously got myself out of debt while earning my chops with the "ordinary" people I had once believed I was organizing into a militantly pro-socialist electoral party. I was not happy, as in fulfilled, but I had self-respect (Isaac personal communication).

Former cadre had no health insurance, no retirement fund contributions during their tenure, and as most were paid under the table they had no social security contributions for that period either. Therefore a key task on leaving was to rebuild financial resources. Some have been more successful than others at this task. Of course other assets such as

legacies from parents, and so forth, had already been appropriated by the group so these potential assets were no longer available.

Careers and educational paths for NTers were disrupted. Questions of what "might have been" continue to haunt some former NTers:

> Career-wise, I really doomed myself- I got blacklisted because of them. […] I mean, my name was mud, you know. If after five years, especially after I left, all I could put on my resumé, aside from the handful of night jobs I did just to make a living, you know- was work with them, you know, I couldn't get- I couldn't, I could not earn a living doing what I was either trained to do or what I wanted to do (Celia).
>
> I wanted to be involved in the music industry and I did - - go to this school, […] some technical school and I was learning this stuff and the time I was in the school, the time I joined - - I put that on the backburner, even though I was paying for it still [laughs] years later because I took a loan out for it, but my political assignment didn't jive with what I wanted to do. Yeah, I may have been something […] I would have had a career, I think maybe in music. […] Yeah, I was going to that school. I always wanted to produce or whatever. I wasn't really sure but something . . . and I, the, I was told that a political career is what I was - - my life, you know, I signed on the line to join this thing and I signed my life over . . . I signed my life over . . . (Denise).

While these NTers reported that their career trajectories were disrupted by their NT membership, others stated that they gained valuable experience that in fact contributed to their future careers (although there is a degree of ambivalence in how this is expressed):

> I gained a lot. I mean, I have to say, I mean working with the IWP launched my career […]. I just learned tremendously. Um, it wasn't a negative experience for me. It was more emotional than anything else because of the, the impact of just, like, being, like you know, part of an organization that you really believe in and then having it, having it deliberately sold out, that was, and not being able to do anything about it. That was very frustrating. But yeah, I profited immensely from it (George).

Another NTer described his experience in the NT as "not bad". When asked to expand on this he said:

> You know, I learned a great deal about myself and about the world and about other people. I'm not- I mean, just to put it in perspective, I'm not one of those folks that believes I was in a cult- although I saw the cult-like

> aspects of it, but I was- I was deeply involved in the political aspects of it and less involved in the therapy- I could care less about- I actually got beat up because I didn't go to therapy- so there were for me, it was- I think it was a really good learning experience and - brought me to where I am now. It's all part of what makes up me, so all in all, not bad (Ruiz).

Others felt they had learned useful skills in the NT and were able to build on these. For instance, two NTers mentioned that they now use organizational skills honed in the group in their current jobs. On the other hand, Isaac spent years in low-level employment and has yet to embark on a new career many years after his fulltime involvement ended. Four NTers restarted their educations or further training after exiting the group, and of these, three are now professionals.

GPers did not work fulltime on GP assignments, and were not employed by the GP. The maximum involvement of any of the interviewees was about 20 hours a week, and this was for limited periods. Thus most GPers continued with outside jobs regardless of their GP activity. Some were not employed during their tenure and thus had extra time to devote to the GP, which then lessened once employment, or, in one case, parental, status changed. This status change often then became the reason that these GPers drew back from involvement. Thus their general career or educational course was not greatly impacted by their GP involvement.

GPers did not mention financial rebuilding as a consideration in their post-GP life. Although some did mention entering a new stage of life that required less political commitment and more individual focus such as the previous examples of having a child or becoming a homeowner.

Relationship to subsequent group involvements

The majority of NTers report high levels of discomfort, suspicion and hypervigilance in terms of post-NT involvements in group activities of any sort (but particularly political or therapeutic activities). Six NTers said they would never get involved in any group activity again, while most others expressed the need to exert great care in subsequent group involvements. Similarly some report great difficulty considering any therapy,

which is problematic for those who continue to feel psychologically distressed following the experience. Louisa, for example, said she would not seek therapy again. This becomes understandable when considering her response to a question about her wishes for the future:

> The first [wish] is I'd forget everything I ever learned in social therapy- not everything, but I'd get rid of the guilt- of not living- performing properly or to my- I wish I could just- somebody could take that stuff and just- I wish I'd never heard it, even the good- I don't- I did get- I'm a different person than I was because of it, which is good. I'm a lot stronger. I'm able to function, but I would love to get rid of that voice that goes, "You're not performing" you know, I hear it all the time and I would give anything to get that- you know, it's okay to have weaknesses. It's okay not to push yourself until you want to die to try to have growth and development. Maybe I've got as much as I'm gonna get, but see, they always tell you that you never stop growing and developing. You have to keep pushing to keep continuing and I can't get that out of my head. I would love for that to go away. I'd give- I'd go into a booth and put electrodes in my head if I thought it would get rid of that.

This NTer continues to suffer long-term effects from her NT experience which have clear characteristics of unresolved PTSD, in particular the inability to control intrusive thoughts (Herman 1992; van der Kolk 1996c).

Others felt that social therapy had, indeed, helped them work through various problems, and valued at least some of that part of the experience. However, these statements were often ambivalent and vacillated between positive and negative evaluations, as in this example:

> I tried therapy with, like, a number of different therapists, maybe two or three over the years and it just wasn't the same. I mean, I, honestly and I know, I, I know many people who have had a lot of problems with the therapy. Like I say, I found it to be growthful. It just, when it got to the point that I was a full time organizer and everybody just knew everything about my life and, that, then it just was much harder for me to work on my issues because I knew they were walking right out the door the minute I left, you know. So but, but in terms of their therapy, I, I, I got a lot of help (Juliet).

While none of the study participants would consider returning to the NT, four have now—after some years away from group involvements—become politically active.

Their interests range across the political spectrum from left-wing causes to the Democratic Party, to conservative politics. None of the former NTers became "cult-hoppers"—the phenomenon sometimes seen in cult leavers who do not become educated about the social-psychological dynamics of such groups (Lalich and Tobias 2006). Nor did those who were isolated on leaving join other groups. Rather they remained isolated for a period, not trusting any further group involvements. Those who eventually became politically active again did so only after an extensive period away from such activism. In a future study it would be useful to attempt to further understand what differentiates those who "cult-hop" from those who don't.

Several GPers are involved in other political commitments, or said they would consider becoming involved in the GP again at some later time. Doug's comments were fairly representative of the majority of participants:

> Like I've said, I would still, I might be interested in joining a local party somewhere else. My feelings about the state party, I mean they're not completely without fault but they seemed like a pretty good bunch of people with, you know, good ideas.

Even Peter, who stated that he would not ever get involved in a political group again, had a forgiving and generous assessment of his experience in the GP:

> Do what is in your nature to do, what you like doing, not what you think needs to be done. Don't do it because you think that's the way, you know, it has to be done. That's a big thing that I learned I guess. I mean, you know, there's a place for a Green party- the vision of the Greens in the world certainly, and there will be people who pursue it and love it, you know, like say Paul. I think that's, you know, it's in his nature, but if it's not in your nature, let somebody else do it. There will be somebody to step up to it, so I guess I'd hope that people would learn that- just do- do what's in your nature to do and that's the best way you can contribute.

After they left, nine of the 12 NT study participants engaged in some form of whistle blowing or negative public evaluation of their experience in the NT. These included reporting fraudulent practices to the FEC and FBI, filing complaints with professional ethics boards, interviewing with investigative journalists on stories about the NT, setting up an ex-member web site, and writing their own accounts of their experience (see

Chapter 12). Some former NTers still struggle with if, and when, the organization took a cultic turn, feeling that perhaps the group had been doing useful and powerful organizing, until a specific time when they felt Newman "sold out":

> So yeah, to me, I saw, I saw real political movement before [the "Want Fred" period]. I saw real dynamics before that. I saw battles. I saw people coming in and being invigorated by the politics and by the atmosphere and by the movement. And I saw it turned into a cult of personality. And, and, and, and it wasn't my scene, that's, that's, yeah. To me it was two different groups, it really was (Ruiz).

These interviewees expressed anger at how Newman had corrupted the organization that they had believed in, and sacrificed to create:

> We were building NAP, we were building a pro-socialist, interracial party. Ok? That's what we were doing. […] And he destroyed that. I can't forgive him for that. People had nothing else. You know? What else do they have? […] So that, that was, that was a real tragedy. Those were institutions that were rooted among poor people (George).

As for GPers, some feel strongly that the GP has gone in the wrong direction, and are now active in alternate political groupings (one of which, in fact, even includes a current GP member). But none of the participants in this project have engaged in any type of activity comparable to that mentioned for the NTers: none have formed ex-member groups, have gone to the press to tell their stories, or have filed legal or other complaints with any agencies.

The Group Psychological Abuse Scale

As part of this study, participants completed the Group Psychological Abuse Scale (Chambers, Langone, Dole, and Grice 1994). This is an instrument designed as a "quantitative measure of abuse that can be applied to any group by anyone with experience of the group" (p. 90). It was built using a factor analysis method based on the responses of 308 self-identified former cult members and it has proven useful in "characterizing the varieties of abuse and in differentiating cults from innocuous groups" (p. 88). The study that produced this scale created an "empirically-based definition of cultism" (drawn from its four sub-scales) that parallels several of the features of totalism discussed earlier. Chambers et al state:

> Cults are groups that often *exploit* members psychologically and/or financially, typically by making members *comply* with leadership's demands through certain types of psychological manipulation, popularly called *mind control*, and through the inculcation of deep-seated *anxious dependency* on the group (p. 105).

The results of the GPA as completed by NT and GP participants, show a clear differentiation in the experience of belonging to each group, as reported retrospectively by members. Average scores across all four subscales—compliance, exploitation, mind control and anxious dependency—are two to three times higher for NTers than for GPers. Even for NTers who still do not consider the group a cult, or who report, for instance that it was "all in all, not bad" (Ruiz), the overall GPA scale, and all subscales, were significantly higher than that of the most dissatisfied GPer. All NTers scored well above the "neutral" midpoints of 84 for the total GPA and 21 for three of the four subscales. Interestingly, the score for anxious dependency is by far the lowest for NTers, though, at 22.5, still above the "neutral" midpoint of 21 and more than twice that of GPers. This may be explained by the fact that this instrument was designed with religious cults in mind, and that religious references were concentrated in the questions that make up the anxious dependency subscale (e.g. references to "satanic forces", "damnation", or "divine"), which caused some respondents to leave these questions blank. Given a broader wording of these questions, I would expect to see higher scores on anxious

dependency for NTers—closer to their scores on the other subscales. GPers clearly scored significantly below the neutral midpoint on the total GPA and all subscales.

These results show a coincidence of elevated GPA scores with the NT narratives that included trauma, fear and loss. Similarly, the much milder narratives of GPers coincide with very low scores on the GPA. These results will be further deepened in the next chapter where we will see similarly dichotomous results from the Group Attachment Interview analyses.

Table 10.
Group Psychological Abuse Scale

Group	N	Compliance	Exploitation	Mind Control	Anxious Dependency	Total GPA
Newman Tendency	10	28.7***	27.9***	30.2***	22.5***	109.6***
Green Party	12	9.9***	17.5***	12.4***	10.6***	50.4***

*** $p < .001$

Conclusion

The impact on individuals of membership in the NT and GP groups differs fundamentally. While these two sets of individuals started out looking roughly comparable demographically, with only slight (though possibly notable) differences in prior dispositions, their experiences bifurcated dramatically from the moment of recruitment or entry, until the point of leaving the group.

The NTers' experience was one of entering into a total environment. Within this environment, they were largely isolated from prior relationships, and immersed into NT relationships, structures and belief systems. On exit they had to not only depart the total world of the NT, but often cope with a fear of retribution (especially if they were labeled "hostile" on exit). Most importantly they had to break the strong attachment bond that had formed to the group. As this bond was a disorganized attachment bond, leaving often required the condition of mitigating attachment relationships. These mitigating

attachments allowed the member to begin to reorganize their thought processes—that is, to reconnect emotional and cognitive processes—about their relationship to the group by providing an escape hatch from the condition of fright with no solution created by the NT. Despite these mitigating attachments, on exit, NTers' social networks were severely disrupted, as were employment, education and housing situations, with considerable short, and long-range effects that required long-term efforts to resolve. NTers have no intention of ever becoming reinvolved in the NT, and many, indeed, have worked to warn others of the problems of becoming so involved.

GPers did not have to leave a total environment, but rather, their exit involved transitioning from a partial (even if, in some cases, a quite serious) commitment to other commitments and priorities. Social networks were only mildly impacted, and career, education and housing were largely unaffected. GPers may have had political differences with the GP, or personality conflicts with persons in GP locals, but many stated that they may become active again as GPers at a future time.

These results provide empirical support for Zablocki's observation, from his longitudinal Urban Communes study of "persistent post-traumatic effects" (p. 204) in former members of cultic groups. Herman (1992) found similar long-term effects which she termed "Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder" and identified as resulting from "a history of subjection to totalitarian control over a prolonged period" (p. 121). Goffman (1962) concurs with this, noting that, unlike most of those he studied in his work on total institutions, those subject to the "reorganizing processes" of brainwashing, do experience "lasting effects" (p. 71). This will be further explored in the next chapter where we look at cognitive processing about the group relationship.

This chapter concludes Part Two which has offered thick descriptions of each group: the history of their development, entry and recruitment, life in the group, and exit processes. In Part Three, we turn to the analysis of attachment and discourse patterns within each group. In the next chapter, I present a detailed analysis of the Group Attachment Interviews (GAI) in which participants discuss their relationships to their respective groups. The GAI allows us to look more closely at linguistic markers of disorganized attachment and dissociation in NTers, and the absence of such in GPers.

Part Three

Chapter 11

From Social Structure to the Mind: Disorganized Attachment in a Totalist Organization

> *There was a mentality, you know, while you were in it, that, that, that you would more or less die if you actually ever became outside of it. So there was a lot of confusion about that, you know, sort of, how am I, how am I no longer in it anymore? I didn't even think that was a possibility.*
>
> Excerpt from NT Group Attachment Interview transcript.

Introduction

In Part Two I traced the history of the two groups, the GP and the NT, and the experiences of members in them. The NT has been shown to be totalist in structure: with a single charismatic authoritarian leader controlling a steep, rigidly-bounded hierarchical organization. Group members were isolated from extra-cult affective relationships, and intra-cult relationships were nudged away from attachments to particular others towards a generalized allegiance to the collectivity. This was supported by coercive influence processes (largely taking place within social therapy) and by the group's ideology of giving all to the working class revolution. This top-heavy social structure in which the group member was immersed thus became the primary source of all his or her social connections: personal social relationships, work, housing, therapy, educational, cultural and ideological inputs all emanated from the NT. The GP was flat, decentralized, and represented only a partial commitment, and only one aspect of life, for its members. In this chapter I present the results of the Group Attachment Interview (GAI) which will

show that NT members developed a disorganized attachment relationship to the NT in contrast to GPers who did not show signs of disorganized attachment, nor, in fact, of any attachment relationship at all. I thus develop the proposition that the structure of the NT did, in fact, affect the mental processes of its members, as observed in the GAI transcripts.

In previous chapters, as in the quote above, we saw the power of the bond that members had with the NT. We have also seen the great distress and despair felt by most ex-members on breaking this tie. Scholars of cults and totalitarianism (as well as lay people) have been struck by the strength of the bond to totalist groups that can result in followers engaging in ego-dystonic behaviors[70] (Zablocki 1997). Further, the bond to these groups seemed to go hand-in-hand with a predictable weakening in members' prior close or attachment relationships. The emotional aspects and effects of these phenomena were not adequately reflected in the literature on new social movements (for example: Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield 1994; Klandermans and Oegema 1987) although some attempted to make such links (Goodwin 1997) and others pointed to the importance of doing so (Aminzade and McAdam 2000). Meanwhile, however, attachment theory was developing as a leading theoretical perspective in research on adult close relationships (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996; Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999; Simpson and Rholes 1998; Weiss 1991). Some work using attachment theory looked at individuals' attachment statuses and their political (Hopf 1998) or religious (Granqvist 1998; Granqvist and Hagekull 2001; Kirkpatrick 1998) beliefs and behaviors. But no work had yet been done to inspect the special nature of the cultic bond – in either religious or political contexts – using an attachment theory perspective, although this has been suggested as a possibly fruitful line of inquiry (Main 2000; Stein 2001; Zablocki 1999).

As Bowlby (1982) observed, and Sroufe (2005) and others have gone on to show empirically, a person's attachment status is not immutable or fixed. Rather, attachment theory, as a developmental perspective, sees early attachments as formative and allows

[70] As cited in Zablocki (2005): According to the American Psychiatric Glossary (seventh edition) 1994, American Psychiatric Press, the term *ego dystonic* refers to "aspects of a person's behavior, thoughts, or attitudes that are viewed by the self as repugnant or inconsistent with the total personality."

for changes based on experiences and intervening attachment relationships across the life cycle. It was this set of ideas that led me to view attachment theory as a potentially productive way to investigate the cultic bond (conceptualizing it as an intervening attachment bond in a person's life course) which might help to explain the particular nature of that bond: the induction of hyper obedience, hyper credulity and deployability, and the resulting deep and often long-lasting distress experienced by members on, and after, exit.

What is an attachment bond?

In the previous chapter, I discussed how the relationship of NTers to the NT generally met the criteria for an attachment bond: the relationship with the NT was not replaceable by any other, and NTers experienced great distress on separation from the NT (often over extended periods of time). While there is ongoing discussion on how to define objective markers of adult attachment (Fraley and Shaver 2000; Fraley 1998; Hazan and Shaver 1994; Hazan, Gur-Yaish, and Campa 2004), there appears to be consensus on these two elements (distress on loss and irreplaceability). An attachment bond, according to Bowlby (1982), is one to a "specific other," and is therefore, by definition, not replaceable. More recently, Rholes and Simpson (2004) reinforced this, stating that "to have no attachment bond means that all caregivers or social partners are equivalent" (p. 5). In other words, a "generalized other" is not a replacement for a "specific other". Attachment *behavior* serves, primarily, according to Bowlby, to maintain proximity with the object of attachment. This attachment behavior is activated by the lack of such proximity as well as by other threats such as fear, illness, fatigue, etc. Thus distress on separation is a crucial element of attachment behavior, and is therefore the second key marker of attachment (although individual differences may affect how this plays out – see, for instance: Fraley 1998). As Hazan, et al (2004) point out, "the separation-distress feature is centrally important" both theoretically and historically and "thus is a behavior that merits special attention in the search for adulthood markers" (p. 59).

Although there are other markers of attachment, such as using the attachment figure as a safe haven or secure base, these are not always seen, especially in

relationships of disorganized attachment, such as in some cases of domestic violence (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999). And, as I argue below, the secure base function is compromised in totalist groups. Therefore, the remaining elements by which to identify whether an attachment exists are the two mentioned here: the irreplaceable nature of the other and the high degree of distress seen on loss of the bond.

In the NT, attachment to a particular other, namely the NT, was put in place in a number of ways.

- through establishing the NT as a presumed safe haven.
- through creating fear or threat to arouse the attachment behaviors of members.
- through eliminating or weakening alternate attachments, which might provide other safe havens able to terminate attachment behaviors caused by fear arousal.
- through the structural creation of material dependency on the group which also prevented seeking of alternate safe havens capable of terminating attachment behaviors.

The GP did not create an attachment bond of members to the group. Rather, bonds to the GP came closer to meeting the criteria for affiliative bonds, related to Baumeister and Leary's (1995) definition of the need to belong in which they include: "frequent, affectively pleasant interactions with a few other people […]"[71]. Weiss (1991) uses the term "relationships of community" (p. 68) to describe these looser networks. These definitions include neither the concept of a specific other, nor that of distress on separation. And, in fact, neither of these markers of attachment bonds were observed in GPers' relationship to the GP in this study.

The mechanisms of disorganized attachment in a totalist group

I have suggested that the strength of the bond to the totalist group is due to the special nature of this attachment (as opposed to an affiliative) bond. Attachment theory offers a useful way to explain the mechanisms that bind the group member tightly to the group.

[71] Some of the more disaffected GPers might argue the "pleasant" aspect of this definition!

As discussed in Chapters Eight and Nine, the group creates for the follower the sense that it is a safe haven by means of attention, cult-affective ties and material dependency. When the group then creates a sense of fear and threat, this causes the participant to seek out a safe haven, or attachment figure, for protection and comfort. If the group has successfully isolated the follower from extra-cult ties, he or she will then turn to the group for comfort. But as the group itself is at the same time the source of threat, turning to the group for comfort and protection is a failing strategy. This failed strategy results in a two-fold effect: first, the participant disorganizes cognitively and emotionally with consequent confusion, dissociation, disorientation and cognitive lapses (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996), and second, their emotional tie to the group is strengthened.

From the group's perspective, the participant's cognitive and emotional disorganization opens a window of disorientation through which the group's ideology may be introduced (discussed further in the next chapter). Of course, the strengthening of the emotional tie to the group helps this process, and later deployability, as well. But why is the tie strengthened through this cycle of assault and leniency? An attachment theory analysis helps to understand this. A fearful person who seeks comfort and protection (i.e. exhibits attachment behavior) and gains proximity to a safe haven, will ideally succeed in moderating their fear arousal[72]. Once comfort is attained (a sufficiency of opioides in the system), the person eventually wishes to engage again in stimulating activity, or what is termed exploration behavior, and will move away from the provider of comfort and protection. The safe haven now becomes what is known as a secure base – a base from which further exploration can take place, with the explorer having a sense that, when needed, they can return to find a safe haven again. But when the source of threat and comfort are identical, as in the case of relationships of disorganized attachment, the participant never achieves complete comfort. They thus are not able to "terminate" their attachment behavior. In effect they keep seeking comfort that will never be adequately delivered, as, at any moment, the group may instead introduce threat. The participant

[72] This can be detailed at a biochemical level, as a process of homeostasis between the arousal of adrenalin and the comfort of opioides being stimulated by the processes of fear and comfort. See Tom Smith's *Strong Interaction* (Smith 1992) for an interesting discussion of this process.

remains in a constant state of hyper-arousal, constantly seeking comfort from the only available source, and never fully achieving it. Similar to victims of domestic violence (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999), the attachment figure thus acts as a safe haven (promising protection and comfort), but not as a secure base (completing the act of protection and comfort, and thus setting the stage for further outwards exploration). I suggest that it is this process of unresolved fear arousal that causes the strengthening of the bond to the group. Allowing mitigating attachment relationships would therefore defeat this mechanism by providing comfort elsewhere and thus attenuating the group member's state of hyper-arousal. The structure of isolation is thus key in maintaining the tie to the group.

The Group Attachment Interview

I designed the Group Attachment Interview (GAI) in order to look at the particular quality of the attachment bond formed to a group, with the expectation that the bond to the NT would fit the criteria for a disorganized attachment bond. A further development of the GAI would focus questions more specifically on questions related to whether an attachment bond of any type existed by discussing more specifically questions of loss of the group. This is a weakness in the current interview. However, in this particular study this was compensated for by questions about the leaving process asked in the second interview.

The GAI is based on the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI, George, Kaplan, and Main 1996) which is designed to assess "the individual's state of mind with respect to attachment" (p. 1). The AAI is coded from an interview that lasts about an hour, during which the participant is asked various questions about their relationship, as children, to their primary caregivers. The design of the interview is intended to "surprise the unconscious" (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996). The interview transcript is rated first for "probable experience," noting loving, rejecting, neglecting experiences as well as those of loss or abuse. A second pass assigns ratings to "various aspects of the subject's present state of mind with respect to attachment" (Main and Goldwyn 1998 p. 1). The last phase of the coding is to assign an attachment classification "which appears best to represent their overall state of mind with respect to attachment" (p. 1). These

classifications are: Secure, Preoccupied, Dismissing, Unresolved/disorganized (the full term for disorganized attachment) and the rarely occurring Cannot Classify.

The core task presented to the participant in the AAI is to reflect on attachment experiences whilst at one and the same time maintaining a coherent and collaborative discourse with the interviewer. The ability to successfully negotiate this indicates a Secure, or Autonomous state of mind regarding those attachment experiences (even in cases where those experiences may have had negative aspects). Various other types of incoherencies in response to the task map to the other types of attachment status (as detailed below). An overview of attachment theory and these classifications is also given earlier in Chapter Three.

In creating the GAI, I modified the AAI to focus on a person's relationship to the group to which he or she had belonged, rather than to their early caregivers. In order to maintain as close a correspondence to the AAI as possible, I attempted to minimize these modifications. Thus the key change was to substitute the section of the interview that asks the respondent to give (and later support) five adjectives to describe each caregiver, to instead give five adjectives to describe the relationship with the group:

> *Now I'd like to ask you to choose five adjectives or words that reflect your relationship, as you remember it, with [group x], starting from when you first became involved? [f participant is an ex-member add: and up to when you ceased to be involved with the group…]* (Stein 2004).

Other more minor changes were also made as discussed in Chapter Five.

I also adapted coding standards for the GAI from the AAI protocol. The most important of these changes is in the definition of loss, trauma or abuse in relation to the group. In some regards, this differs considerably from the parallel definitions in the AAI. The GAI coding was theoretically driven by the concept of disorganized attachment, where fright without solution is the result of the conflict that occurs when the attachment figure is both the source of, and the solution to threat. Thus I looked for situational markers of "probable experience" where fear arousal was described, or fear of loss of the group or attachment figures, as well as situations where assault/leniency processes occurred. These situations that arouse feelings of fear or loss, when not fully resolved,

can result in disorganization which may persist and is then detectable in later discourse (Hesse 1999). The following is a list of those elements I coded as possible loss, abuse or trauma experiences for the purposes of the GAI:

- Reference to leaving or trying to leave the group
- Social therapy sessions (NT only)
- Interviewee describes feeling trapped
- Interviewee describes a situation in which they were fearful
- Interviewee appears to be objectively trapped, utterly dependent on the group for resources
- Verbal abuse causing interviewee to be fearful
- Discussion of experiences with weapons
- Discussion of physical abuse or violent incidents
- Discussion of loss of close persons (either on entry to, or exit from, the group)
- Discussion of entry process (where dynamics of assault/leniency were pertinent)

In the AAI, disorganized attachment is termed Unresolved (disorganized/disoriented) – or "U/d". It is coded based upon discussion of abuse or loss that displays "lapses in the monitoring of reasoning or discourse, or reports of extreme behavioral reactions […] during the discussion of these events" (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996, p. 178). These lapses "suggest momentary but qualitative changes in consciousness" (Hesse 1999, p. 405) indicative of a "collapse of behavioral and attentional strategies" (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999, p. 549) in relation to the attachment figure. These lapses:

> often occur in a high-functioning individual and are normally not representative of the speaker's overall conversational style. For this reason, among others, transcripts assigned to the unresolved/disorganized […] category are given a best-fitting alternate classification (Hesse 1999, p. 405).

These alternate classifications are: Ds (Dismissing), E (Preoccupied), F (Secure/autonomous), or CC (Cannot Classify). However, these alternate categories may be muddied or more difficult to ascertain where the current state of mind regarding attachment is Unresolved/disorganized. Further, each alternate assignment of Ds, E, or F is given a sub-category assignment (numeric) *and* a sub-type (a or b)[73]. Additionally, Cannot Classify cases are noted by designating CC and then, the next best fit, followed by other possibly fitting categories, as, for example "CC/E3/Ds3a".

The Ds Dismissing and E Preoccupied statuses are considered to represent insecure or anxious attachment, as opposed to the secure F status. These three statuses are all, however, considered organized and systematic approaches to attachment (though not equally optimal). The Unresolved/disorganized and Cannot Classify statuses are not organized and represent segregated systems, or multiple and contradictory internal working models or attachment representations.

The major categories of states of mind in respect to attachment are:

Ds— Dismissing of attachment: "Actively dismissing of the likelihood that [group] attachment experiences have affected personal development" (Main and Goldwyn 1998, p. 4). Often these transcripts are short, with idealized descriptions of [the group] that is not well supported by specific memories, or they are dismissing of "potential negative effects" (p. 151) of group involvement, "often while laying claim to personal strength" (p. 151).

F—Secure/ "Free"—Autonomous: "[V]alues attachment relationship and experiences and regards them as influential, but appears objective in evaluating any particular relationship and its influence. Interview is coherent. Generalized descriptions of [relationship with group] are supported by specific memories; fluent; non-contradictory; at ease with the topic" (p. 4).

[73] The sub-types are not part of this analysis and will not be discussed here, but they were coded for, and are documented in the table below for possible future analysis.

E—Preoccupied with attachment figures and experiences: "The influence of [the group] or attachment-related experiences can neither be dismissed nor coherently described, and seems to preoccupy attention. [Individuals] may oscillate between good/bad evaluations of past or [group]" (p. 4). These transcripts are often long, with long, entangled and angry passages, or many markers of "passivity of thought" indicating the inability to fully grasp or complete a thought process.

U/d—Unresolved (disorganized/disoriented): "[Individual] has experienced attachment-related traumas which cannot yet be clearly reconciled with present-day life." (p. 4). Specific markers of disorganization and disorientation in reasoning, discourse and behavioral reactions to abuse or loss are delineated below.

CC-Cannot Classify: "The patterning of interview responses makes it impossible to assign either Ds, F, E or Ud category placement" (p. 4). There is a global incoherence in the interview, and often contradictory Ds and E discourse markers co-exist.

Group Attachment Interview Results

The overall results of the analyses are presented below in Table 11.

Table 11.
Group Attachment Interview Results

Group	Age at interview	Year left group	Total years in group	Unresolved/ Disorganized?	Classification descriptor	Major classification or best-fitting alternative to U/D
Newman Tendency	46	1990	5	Yes	U/d Secure[74]	F5
	41	1993	8	Yes	U/d Cannot Classify	CC/E3/Ds3a[75]
	52	1992	16	Yes	U/d Preoccupied	E3
	35	2002	2	Yes	U/d Preoccupied	E3a
	52	1983	7	Yes	U/d Secure	F_[76]
	46	1992	7	Yes	U/d Cannot Classify	CC/E2/Ds2
	36	1992	4	Yes	U/d Preoccupied	E3a
	40	1991	8	Yes	U/d Preoccupied	E2
	49	2000	10	Yes	U/d Preoccupied	E3
	41	1992	8	Yes	U/d Dismissing	Ds3/a or b
	57	2002	5	Yes	U/d Secure	F1a
	63	1974	4	No (Borderline)	Secure	F4b
Green Party	54	2004	5	No	Secure	F1a
	64	2003	4	No	Dismissing	Ds2
	40	2002	1	No	Secure	F1
	50	1991	3	No	Secure	F4b
	51	2004	13	No	Secure	F2
	43	1989	2	No	Secure	F4b
	44	2002	7	No	Dismissing	Ds3
	34	1999	3	No	Secure	F3a or b
	41	2003	4	No	Secure	F3a
	52	2004	4	No	Secure	F3
	50	2000	3	No	Secure	F4b

NTers are nearly all Unresolved/disorganized

As anticipated, nearly all NTers had markers of Unresolved/disorganized/disoriented states of mind with respect to attachment to the NT. That is, they continue to show signs

[74] Note that when assigning Unresolved/Disorganized, a major classification or best-fitting alternative is also assigned.
[75] Cannot Classify assignments are, like U/d assignments, followed by alternate classifications.
[76] Unable to assign sub-category to this transcript.

of dissociation and disorientation in their thought processes regarding their experiences with the NT. These linguistic markers will be described more fully below.

Do NTers have a tendency towards preoccupation?

Of the NT study participants, four of the twelve completed transcripts were assigned an alternative major classification of E3: "fearfully preoccupied by traumatic events"[77] (p. 174) where "the nature of her past seems to be such that she cannot escape preoccupation with or by it as a whole" (p. 174). In these participants, this exists in conjunction with markers of lapses in the monitoring of reasoning or discourse, or extreme behavioral reactions. In other words, they are both U/d with an alternate E3 classification, which, while often seen together, do not *always* occur together according to George, et al (1996). Another NTer had an alternate classification of E2 (Preoccupied with angry/conflicted sub-type), and of the two assigned Unresolved/disorganized with Cannot Classify as an alternate, their dominant sub-classification was also E. Thus, there is a weighting, in these Unresolved/disorganized transcripts, towards E-like discourse, indicating an ongoing current state of mind of preoccupation with the group. The relevance of this finding will be discussed further below.

Cannot Classify in two NTers

The two NTers who were assigned Cannot Classify as an alternative classification, in addition to U/d, had patterns in their discourse of contradictory features of both dismissing and preoccupied markers. In one speaker, for example, highly derogatory and dismissing speech was noted, along with ongoing long, angry and entangled passages characteristic of preoccupied speakers.

Dismissing subclassification in one NTer

Only one Unresolved/disorganized NTer had an alternate classification of Dismissing, with rather succinct responses, and a tendency to minimize the impact of his group

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[77] Interestingly, many battered women studied by Sullivan-Hanson (1990, cited in Hesse 1999) fit the E3 classification, and almost none were secure.

involvement while at the same time disorganizing at different points in the transcript when discussing leaving the group or violent incidents.

Secure NTers: both disorganized and organized

Three of the Unresolved/disorganized NTers had alternate F or Secure classifications. They showed clear markers of U/d lapses in monitoring of reason, discourse or behavior, when discussing loss, abuse or trauma related to the group. However apart from that their transcripts were generally coherent and balanced. They were able to discuss their experience without becoming entangled in angry discourse or demonstrating markers of passive thought, nor did they dismiss the impact of their group involvement.

Finally, one NTer was not classified primarily as U/d, but rather as F or Secure, although he did have some U/d markers in his transcript. However, they were not strong enough indices to rise to the threshold of a U/d assignment (Main and Goldwyn 1998). It may be of note that this participant left the NT over 30 years ago, took effective action at the time to protect his son from neglect experienced in the group, and was in the group during its formative years (where perhaps the techniques of control were not fully formed), and had a relatively short tenure of four years. It may thus be the case that this speaker either a) did not experience "fright without solution" as he *did* act to resolve the threat to his child and/or b) Newman's methods were not yet fully established, and thus he was not ever fully brought into the system of assault/leniency; and/or c) the intervening years have allowed substantial resolution of the abuse. A larger study would uncover more variation in these results and allow for a more complete analysis of these differences.

GPers: Secure? Or simply not attached?

None of the GPers were classified as Unresolved/disorganized. First, there were few events that fit the categories of trauma or abuse as identified above and thus there were few opportunities to code for U/d discourse in relation to such events. (However, the GPers did leave the GP, and so could be scored for U/d responses to loss.) Second, where those events did occur, the participants showed only mild, or no signs of disorganization

or disorientation in regard to them. Nine of the eleven completed analyses were classified as F or Secure and two were classified Dismissing. In general, GPers told their stories coherently and cooperatively. The transcripts themselves were, overall, much shorter than those of the NTers – an average of 19 pages compared to 31 pages, which itself indicates ongoing preoccupation by NTers with their group involvement. This is interesting, as well, given that NTers had, in general, left the group many years earlier than GPers and thus one might have expected that with the passage of time more resolution would have occurred resulting in more concise and coherent interviews. Of course, the nature of disorganization is that the memories remain vivid and unresolved, and time alone does not serve to re-organize them. Rather, creating a coherent narrative in the context of a secure relationship seems to be the path to resolution of disorganized or traumatic memories (Herman 1992).

Lastly, the nine GPers' F transcripts were often hard to subclassify. My sense is that this is due to the fact that these relationships did not, in fact, rise to the level of attachment relationships, and so much of the discourse, while coherent and collaborative in a general sense, did not neatly fit the Secure subclassifications. It is possible, therefore, that these transcripts represent the GPers' general discourse style, rather than being reflective of any attachment bond to the GP (given that such a bond has not been established). Thus we cannot conclude from these data that GPers' were either generally secure in their current state of mind regarding either attachment to an individual, or to a group. Similarly, the results for NTers cannot be extrapolated to indicate current state of mind regarding close attachments to individuals not associated with the NT as a group. A reminder of the discriminant validity of the AAI on which the GAI is based is warranted here: Crowell, Waters et al. (1996) established that attachment-related discourse is not correlated with general discourse style.

Coding of Unresolved/disorganized responses to abuse by attachment figures

Coding for U/d placement in the AAI relies on three elements—lapses in reasoning, in discourse, and extreme behavioral response—to "potentially traumatic events" (George, Kaplan, and Main 1996), namely: loss, trauma or abuse. All these elements were used in

coding for the GAI. Loss was coded largely as loss of the group, but could also include loss of relationships due to group membership. Abuse or trauma were coded as experiences of being frightened, feeling trapped, verbal and/or physical abuse, and the overall process of coercive persuasion as experienced, particularly, within the therapy groups. In coding for Unresolved/disorganized status, numeric scores are assigned to particular passages (or sets of related passages) based on indices of unresolved/disorganized responses to loss, trauma or abuse. The whole transcript is then reviewed and assigned a score from one to nine. Scores of five indicate possible but not definite disorganization, and those above five are considered definite to marked disorganization.

The following details certain of these linguistic markers with examples from the interviews. Unless otherwise noted, all examples are from NT interviews. Not all possible markers are included, although there were examples of nearly all the U/d markers found in the interviews.

Lapses in reasoning:

Unsuccessful denial of the occurrence, nature or intensity of the abuse[78]. Speech patterns surrounding these denials often become confused and irregular. This pattern was seen several times in the interviews. The speaker below, for example, who left the NT over two decades ago, recounts in a long passage his extreme lack of financial resources during his time in the NT – he was materially trapped in the group. He starts thus:

> *I guess I got out at a good time, you know, 'cause I guess if I'd stayed any longer, either they might have uh- they might have gotten me into- I might have never gotten out. In other words, if they got me to succumb to their blandishments or whatever, I might never have gotten out, or maybe I would have, but it would have been a lot more painful than it was. Like I said, I never ruptured my, my direct relationships. They never were ruptured- or any separation, they didn't bankrupt me. They didn't, you know—I'll say this about them, I remember towards the end- and I was in a very bad financial situation. I was really- I was selling ads for their newspaper and it wasn't working 'cause they wouldn't give me a salary.*

[78] In this section, all *underlined and italicized* phrases and sentences are taken from the coding manual (Main and Goldwyn 1998) as descriptions of the various markers.

They said you keep a third of whatever you make- like a commission basis. Well, sometimes I'd do okay, but more often than not I wouldn't and I would be living on twenty, thirty bucks a week.

In the above quote the speaker first uses ominous language (see below): "they might have gotten me into- I might never have left" without being able to say what they would have gotten him into. Then he states that they didn't bankrupt him while he later goes on to vividly detail his financial straits (see below) and begins to disorganize in myriad ways. He further states above, "They didn't, you know—I'll say this about them", as if beginning to deny the NT was responsible possibly either for the attempted rupture of relationships, or his financial situation. Later in the transcript he makes clear he left when his relationship with his family was, indeed, threatened. He continues, in the quote below, to describe how he needed a job and was finally, though reluctantly, given permission to take one outside the NT:

I was, I was barely- my rent- I was living in a tiny studio in the upper east side. Rent was like three hundred a month and I was barely making it, you know, that cheap of rent and I was barely getting by and sometimes I'd have to call my parents and beg them for money and they didn't like that. "What are you doing? Why can't you make a living?" […] I was really in bad shape, so walking around, I remember actually rationing- well, this is for the subway, this is for a cup of coffee, and this is a couple bucks for lunch, and that's it. That's all the money I had, and I was borrowing money from people uh- and they [the NT] said they would get me a job, and it didn't come through, and in fact I was- I was also looking on my own and I, and I said, I can't live like this, you know, and they had also said they couldn't guarantee me the job, they looked and tried and said- they didn't actually say: "You definitely will have it." Well, let me take that back. They did say once- 'cause I applied for civil service jobs and I was offered a civil service job, but I went to my section chief and said, "I, you know, you've been talking about getting a job for me, but I've just been offered one from the state of New York. What should I do?" He says, "Turn it down. We'll get you this job." And it didn't come through, but I applied for another civil service job. I applied for several, and this one was offered to me, and I'll say, again- it was actually- she was the editor of the newspaper. She was the one trying to organize this [NT] job for me. I went to her again, I said, "I've been offered another job. What's happening?" and she said, "You better take it. I can't guarantee this thing for you." So I give her credit. She- instead of manipulating me, she could have said- and I think I still even at that point would have bitten the bullet

and said "Okay", but you know, I was really in horrible economic shape, you know, and the job only paid like eighteen thousand a year, but again, this was like a fortune, you know, this is a fortune. I was actually getting a regular paycheck, and this woman- the editor Vanessa Tilsen uh- said, "I can't get the job organized for you. You better take…" Well, she said, not take- she said, "I have no objection if you take this job." and I took it, and then that also helped me get out because I wasn't dependent on them for, for my economic survival. I think to myself- if they actually had gotten a job for me, it might have been much harder to get out, because then my paycheck was coming from them.

This speaker has flipped back and forth several times from descriptions of his desperate financial straits, to statements such as "I'll say this about them…" or "I'll give her credit" as if to indicate the NT were, in this instance, trying to be helpful. Objectively he was financially dependent on the group and making very little money. But when one leadership figure says "I have no objection" to him taking the outside job, it reads almost like an abused woman being grateful, as Herman (1992) puts it, for "small indulgences". He alternates this tentative gratitude, with a final, apparently "fresh", observation that not turning down the external job would, indeed, have kept him trapped. Further, throughout this passage his previously coherent speech becomes entangled and confused with violations of manner and tense. This is a speaker who in other passages, particularly ones not concerning the NT, speaks in a particularly thoughtful, articulate and coherent way.

Here is another example of <u>*failure to deny abuse*</u>:

Well, I think I'm just learning those- if there were, I think that it's just now- and like I'm struggling, like I told you with that- that I feel- I still have that mindset of- that—you know, I can't see the setbacks. I keep thinking I'm a failure because of what, you know, I'm not performing. I still am stuck in that. I can't- I haven't gotten beyond it yet, you know, so I'm sure there are, but I keep thinking it's my fault. They really do a number on you there and I can't let go of it. I'm still not beyond it yet. That's gonna take some- a lot of deprogramming and I just don't know if I'll be able to get rid of that thought, you know, if only I had pushed harder, harder, harder, you know- I still can't quite- you know, it's getting the best of you, you know, that's what I was thinking in the group, I was performing better and I was doing more and I did do the play readings and now when I think- hell, I couldn't do that again, you know, and so I think, well maybe I really was doing better. I'm still real confused about

> *that, you know, maybe I sh- you know, I really was doing better. I didn't have as much anxiety. I was doing things that I did enjoy. It was like they did have a good point about performance, you know, that there's validity in what they're saying. I don't know who they're screwing this to, but yeah, I'm totally still very confused with that.*

This speaker veers back and forth between the benefits she felt she got from social therapy and stating "they really do a number on you there". She also has a <u>sense of being causal in the abuse and deserving of it in a personal sense</u> shown in the references to "it's my fault" and "I'm a failure." The "failure to deny" is in contrast to her reports in other parts of the interview that the NT therapists were: "*scary as hell […] they scare me to death […] it just scares me—I wouldn't go up there in that center. I'd be scared to death of those people*." She later also says:

> *I would really like to give myself a break, but I just can't seem to do it. You know I can still hear them beating me with the whip, you know, "Get out there and make your mark on the world. We're revolutionaries!"*

<u>Reports effort to dissociate memories of the experience</u>*:* In relationship to boundary violations by therapist, and general feelings about what was going on, Bernice stated:

> *I even, I mean, I consciously thought, uh, this is so strange, but I would like just tuck it away.*

Another example of this <u>effort to dissociate memories</u>:

> *I would do this mental thing in my head that I would try to justify why I shouldn't be upset.*

<u>Disorientation with respect to time</u>: NTers showed many of these markers, frequently slipping into the present tense when describing therapy, their leaving, or other difficult times during their tenure. This speaker left the group 25 years ago. He describes how he was ordered not to take time off to see his parents, with whom he had previously been close. He then says:

> *But that was the culminating – that was the straw that – you know, five years ago I might actually gone along with them if they asked me 'cause I was still in my enthusiastic and believing stage, but at this point […] it had been building over the past year and a half or so and that was it.*

He is actually discussing a time 30 years ago when he says “five years ago”. He wants to say, “five years before that”, but he’s had a subtle shift to the present – he is in the moment of the conflict that led to him leaving, and says “five years ago” and the “past year and a half” and “this point”, not “that point”.

Celia, who left over a decade ago, shows another example of a shift to present tense:

> *But I felt that anger when I left, of people towards me that I had been, I’m a betrayer, I sold out, you know, I hurt Fred, you know, I’m a revolutionary traitor. I’m the worst.*

Louisa also frequently slips into the present tense. For example, when describing therapy several years after she left, she says:

> *I still have a hard time with it, but that’s how they were intimidating because no matter what you said, what you did, they could spin it and they would make a question out of it and they would push you back. It’s like they’re always shoving you, like you can’t just say something and then it’s just okay—never did that happen—and really, it makes you crack up. You feel like your brain is gonna explode out of your ears. It was horrible, and I thought I was—it was horrible because I couldn’t get it.*

Disoriented speech – lapse in the monitoring of discourse:

This speaker left over ten years ago and is discussing her tenure on the security team. Towards the end she is *suddenly unable to finish the sentence* as she gets absorbed and disoriented by the memory:

> *And just the idea that I might have to shoot somebody – or that we might get broken into, get shot, you know. I mean I, I felt confident that, I also, before, when I was living in [City 1] I took self defense courses and then I taught self defense, so I knew I could handle myself physically – um, but I didn’t know about running across people with guns, you know. So there was always, there, at the back of your mind you’re always, when you’re on the security shifts, worried about you know, you know, if something would happen to like one of your, you know, “I wish I was home,” you know.*

The previous quote also has an ominous sense where *“Words or phrases which seem to stand for the abuse are used in an odd way as though the person is unable to name it”*

(Main and Goldwyn 1998, p. 141). She can't state what she is afraid will happen: "if something would happen". She has also shifted the pronoun from "I" to "You".

The references to death, being dead, or dying, in referring to the NT, are also notably frequent in the NT interviews (and are absent in GP interviews), further reflecting this ominous speech. See, for example, the quote at the beginning of this chapter. Another example of ominous speech is the kind of vague fear spoken of by several NTers. For example:

> *I had a fear of the void of not being involved--that something bad was going to happen to me--it was just really, it really all, it was just, all con, all consuming – and I don't mean that positively.*

There is a sense of a hidden threat in these comments, that even the speaker cannot fully grasp. When discussing his entry into the group (in which he earlier has stated that he was "*frightened all the time*"), the next speaker says:

> *I mean, it's – it's hard to – I went in so young it's hard to judge, you know, what I would be like if I didn't go in um- go in, it sounds like prison.*

He goes on to state that:

> *I'm one of the few people that I know that are ex-members that think of it as a positive um-but you know, you take the negative with the positive. I think it was- overall, it- it was an improvement on my personality.*

This appears to also be a form of <u>*denial of occurrence of abuse*</u>. He is trying to look at the experience positively but he also realizes that "it sounds like prison". Further examples of <u>*ominous speech*</u> are demonstrated by the next speaker who left the group about 16 years ago. I had asked her to expand on the word "exhausting" she had used to describe her experience. In the middle of a long, incoherent passage about being on the road almost 20 years ago, petitioning to get Fulani on the ballot, she says:

> *I was down in State 5 um, I had uh—no I think it may have been City 3. In State 5, well, in City 3 – I can't remember to be honest with you, I think I was in State 5 second 'cause in State 5 is where my body physically just stopped. I got, and I was so afraid – um – of not being able, of what, what they might do to me. I was just, like, so—you know that, that story about the elephant and he's hooked up with a, a chain on the pole, and he's trying to, you know, little elephant and he's trying to get, break free – then there's, as, ele – eventually you can hook the elephant up with a rope*

because in their mind, in that animal's mind it, like, believes that it can't break free, and that's what it was like for me, looking back.

She finds it very difficult to tell this story. She is <u>*suddenly unable to finish sentences*</u>. She uses <u>*words that stand for the abuse*</u>: "What they might do to me". And she shifts from the topic and generally speaks in a disoriented manner. Later in the same passage we see another marker of disoriented speech: the intrusion of vivid visual sensory images with unusual attention to detail:

It was just so hard – just getting out there in the sun and – pounding on your, pounding on you. Um . . . . .{{5 secs}} ask, stopping people, you know, in the summertime and you know, they were like, I have ice cream in my bag.

After 20 years, this experience has still not been metabolized and she is unable to tell the story in a coherent manner. She finishes the passage by stating:

I, it was just so exhausting. I hated that …I really did. {{laughs}}. I can't believe I did it. But you know I was so young and I just felt -- {{sighs}}—

The speaker again gets absorbed back into the memory and cannot finish the sentence. She is unable to put language to what she felt.

<u>*Prolonged silences*</u> are another indicator of a lapse in the monitoring of discourse. They indicate absorption in thinking back to the past, and a failure to keep track in the current conversation. In response to whether there were any aspects to her involvement that she feels were a setback to her development, this speaker says:

I always wanted to produce or whatever. I wasn't really sure but something . . . . {4 secs} and I um – the, I was – told that a political career is what I was – my life, you know, I signed on the line to join this thing and I signed my life over … {3 sec}. I signed my life over . . . . {18 sec}

Prolonged silences were not evidenced often in these transcripts. However, <u>*losing track of the question*</u> happened frequently as interviewees became absorbed in their memories and thus lost track of the interview context. For example, when asked about how he felt after leaving, this speaker ended his response in the following way:

It wasn't like I didn't like Fred and didn't know him. I knew Fred and I didn't like him. Um- and what was the question?

In the following quote, the speaker is becoming aware of her lapses. She has just been speaking about running into current members of the NT in reply to a question about violation of her personal boundaries in the NT, when she says:

I get like, almost spacey you know, thinking about it. It's like, cause I really don't spend a lot of time thinking about this stuff anymore so it's, it's a little strange.

Interviewer: And I know it can be difficult and that's//

I mean it's like you know - -

Interviewer: I understand that//

It makes you nervous and I have no idea why.

This speaker, and another former NTer both referred to this type of "spacey" feeling in each of their second interviews, held the day following the GAI. At that time the speaker above apologized for "babbling" during the GAI, and said she didn't understand why she had been so incoherent the previous day. The other speaker noted that she had blocked out many things which she hadn't mentioned during the GAI, notably what she referred to as "the hard times." While these post-interview comments are not in the AAI or GAI protocols, they are interesting to note.

Three other speakers showed evidence of "flooding" of memories during the GAI interview, with comments like: "Oh gosh, so many memories…" This flooding seemed to create a sense of being overwhelmed thus presenting an obstacle to maintaining a coherent discourse about their experience – they seem then, as Solomon and George (1999) put it in relation to disorganized children, "helpless to control their own narratives" (p. 18). Bowlby (1980) discusses this flooding in terms of a "deactivated" and segregated system that breaks through into consciousness from its generally "excluded" state.

Extreme behavioral responses:

Almost half of the NT study participants people spoke of having suicidal feelings after they left. None of the GPers did so. Celia described her feelings thus:

> *I also even felt suicidal at some points after leaving them because um- you know, there is a sense of- there was a sense of incredible loss and hopelessness and emptiness, loneliness, you know.*

The following speaker describes a range of extreme behavioral responses in the period immediately after he left:

> *I became like, very reckless, you know, almost suicidal…It made me drink, you know, which I've come out of. I still drink but I don't like, get crazy. You know I don't go out binging, I used to go out binging and pass out in the bathroom, you know … that kind of stuff. I guess it did, it did for a while, it made me, like, really reckless, I just did really crazy stuff, you know, um just basically trying to get killed, you know.*

Another NTer reports continuing efforts to try to organize herself and her understanding of her experience. When asked about her wishes for her future, her first wish (quoted also in a previous chapter) is that:

> *I would love to get rid of that voice that goes, "You're not performing" you know, I hear it all the time and I would give anything to get that – you know, it's ok to have weaknesses. It's okay not to push yourself until you want to die to try to have growth, development. Maybe I've got as much as I'm gonna get, but see, they always tell you that you never stop growing and developing. You have to keep pushing to keep continuing and I can't get that out of my head. I would love for that to go away. I'd give- I'd go into a booth and put electrodes in my head if I thought it would get rid of that.*

Although the discourse examples shown above are generally incoherent, this does not mean that these speakers were *globally* incoherent, as, for example, is seen in the Cannot Classify category. Two NTers *were* categorized as Cannot Classify, but the remaining ten were not. The following speaker, for example, has clear, coherent speech when discussing his recent Democratic Party involvement, in contradistinction to several incoherent passages related to his NT membership:

> *Yes, I'm very involved with the Democratic party. I'm on the executive committee of the independent neighborhood Democrats, which is a [Place*

3] neighborhood Democratic club. I am a past president of the [Place 2] Independent Democrats for two and a half years. Still support them, by the way. In fact, I went to their dinner two weeks ago, and I have a lot of contacts- a lot of people I still see in that group, so yes, I'm very involved in Democratic party politics. The Democratic party is my political home right now.

Although no GPers were classified as Unresolved/disorganized, for the sake of completeness and comparison, I shall include here some of the few examples of GP speech that fit to the U/d markers listed above. The first example concerned the incident mentioned earlier where another GPer had frightened this GP speaker. As she discusses whether the incident still affects her now, she states:

I- except with talking about it right now, I mean, it, it still bothers me, and it bothers me for him, you know, I, he, his, no, but other than, no.

She becomes suddenly dysfluent, and is unable to finish the sentence. Another speaker, describing the same general issue, and how it was discussed in the group as a whole, says:

They [the GP] didn't know how to respond to this irrational – emotional – um presence.

In this example she is using ominous language referring to a "presence" and is unable to describe the problem clearly. However earlier in the passage she is compassionate and forgiving (a marker of secure attachment) of the persons causing her fear, stating that:

I guess they had problems, you know, from the get go, they're troubled you know, being raised and stuff like that […] maybe not the proper attention they should have had.

Neither of these transcripts had high enough scores (above five) on either individual U/d passages, or in the transcript as a whole, to qualify as Unresolved/disorganized.

While GPers did not, as a rule, experience trauma in the GP, they did all eventually leave their involvement with the GP. Thus all their discussions of leaving could be examined for U/d markers. Such markers were not found. In fact most seemed to have typically secure expressions of regret, of valuing the experience, and being

balanced or rueful in discussing leaving. Their speech maintained coherence and they rarely lost track of the interview context. For example:

> *Yeah, like um—the last round- last time I was contacted to talk about database management questions- I was invited to be on a committee and I declined just 'cause of feeling- having too many irons in the fire already and that made me unhappy. I mean, I would have liked to have done that.*

Another speaker replies to a question asking about her current relationship with the GP (which she has left):

> *Hmm, yeah, I just think it's like, it would be like we're neighbors but we, and we don't even need a big fence between our yards {{laughs}} you know, we're just, we're just co-existing, we're not, we don't really have a relationship.*

Her response is fresh, balanced, humorous and coherent, all markers of discourse indicating a secure/autonomous state of mind with respect to the experience with the GP.

We see then that the response of NTers' to an intense, exhausting, chronically traumatizing relationship with the NT, with no-one outside the group from whom to get feedback, was to disorganize, resulting in a dissociative split between the cognitive and emotional parts of the brain. The GAI is a means of observing this split after the fact by analyzing language markers demonstrating "leaks" or slips in the monitoring of reasoning or discourse. As in PTSD, the experience remains "unmetabolized", as vivid and immediate as when it happened and continues to absorb the speaker in its emotional impact. However this is not all that happens. If it were, we would be merely observing a dissociation of the cognitive and emotional parts of the brain as in "simple" PTSD. What differentiates this phenomena from PTSD is that it is *relational* in essence. The GAI is also a means to observe this relational impact.

There are ongoing discussions in the attachment literature (Fearon 2004; Turton, Hughes, Fonagy, and Fainman 2004) regarding the relationship of PTSD to attachment disorganization[79]. Bowlby proposed a concept of segregated systems, which Lyons-Ruth

[79] This discussion includes showing similarities in the incoherence of discourse of individuals with each diagnosis – largely in the realm of subjects become "absorbed" and thus failing to monitor discourse.

and Jacobitz (1999 p. 55) summarize as “multiple, conflicting, and unintegrated models of past traumatic experiences [which] are maintained in segregated areas of consciousness” (p. 550). Bowlby’s concept of internal working models—internalized representational models of dyadic attachment relationships—is important here. For example, an organized secure, open, flexible and responsive relationship with an attachment figure translates to a single and coherent internal working model of openness, flexibility and responsiveness within an individual’s mental state. Lyons-Ruth and Jacobitz shed light on this in regard to disorganized attachment:

> What is represented is not only the individual’s way of participating in the relationship—for example, as the coercively controlled child—but the entire dyadic relational pattern of controlled child and controlling parent. The more the parent must respond to his or her own need to regulate fearful arousal rather than to the child’s states, the more skewed these relational polarities become, and the more discontinuous and self-contradictory are the internalized models that accommodate both relational possibilities (p. 548).

Main (1991) further clarifies this concept: “Bowlby’s concept of multiple models refers not to the diversity of models of differing parts or aspects of reality […], but rather to multiple and implicitly contradictory models of the *same* aspect of reality” (p. 132). These “discontinuous and self-contradictory” internal representations can result in “conflicting and unintegrated behaviors” (p. 550) and “may be reactivated unpredictably in […] ways that are not monitored by an overarching, integrated, and coherent […] state of mind” (p. 550).

Thus, it is the quality of the *relationship* in which the disorganized attachment has occurred that is internalized. In “simple” PTSD there may be no relationship at all—for instance in the case of a trauma such as a natural disaster or accident. However, in relational situations of trauma such as hostage situations, domestic violence, cults or torture, a relationship is at the heart of the trauma situation. In PTSD we see that the cognitive and emotional “representational formats” (and perhaps others—see Fearon 2004) become dissociated. But this is not enough to explain the dynamics of cultic attachment. A further step happens: the disorganized attachment relationship with the cult leader, or group as proxy, becomes internalized as a new internal working model within

the follower. It may be that the follower becomes disorganized first at the level of "simple" trauma (through the experience of fright without solution as set up by the cult) thus beginning the process of dissociating the cognitive and emotional systems. This then provides a "window of opportunity" through which the relationship with the cult becomes internalized. With the follower in a state of confusion and disorientation, the cult leader can insinuate the group language and norms as the new interpretations of the follower's felt experience (since the follower is unable to make such interpretations themselves, given their disoriented state). This then becomes the cognitive realm in which the follower remains and it is with these cognitions that they interpret their fearful, dissociated and hyper aroused emotional signals. This internalization results in internal dialogue, or self-talk, that takes the "voice" of the cult, telling the follower how to act, think, and feel. Such internal dialogue is unlikely to be observed in victims of "simple" PTSD.

Thus there is both a disconnection between actual felt experience (stored in episodic or implicit memory) and cognitive interpretations (stored in explicit or semantic memory) of that experience. In relation to child development, Bowlby (1980) described how attachment figures can contribute to this disconnection in directing the child's cognitive processes about their experiences:

> One of the more intractable forms [of the disconnection of the systems…] results from a parent implicitly or explicitly forbidding a child, perhaps under threat of sanctions, to consider any mode of construing either his parents or himself in ways other than those directed by the parent. Not only is the child, and later the adolescent and adult, unable then to reappraise or modify his representational models of parent or self, but he is forbidden also to communicate to others any information or ideas he may have that would present his parents in a less favourable light and himself in a more favourable one.
>
> In general, it seems likely, the more persistent the disorder from which a person suffers the greater is the degree of disconnection present and the more complete is the ban he feels against reappraising his models (p.249)

This reflects the mismatch between experience and cognition which is a consistent feature of cultic processes, with the cult determining and directing construals about the

leader, the group, and the group member. This process, which often relies on deception and obfuscation (Coser and Coser 1979; Lalich 2004; Lalich and Tobias 2006; Lifton 1961; Singer and Lalich 1995), serves to further disorient the follower and generates, through the process of disorganized attachment, a segregated internal working model of the follower-leader/cult relationship.

This new internalized but unintegrated working model does not erase prior working models. It does, however, exist in a segregated area of consciousness, as suggested by Bowlby in his concept of segregated systems. This idea closely parallels Lifton's observations on interviewing persons who had been subject to coercive persuasion in totalist systems. He termed this effect "doubling" (Lifton 1961; 1986). Similarly Hassan (1988) refers to the dual self, and others refer to a pseudo-personality or cult personality (Lalich and Tobias 1994/2006). What is key is the fact that multiple internal working models exist.

That such a relationship is internalized is seen in some NTers' discourse in certain of the U/d markers such as expressions of feeling causal in the abuse, of the failure to deny that the abuse occurred, and in other markers, as well as in ongoing, yet unconscious, use of NT language. Unless resolved, such self-talk (or the internal working model of the cult relationship) remains internalized in the follower, sometimes, as seen in the speakers in this study, for decades.

The types of discourse and language that are used by the group, and its internalization and reflection in followers' post-exit speech, is the subject of the next chapter.

Variation in alternate U/d attachment classifications and questions for future research

The variation in alternate classifications (secondary to the U/d classification) of NTers is also of interest, and points to important areas for further study. This involves both the impact on a person's attachment and the dynamics of attachment in cults, as well as individual variations in trajectories through the cult. Given the relationship set up between the cult and its followers, as indicated, particularly by the GPA results on the compliance and anxious dependency scales, it is predictable that cult members may tend

to be generally more preoccupied in their current state of mind regarding their attachment to the group. The enforced dependency, the creation of an attachment figure in the person of the cult leader (or group as proxy), and the eliciting of attachment behaviors through threat, would all tend to foster an anxious dependency, or clinginess, as is emblematic of the preoccupied. Thus a future and interesting task would be to further understand the relationship of the U/d classification to E classifications in general, and E3 (fearfully preoccupied by traumatic events) classifications in particular. Does the cult situation itself create both a disorganized attachment as well as a preoccupied, dependent one? And is this preoccupation key to the strength of the bond?

Flowing from this, it may also be that certain people are indeed, more subject to the dynamics of cultic retention processes. Given Troy and Sroufe's (1987) work on childhood bullying, where the avoidant (dismissing) bullied the ambivalent (preoccupied), but not the secure, and where the secure stepped up to protect the ambivalent from being bullied, perhaps those who are preoccupied with regard to attachment *prior* to encountering a cult, would be less resilient to the authoritarian dynamics of the group. Again, however, it is not merely internal dispositions that account for cult membership, but the *interaction* of these dispositions with the strength and type of situation.

Another prior attachment status that may be a pre-disposing factor for cult retention is that of Unresolved/Disorganized due to earlier unresolved loss, trauma or abuse. Those who are Unresolved/disorganized, have, by definition, already experienced dissociation of thought processes. Research shows that the previously dissociated are more susceptible to later dissociation in a situation of trauma or loss (van der Kolk 1996a). Thus it may be easier to induce fright without solution in such persons.

It may also be that persons with certain prior attachment statuses respond differently once in the group, as is suggested by Lifton's (1961) foundational work on thought reform. Along with his work, others have seen similar variations in how people experience and come through totalist systems (Lalich 2004; Levi 1986; Schein 1961; Stein 2001). Do those with dismissing prior attachment status become the "victimizing lieutenants" of the group and rise more easily to leadership positions? Perhaps after they

leave they are less ready to examine the experience and are quick to consign it, unexamined, to the past? Lifton referred to these persons as “apparent resisters”. Are the formerly preoccupied (Lifton’s “apparent converts”) more likely to become lower-level members, subject to greater levels of abuse? Once they get out, do they have more difficulty in resolving the experience, and experience longer-term impacts? And do the secure, as is perhaps suggested by Lifton (1961), become the “obviously confused”, going along with the group norms and changing at least some of their beliefs, but once they leave, working actively to resolve their confusion by trying to understand what happened to them, demonstrating, not immunity to coercive persuasion, but, perhaps, greater resiliency and a quicker recovery? In other words, the “obviously confused” engaged in a process of metacognition[80]—thinking about how their thought processes had been shaped—in order to understand how these ego dystonic beliefs had emerged, and creating a coherent narrative of their experience.

It is important to note here that the “obviously confused” while eventually coherent, and likely secure, *were not immune* to the brainwashing experiences they encountered. Bowlby’s application of control systems theory helps us to understand this theoretically:

> Viewed in an evolutionary perspective, it is evident that variation and natural selection have resulted in each organism’s physiological systems being so constructed that they operate effectively in the environment to which the species has become adapted and that they will become stressed or fail in others (1988 p. 164).

A totalistic or cultic environment is a strong situation (Smith 1992) creating fright without solution and thus is outside of the environment of adaptedness even for those with a predisposition of secure attachment. Further:

> Competence in resolving issues in one developmental period does not predict later competence in a linear deterministic way; rather, competence at one period is thought to make the individual broadly adapted to the environment and prepared for competence in the next period (Egeland, Carlson, and Sroufe 1993, p. 518).

[80] This concept of metacognitive knowledge and its relationship to coherent discourse is an important aspect of coding for U/d discourse. See Main (1999) for a discussion of its relationship to single versus multiple models of attachment.

But outside of an environment of adaptedness even the "broadly adapted" coping systems of the secure may fail, resulting in disorganization. Therefore, secure attachment does not necessarily offer blanket protective benefits when confronted with a totalist system.

Finally, might we expect the formerly Unresolved/disorganized to have the worst long-term outcomes and the most difficulty resolving the experience after leaving? An attachment perspective may be able to help untangle these variations in the interaction of the person with the situation of coercive persuasion within a totalist structure.

The Leader's attachment status

Any discussion of disorganized attachment would be incomplete without an attempt to understand the other party to the dyadic relationship (i.e. that between the follower and the group as the embodiment of the leader). It is not generally feasible to access cult leaders in order to administer the AAI, and I did not attempt to do so for this study. Theoretically the GAI would not be applicable to the leader as the group functions as essentially an extension of the leader[81], and thus to administer the GAI to him would be like asking an individual to report on his attachment to himself.

However, it is highly likely that the leader would have an attachment status of U/d or CC if given the AAI. Attachment disorganization predicts "controlling behavior with caregivers, aggressive and fearful peer relationships" in childhood, as well as "elevated psychopathology during adolescence" (Lyons-Ruth p. 550). Further, Lyons-Ruth and Jacobitz report that marital violence[82] "is associated with a constellation of adult characteristics that are also related to disorganized/unresolved attachment relationships" including "intense abandonment anxiety" and "controlling behavior toward the partner" (p. 545). While there is no evidence that Newman has been physically violent, the

[81] Following Arendt, the Party is posited as the embodiment of the Leader: "The Leader represents the movement in a way totally different from all ordinary party leaders; he claims personal responsibility for every action, deed, or mideed, committed by any member or functionary in his official capacity. This total responsibility is the most important organizational aspect of the so-called Leader principle, according to which every functionary is not only appointed by the Leader but is his walking embodiment, and every order is supposed to emanate from this one ever-present source" (Arendt 1948/1979 p. 375).

[82] Although not a cult relationship, controlling domestic violence has many similar qualities as described by Boulette and Anderson (1986) and Vaughn (Vaughn 2000)

combination of intense abandonment anxiety and highly controlling relational behaviors seems to fit him well, (as well as fitting the general profile of cult leaders, see, for example: Lalich and Tobias 2006, or Adorno's 1944/1982 description of the authoritarian personality as being "exploitatively dependent"). West and George (1999) cite Dutton in postulating abandonment anxiety as "a core feature of the abusive personality." I refer to the result of this type of abandonment anxiety on the part of such leaders as "seeking a guaranteed attachment." In other words, they seek to control others in order to enforce attachment to themselves.

Another attachment status that may apply to these types of leaders is Cannot Classify (Sroufe, personal communication). Lyons-Ruth and Jacobitz (1999) also note that Cannot Classify or E3 (preoccupied/overwhelmed by trauma), are attachment statuses found "with increased frequency among both perpetrators and victims" of marital violence.

I would further suggest that a subcategory of dismissing (dismissing the impact of attachment experiences on personal development) would be likely to be found in such persons. Or in the case of Cannot Classify classifications the following subcategories would be first dismissing (with derogation of attachments) followed by E2 (preoccupied, angry/conflicted). The dismissing subcategory would predict the domineering bullying and aggression seen in most cult leaders.

Newman has created an organization in which he is the undisputed authority and leader. He is surrounded by both secrecy and intense loyalty. In public appearances "he's got this wonderful throne, everyone else has the hard chairs. He's got someone giving him a drink. He's so special, and everybody else you know, has to sort of adore him," as Gillian reported. And in private his followers, as reported in interviews for this study, take care of his needs, from dusting to shopping to tending to him at his vacation home. According to another interviewee:

> That man has got to have money coming out of his ears and I know he has property and I know he has yachts and, and that's not right cause he has all of that off of the work and sweat of a lot of little people that didn't kn-, that didn't authorize their money to be going for him (Myrna)

Financial gain for the leader is often seen in cults, but I would suggest that this is actually a by-product of their fundamental motivation: that of seeking guaranteed attachments. The need to control others as a means of guaranteeing attachment is a consistent feature of cult leaders – certainly not all of them seek to increase wealth as a result of their domination of followers[83]. But of course, once a leader has succeeded in controlling group members' attachment to him or herself, then many other benefits can accrue: sex, financial wealth and political power among them.

Newman has succeeded in surrounding himself with these guaranteed attachments. That he is "greedy" for them is evidenced by his most intimate circle, as discussed in his own writing, *The Women I Live With* (1990), as well as these women's declarations to him (Daren et al.). And this inner circle is buttressed and amplified by the other layers of his organization, all of which point towards and support him, perhaps feeding back to him a kind of internal working model of controlled and guaranteed attachment.

The question of causal direction

How can we know that the NTers were not all previously Unresolved/disorganized and thus either went looking for another disorganized relationship, or were particularly susceptible to the dynamics of cult retention by means of dissociative processes? This study is not adequate to state a causal sequence. And as indicated above, it is possible that persons with certain types of pre-existing attachment statuses might, indeed, be more vulnerable to cultic processes, whilst others may be more resilient. However, this study can be used as a starting point for future work. It has shown, to begin with, (and as predicted theoretically) the preponderance of U/d attachment found in ex-members of one totalist group and the lack of such in members of an open, non-totalist group. With this information future research that administered the AAI along with the GAI would enrich the data presented here and perhaps provide more clues as to these processes. Of course, ideally, a longitudinal study would look at AAIs earlier in life, and then later administer

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[83] I am particularly aware of this from my own experience with a leader who lived modestly and at times refused financially beneficial opportunities and offerings (Stein 2002).

GAIs to those persons who subsequently had intense or extreme group involvements. Questions of cause and effect could then be more clearly addressed than in the present study.

Researchers working on existing longitudinal adult attachment projects would be in an ideal position to continue investigating these questions. Sadly the incidence of highly controlling relationships, whether in one-on-one intimate relationships, or in totalist groups, is, I believe, frequent enough that such a study should be possible with existing cohorts being followed with the AAI. The real problem in following up, however, is *access* to the individual whilst in such relationships, as this would likely be restricted by the controlling figure. However, given time, if and when the individual exits from the controlling relationship, the study could again be taken up. The strength of both the AAI and the GAI is in their ability to look at relationships retrospectively, whilst assessing the interviewee's *current* state of mind regarding those relationships. This gives us a window into the ongoing impact of a specific relationship, which is invaluable in investigating the long-term effects of membership in totalist groups.

With attachment theory as an investigative lens, we can also make strong assumptions about the impact of experiences in such groups *at the time of the actual experience* based on the retrospective accounts of ex-members. In other words, we can reliably ascertain whether persons were subjected to dissociating and disorganizing processes during group membership. This therefore may give us a tool (that has been held to be reliable and valid in other research contexts) to evaluate whether brainwashing, thought reform, coercive persuasion, or mind control, as it is variously termed, took place in a given person's past experience.

Conclusion

The research presented here has shown that 11 of 12 NTers had an unresolved/disorganized state of mind with respect to attachment to the NT. This compared to no indication of disorganization (with respect to their group membership) in the 11 GPers studied. The GPers did not show any attachment bond to the GP, but rather a loose, affiliative bond. Social structure therefore does appear to have an impact on

thought processes as observed in responses to the GAI. This impact involves (among other things) a long-term and ongoing inability to give a coherent account of experiences of loss, trauma or abuse associated with group membership. The long-term emotional, cognitive and behavioral effects of involvement in controlling group relationships have been addressed by Herman (1992), Zablocki (2001b), Singer (1995), Lalich (2006) and others and parallel both the persistence and long-term (generally negative) effect of U/d attachment status seen in the attachment literature—see for example: Dozier (1999) and Lyons-Ruth and Jacobitz (1999). The current study therefore connects these two literatures and theoretical frameworks. It confirms the value of pursuing attachment theory as a useful framework for investigating totalist groups as suggested by Zablocki (1997), Main (2000) and Stein (2001).

There is an enormous amount of rich theoretical and empirical work available in the field of attachment that can be fruitfully applied to the study of the essentially *relational* processes at work in the vast array of cults that exist in contemporary society. We now have the possibility of examining this disorganized trauma bond after the fact and noting its persistence over time. Attachment theory clarifies the mechanics of disorganized attachment at both the relational and neurobiological levels and can thus help to open the black box of brainwashing.

With a deeper understanding of the processes at work, perhaps clinical workers can apply the knowledge gained in attachment research to also help former members of cultic groups to resolve their experiences of trauma, abuse and loss. Without such assistance these individuals carry forward difficult and unresolved histories that are often further obfuscated by stigmatization processes once they re-enter the non-cult world.

The concept of creating a relationship of disorganized attachment to the cult also helps to explain why cults and other totalist systems share so many structural features: namely, the predictable interference with alternate attachment relationships, and other forms of structural isolation that are ideologically enforced with an absolute ideology. Alternate safe haven attachment relationships *must* be disabled if an environment of fright without solution is going be effectively implemented. This environment, to which we are not well adapted, then creates a strong situation that overrides normally adaptive

human responses. If effectively implemented, and thus barring access to alternate safe haven escape hatches, disorganized attachment ensues among those caught within such systems. This results in a strong attachment bond, and a follower who is cognitively disorganized and disoriented, and thus ready to accept opportunistic interpretations of their experience. With these elements in place, leaders are in a position to deploy hyper credulous and loyal agents.

In this chapter I have tried to show that, as opposed to a non-cultic group, a cultic group using processes of coercive persuasion does not simply strip the cult member of old belief structures and attachments (Lifton 1961; Schein 1961), but also disables the member's own ability to make accurate cognitive meanings of their sensory emotional inputs. In the absence of that ability a new interpretation of their felt experience can be offered, which is not then subject to critical evaluation, as their critical, cognitive capacity to analyze the relational situation is now effectively compromised. Peripheral rather than central routes of processing can now be engaged to further inculcate the ideology of the group. This part of the process is the topic of the next chapter.

Chapter 12

Total Ideology or Conversations for Common Sense?

> *How is the mass mind controlled? By distorting reality. How is reality distorted? By isolating people. How are people isolated? By locking them up physically and mentally. Who is locked up in bourgeois society? The masses are locked up in bourgeois society. […]*
>
> *Our feelings of closeness to other people; [sic] to our world, is destroyed and in its place is put an alienated mistrustful, negative, helpless, dependent outlook which addicts us to needing the bosses to take care of us. They destroy our mind;[sic] our sense of mass power, and then we are dependent on them. They are the pushers who hook us on bourgeois individualism and then make us work for them to feed our habit. They constantly produce chaos and confusion. They brainwash by this technique. They destroy our sense of reality by generating confusion and chaos. In such a state the masses become dependent on authority to give them security. The fascists are always available.* (Fred Newman, Power and Authority, 1974 p. 128, 132)

Introduction

The NT's totalist structure—with its charismatic authoritarian leader, steep hierarchy, rigidly-bounded inner core, and internal and external isolation of group members from alternate attachment relationships—creates a condition of fright without solution for its members, while presenting the NT as a safe haven. In the previous chapter I have looked at how language, as observed and analyzed with the Group Attachment Interview, reflects members' mental processes, namely the disorganized thought processes that occur in the condition of fright without solution. Thus the structure of the totalist group along with associated processes of coercive persuasion appears to result, many years later, in most ex-members being unable to sustain a fully coherent narrative of their experience. As I have shown, this is not so for former members of an open, non-totalist group. This is an application of discourse analysis based in a neurobiological view that states that unresolved trauma has lasting impacts in the storage of memory of the trauma (and lack

of integration into explicit memory) which is reflected in the discourse of the person affected.

Whorf's linguistic relativity hypothesis looks at language from a different angle, which, to put it simply, states that diverse languages influence the thought processes of those who speak them through patterns of grammar, structure and vocabulary (Gumperz and Levinson 1996). The thesis of this study is that language both influences *and* reflects thought processes while it also influences, and is influenced by, social structure. In this chapter I will argue that this influence or shaping function occurs in the NT through a process that Habermas (1984) refers to as *concealed strategic communication* where "at least one of the participants is acting strategically, while he deceives other participants" (p. 294) into believing he is acting or communicating in a straightforward manner, as if he were oriented towards achieving mutual understanding. In the GP, on the other hand, we see elements of what Habermas terms *communicative action* which is communication that is actually oriented towards mutual understanding for the purpose of coordinating action. While this type of communication may sometimes be clumsily executed in the GP domain[84], nonetheless, overall the data suggest a picture of communicative action rather than the concealed strategic communication of the NT. I will discuss both the content and forms of communication to demonstrate these differences.

Establishing a different language, or different meanings of language, is one of the basic elements of a total worldview within a totalist system (Berger and Luckmann 1966; Lifton 1961; 1986; Mannheim 1936/1985). Zablocki (2001b) emphasizes the manipulation of language as a fundamental element of the process of retaining members of totalist groups. Schein (1961) stated that language (rather than physical coercion) was such a core part of coercive persuasion that some foreign prisoners "forgot" they knew Chinese in order to resist the process. Each of these scholars' theories, along with accompanying empirical illustrations of discourse within the NT compared to the GP would be worth a chapter. However limitations of space require focusing on certain key elements.

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[84] The adverse effect of email communication, for instance, was cited multiple times by GP interviewees as the source of misunderstandings and generally unpleasant and hostile communication episodes.

In studying the interview transcripts and original NT and GP documents, and observing discourse during my field work, certain themes emerged which reflected Habermas' concepts. I attempted to operationalize these themes into the functions served by language, and the methods by which these functions were achieved. See Table 12 below. A number of features of communication stood out: language as a factor in creating and maintaining dissociation and confusion; the type and structure of the ideology being communicated (total or particular): its reflection of the totalist structure and its use in justifying it; loaded language as described by Lifton (1961); and language geared at peripheral or central route processing. These factors interrelate and support each other to maintain isolation of the follower.

Table 12.
Functions and methods of discourse

	Strategic communication: Newman Tendency	**Communicative action: Green Party**
Function	Maintain dissociation	Integration of sensory and cognitive processing
	Reflect and justify totalist structure – totalist ideology	Reflect and implement democratic structure – "common sense"
Method	Loaded language	"Fresh" language
	Peripheral route processing	Central route processing

This chapter concludes with a look at particular forms of discourse of members after leaving their respective groups. It highlights the attempts of NTers to reintegrate their disorganized thought processes and reclaim agency over their narratives of their experiences in the NT.

Truth or Lies? Why deception matters: The creation and maintenance of dissociation

A principle function of language use in totalist systems is to shore up the dissociation created by the situation of fright without solution. The group or system provides interpretations of the individual's experience that do not, in fact, match or accurately

describe the actual felt experience and aim to distort or replace the individual's own interpretation. As Asch (1952) said:

> one distinction of importance is between actions [or speech acts – AS] that aim to develop potentialities for thinking and feeling and those that aim to rob persons and groups of the possibility of seeing their situation and of acting according to their needs and insights (p. 620).

The concealed strategic communication practiced in totalist systems aims to "rob persons" of their ability to correctly identify the causes of their felt conditions. As Arendt (1948/1979) put it: "The aim of totalitarian education has never been to instill convictions, but to destroy the capacity to form any" (p. 468). This is in opposition of her concept of "common sense", where persons in conversation together grasp a collective sense of reality (Arendt 1958/1998). I observed three ways in which this attempt to maintain dissociation (and thus destroy the capacity to form convictions) took place in the NT: theoretical and therapeutic injunctions to desist from integrating experience and discourse; the pre-emption of articulation of problems by labeling such discussion with thought-terminating clichés; and through the management and deflection of questions about the group.

Newman systematically develops the idea that there is no need to reflect one's experience in conversation about that experience thus decoupling felt experience from discourse about it (and thus preventing social, shared reflection about that experience). He describes social therapy's role in this:

> In an important sense, then, social therapy is a way to help the group members to have their conversation be "about nothing." This is not in any way to deny the complex and painful feelings. It is rather to deny the correspondence between those feelings and what is said. Indeed, it is to deny that there must or should be such a correspondence. (Newman and Holzman 1997 p. 125)

Denying a correspondence between feelings and speech about such feelings would seem to fit with Asch's (1952) statement in that such denial would reduce the client's ability to see their situation and have agency within it. Asch further states that, "we need to know when we are dealing with a person who is fleeing from fact and truth and when we are dealing with the opposite attitude, that of trying to reach a true understanding" (p. 20).

Social therapy flees from, and indeed, aims to avoid truth altogether, as discussed in this quote:

> The key to transforming conversation (in this case emotive conversation) into performed conversation is to support the conversationalists (the group members) to abandon the realist assumption of truth (or object) referentiality in favor of the activity of performance (Newman and Holzman 1997, p. 116).

Thus in Newman's worldview the goal of understanding one's feelings , or of seeking an accurate understanding of reality, becomes moot: rather, one is to "abandon the realist assumption of truth."

The NT pre-empted a person's analysis of their felt experience by labeling discomfort or disagreement with the NT with the frequently used phrase "being conflicted", or with other uses of the word "conflict". Several interviewees used this term when describing times they were struggling with negative feelings about the group, group discipline, or trying to leave. This phrase was used in a "loaded" manner as a "thought-terminating cliché" (Lifton 1961: see below) serving to block and prevent further discussion of the specific concerns of the group member, rather than as an opening to explore these issues. One of the livelier sections of an electronic forum run by a former NT member (Ex-IWP.org) is titled "Favorite Newmanite Lingo" where individuals posted (sometimes humorous) lists of NT phrases. As one entry read: "My all time favorite: "you're conflicted," and YES I was."

This language continues to permeate some former members' discourse. Grace described how she was "more conflict-ridden and confused toward the end." And Juliet explained that:

> some people were oppositional about it [being in social therapy], but that's because they wouldn't work on their issues, they didn't want to deal with their conflicts, or you know, these were the words that we use about people.

Juliet also described how some people had "political conflicts regarding the money—who paid, who didn't pay, who's late…" Any disagreement with the group was labeled as "conflict", and therefore internal to the group member, and thus something to be worked

through in order to continue to "build" (another word in the NT lexicon) with, and "give" to, the group. In this way the NT labeled and provided a construal (to use Bowlby's term) of the follower's discomfort, and thus neatly did away with it by deflecting it back onto the follower.

Similarly, questions were carefully managed and reframed. Bernice described interactions with her social therapist:

> I question a lot of things and I'm not shy about it. I quest- when I would question him about things- that I felt confused about- and this was just a consistent thing that went on the whole time I was involved over there, he would - he would address my questions in a- in a manner in which- I felt like he answered the questions, but then it wasn't. A few minutes later, I was back again confused. So he was doing some kind of spin thing with me- some psychological thing where I wound up just- maybe even more confused than before I asked the question.

Louisa had a similar experience:

> [T]hey always spin everything- they spin everything. You can't just- I noticed something. When I was up in City 2- you know how we just have a conversation, we meet and we talk and I get to know you- you don't do that with those people. They're always in control in this weird way, but you don't have conversations with them because they'll, they give you that look and then they start to spin it and they never- they answer a question with a question constantly, you see. […] I didn't realize this is what they were doing, and that's very intimidating because you do feel insane. I mean, do you know what I mean? I mean yeah, it's like- if you ask anything, they ask a question. I'm like, why the hell do they do that?

As Gillian said, in looking back at her experience:

> If you try to get clarification they say it's not something you can understand. You just stop asking. You just do. You end up by accepting that being confused is not a bad thing because there's really not anything to know, there's no truth. Anything you bring up from your own background is deconstructed. […] After a while things that seemed preposterous seem normal (personal communication).

In the absence of social confirmation, as Asch's (1951) famous "majority effect" lines experiments illustrated so well, it is only too easy to cease giving credence to your own sense perceptions, especially when—as Sherif (1937) showed in his autokinetic effect experiments—those sense perceptions have an element of uncertainty to them.

In the GP, disagreements and feelings of discomfort were dealt with in more or less direct ways. There was no need to make construals of people's experience for them as no one was in the business of "concealed strategic communication". For example, when the difficulty arose with the GPer who frightened some GP women, this was discussed openly. Even though two of these women left over this, it was because the group failed to resolve the situation adequately for them to feel safe, despite talking about the situation with all parties involved. Neither woman felt confused, or that someone had tried to manipulate them, nor was their discomfort turned back on them as if it was simply their own internal conflict. Their feelings and perceptions of threat were taken seriously, and an attempt, though failed, was made to address the situation: "You know, several people, I mean we even sent old Sol after [him] you know, thinking maybe he could sit down with the old fatherly kind of [approach]" (Sue).

There were other open conflicts in the GP, of course, and sometimes these were not handled well, and sometimes they took a personal turn. As Terry describes her experience:

> There was rebellion- even though one of the tenets of the Green party is appreciating the female gender- I mean, that's a basic tenet- a strong woman is not nice and it's not a good thing, so men- they were all men as far as I can recall- oh no, well there was that one woman- but they had irrational enmity towards me. And so there was an e-mail list that people would post to and it was mostly just people disaffected who had an inordinate amount of, of influence on the day to day life of the- so it was like just a place where people could dump um- whatever vitriol they had and somehow that would have meaning. So when I would take an action- on- mostly when I became chair […] when a decision was made they would decide that that wasn't a good decision, even though it was a consensus decision, it would have be changed, you know, because people in the, in the listserv didn't like it. […] So I guess that's where most of the um- the feeling of rejection came in is towards the end when there was- it felt like people thought- or misunderstood my desires in wanting to accomplish work and not just spin our wheels, so rejecting my style perhaps.

Even though this GPer was upset with people who opposed her in the group, she saw it as a power struggle, and an issue of differing styles, rather than as an attempt to confuse or obfuscate things:

> I'm used to people agreeing on something and then it's pretty much- that's how it's gonna be implemented and I've come to understand that in government and probably in parties, things operate just a little differently. There might be- need to be more latitude. I don't believe that I was being hard and fast on anything, but what I did try to do was lessen the influence of people who weren't repre- elected representatives. This listserv had no place in any- if ten thousand people across the state voted for Nader and that's what got us major party status, then why- they can't be represented by fifty people on a listserv, so by trying to lessen their influence, I alienated the people who were on that listserv, and they turned out to be more powerful than me (Terry).

So while there were (and are) differences and struggles for power in the GP, these are largely open struggles that do not generally unfold through a process of covert manipulation.

Total or particular ideology? The reflection and justification of the totalist structure

Within the NT, the total ideology is a key part of the enforced construal of individuals' felt experiences. It is both introduced into the mental space created by inducing dissociation (and consequent confusion and disorganization) in the follower, and it then serves to continually shore up this dissociation by justifying the isolating structure. The unitary, total ideology is the single interpretation that is allowed. No alternate construals are necessary when a total ideology exists to explain everything in the past, the present and the future.

Arendt defines a total ideology as being one which claims to: "explain all historical happenings, the total explanation of the past, the total knowledge of the present, and the reliable prediction of the future" (1948/1979 p. 470). She further states that it is comprised of two elements: propaganda and indoctrination. While there is an overlap between the two, in her definition, propaganda is generally directed at the outside world and is used for the purpose of recruitment while indoctrination is targeted to existing group members and serves the purpose of retention. The total ideology and the totalist system "establishes and safeguards the fictitious world through consistent lying," (Arendt 1948/1979, p. 383) (in the case of the NT: hiding the reality of the enormous amounts of free labor and money "given" by group members, the manipulation of personal

relationships, and so forth). In this section I discuss five elements of totalist ideology: the structure of the ideological belief system; its content as the only and universal explanation; its role as propaganda and as indoctrination; and its use of language to justify the socially isolating structure of totalism.

The structure of totalist ideology

The structure of the total ideology reflects the structure of the totalist system (in a Durkheimian analysis). This is illustrated by Martin (2002)[85] who hypothesizes that the degree of consensus correlates with the clarity of power (defined as the "inability to conceive of the possibility of alternatives to the status quo" p. 874). The interconnected tightness of the web of beliefs in a group correlates with the presence of cognitive authority.

Martin states that a high degree of consensus reflects in a Durkheimian manner, the clarity of power structure. In the NT this consensus is seen in the lack of discussion, varied views, or opposition to Newman's views discerned in the course of this study. As Serrette (1987) reports:

> The IWP has been chaired by Newman since its inception. As far as I know, no one else has ever been considered as an alternative. The Central Committee members are all chosen by Newman. During the entire 2½ years I sat on the Central Committee, there was never a single policy debate by the CC once Newman made his position known.

In fact, when dissent has arisen, it has been duly disposed of by means of a power struggle where Newman insists on his control and then forces the dissenter out (seen in my interviews in the cases of George, Grace, Jack, Ruiz and, to an extent, Gillian). Disagreement with his positions is not allowed and results in being labeled "hostile". One may withdraw and remain on the periphery, but one cannot disagree with Newman. In the GP, while people do leave over political disagreements (see José, above), it is disagreement with the majority in the group, not with a single figure. Further, many

[85] Savelsberg (2006) suggests applying a sociology of knowledge approach to the study of criminology in general and terrorism in particular. This application of Martin's (2002) work demonstrates the usefulness of such an approach.

people stay, despite disagreement over particular strategies or tactics, based on a belief in the overall agenda of the group, and that there will be room to debate these disagreements. Thus the lack of a single dominant leader in the GP is reflected in a lower degree of consensus.

As regards the tightness of belief systems – this involves the set of beliefs being closely woven together, “connected by webs of implication” (p. 872) – changing one belief implies changing all. As Newman explains: “The message here is this: if you want to change anything in your life, you have to change your whole life” (1994, p. 22). Martin hypothesizes that the tightness of belief systems is related to the presence of a cognitive authority in the group. In the NT Newman is the ultimate cognitive authority and has been since the inception of the NT. Others may participate and co-author books and other materials, but Newman’s is the defining voice. Most former NTers discard the belief system of the NT on exit: leaving requires a fundamental re-evaluation of the web of beliefs, and sorting through that tight, tangled web is one of the difficult tasks facing former members.

There is no recognized cognitive authority in the GP. Again, the principle of decentralization, and the group norm of downplaying central personalities is at work here. Works studied vary greatly, both within locals, and between locals. Particular issues are taken on, and particular materials studied in an attempt to understand those issues, as discussed above. A change in a belief over whether Nader should run, or whether one should ally with the Democrats or not does not imply that one ceases to be “Green”, even though it may be cause for discussion and argument. The Ten Key Values and the Four Pillars are appealed to as unifying principles, but there is no one individual recognized for authoring those. As opposed to NTers, former GPers tend to generally retain their core set of beliefs, and do not engage in a fundamental restructuring after leaving, thus illustrating the looser interdependence of beliefs.

Total ideology as the explanation of all things, for all time

In the NT, concealed strategic communication serves, among other things, to communicate this total ideology with its high degree of consensus and tightly interwoven

sets of beliefs. Newman is frank his embrace of a total ideology, discarding the "notion of the particular" as "one of the great fictions of Western culture" (Newman and Goldberg 1994, p. 234) and espousing a "historical totality". He states that:

> [T]here are no particulars. There are no "things" that can be separated, except by force—especially by force of definition, which is to say non-developmentally—from the seamless historical totality that has no beginning, middle or end, no starting point. In fact it has no point at all (p. 234).

He continues:

> The social therapeutic approach tries to teach people how to think as creators and transformers of everything that there is and all there is—in other words, as makers of history (p. 236).

As a former NTer notes in a posting on language on the ex-IWP.org forum, while the NT rhetoric changed over time – moving from a more obviously Maoist-Marxist left-wing language, to the post-modern and politically "independent" language of the current period – certain elements have remained constant, notably the idea, that:

> "one could still be 'in history' (i.e. free of capitalist individual ego and all its inherent trappings) by becoming part of Newmanworld, by 'volunteering' your time and labor as per his agenda" (Owner 2003).

This history in which Newman aims to engage people in is, according to him, "a process: the beginning-less, end-less, endlessly interconnected, human-made totality of totalities, including the world and ourselves in it" (p 236). Newman states that history "has no point", but nonetheless he proposes that social therapy is the means by which to engage with *all* of history in a process of "continuous personal growth."

Total ideology as the propaganda of "total critique"

Mannheim (1936/1985) offers another way to look at total ideology. He defines total ideology as that of a total worldview that represents a fundamentally divergent thought system which does not share criteria of validity with those outside the total system. This total ideology makes use of a different language, and meanings of language, not readily understandable to outsiders. The totality is more than merely a set of individuals' views

but is posited as "the whole outlook of a social group" (p. 59). In fact, individual views (other than that of the leader) are essentially irrelevant.

As discussed earlier, propaganda is the form of ideology employed when a totalist group communicates with the outside world, or with followers who are not fully consolidated (Arendt 1948/1979). Thus propaganda must keep certain lines of communication open, despite being, internally, a fundamentally divergent set of beliefs. Newman's published literature, such as *Let's Develop!*, or *The End of Knowing*, seems primarily to be propaganda. It still tries to keep a shaky foothold in the external world, maintaining enough "criteria of validity" that it is accessible, and attractive to non-members. The back cover of *Let's Develop!*, for example announces that:

> Let's Develop! will show *you* how to achieve continuous personal growth…transform your life…rid yourself of emotional pain […] Dr. Fred Newman has discovered that *we can reinitiate our development*—at any age and at any stage in life! What's more, says Dr. Newman, *development is the cure* (Newman and Goldberg 1994).

Newman communicates the irrelevance of all other views by announcing "the end of knowing". He uses Wittgenstein as his source in asking "What if there are no explanations at all?" (Newman and Goldberg 1994, p. 231). This illustrates what Antonio (2000) refers to as "strong program post-modernism", where Newman's "end of knowing" reflects a "total critique" of modernity and "treats modern theory's hopes about social progress as moribund and portrays profound exhaustion of modern democratic culture and institutions" (p. 43). If there is nothing to know, and there are no explanations, how can people engage in discourse in an attempt to come to shared understandings upon which to take action, as a communicative action model would have it? In Newman's total world, this absolute rejection of knowledge serves to inhibit independent thought by which the individual group member might analyze or explain what is happening to them.

Arendt (1948/1979) states that:

> Total loyalty is possible only when fidelity is emptied of all concrete content, from which changes of mind might naturally arise. The totalitarian movements, each in its own way, have done their utmost to get rid of the party programs which specified concrete content […E]very

> political program which deals with issues more specific than "ideological questions of importance for centuries" is an obstruction to totalitarianism (p. 324).

In reading NT literature one is struck, indeed, by this absence of "concrete content," with, however a surfeit of over-arching abstractions.

Let's Develop! is typically given to new social therapy clients, while *The End of Knowing* is aimed at academics, who are targeted for both recruitment, and for building legitimacy in the external world. This is much less accessible, written in a dense academic form rather than the short sentences of *Let's Develop!* In a section titled "What is the Practice of Method?" Newman describes the NT itself:

> What we now call the development community (a community that develops without producing development) is a new *kind* of community. Somewhat formalistically, we recently described it as "a community which at once supports development and has as its non-instrumental, non-pragmatic (tool and result) activity the development it supports" (Newman and Holzman, 1996, p. 151). Here we want to tell the story of how we practice method, of how our developing (development) community was and continues to be built… (Newman and Holzman 1997, p. 76).

Later in the book Newman and Holzman describe the goals of the development community:

> To move forward we must create new political *activity* which is not rooted in epistemological overdetermined programmatics (Truth and Rightness). Indeed, to us, the new *political activity* must have as one *raison d'etre* the elimination of knowing as the dominant mode of human understanding. For, to our understanding, further development and growth, of all kinds—at the personal and species level—demand such a thoroughgoing restructuring. Such, it seems to us, is the postmodern political mission (p. 100).

One has the sense in reading these texts that there is almost something that makes sense. But pinning down an argument or a concrete plan or program of action in these propaganda documents is elusive. Analyzing, (merely by simplifying) for example, the above quote, sentence by sentence:

1. *"To move forward we must create new political activity which is not rooted in epistemological overdetermined programmatics (Truth and*

Rightness).” i.e. We must create new political activity which is not rooted in Truth and Rightness.

2. *“Indeed, to us, the new political activity must have as one raison d’etre the elimination of knowing as the dominant mode of human understanding.”* i.e. The new political activity must eliminate knowing.
3. *“For, to our understanding, further development and growth, of all kinds—at the personal and species level—demand such a thoroughgoing restructuring. Such, it seems to us, is the postmodern political mission.”* i.e. The postmodern political mission for humans is eliminating knowing.

“Eliminating knowing” is the goal, apparently, of the Development Community. Almost any randomly selected paragraph from *The End of Knowing* tends to have the same flavor: a convincing intellectual vernacular, circular logic, and a lack of concrete, graspable concepts, or proposals for action. Another example, which promises, at first to lead to some proposal for action, ends, once again, in an incomprehensible, though rhetorically attractive, statement.

> For it is we, the people, who are, at once, the problem and the solution. It is the organized *activity* of the people, by the people, and for the people, not the *actions* of anyone, which is the necessary new anti-epistemological, pro-activity politics urgently needed in this historical moment. This is neither “capitalism” nor “ socialism,” nor, for that matter, any other “-ism” economically and ideologically defined. Indeed, it is not defined at all but is, rather, the *activity of the people* organized to determine both the tools and the results of our activity. For even beyond the populist rhetorical (however accurate) recognition that “the people own the country” is the understanding that the people, by our activity, “own owning” (p. 103).

The first sentence of this passage offers an unresolved paradox. The text continues with circular logic (the activity of the people is organized to determine the activity, “own owning”, etc.), abstractions unconnected to reality, and vague, yet complex statements. The take home message of *The End of Knowing*, seems to be that social therapy and the development community are environments in which to “perform conversations” that are “about nothing” (p. 125), but which are nonetheless revolutionary. What “performance”

is remains obscure in reading this volume. But in *Let's Develop!* its meaning is made a little more clear:

> What I am calling performance—the conscious activity of producing how we are in the world—is unique to our species. While behavior is dehumanizing, performance is developmental (Newman and Goldberg 1994, p.15).

The "revolutionary" aspect of this performance is described as follows:

> But first, a word or two about performance, revolutionary activity, and revolution. Our post-postmodern, activity-theoretic, radical claim that the human activity of developing does not produce development depends on it. What we mean by revolutionary activity is human activity that is fully self-reflexive, transformative of the totality, tool-and-result-ish, relative to nothing other than (outside) itself. The existentialists call is a predicament. We are liberated by it. It is "all process" creatively and constantly emergent. It is, following Marx, "the practical overthrow of the actual social relations" (Marx and Engels, 1973, p. 58). Marx, of course, was speaking of "making the Revolution". We are not. Instead, we speak of revolutionary activity (Newman and Holzman 1997, p. 109).

The vague (and loaded—see below) language of "development" that permeates NT literature is also apparent in its external political activities. Here is an example from an Independence Party (IP) meeting I attended in Albany, New York, where the NT contingent was in the process of being voted out of the IP. I was observing the proceedings, and was approached by an NT member (a longtime member and cadre) who was part of a block of about 20 NTers at the meeting. After some discussion I asked her how she referred to the group she was part of (evidently a group, as they sat together and voted on each proposal as a block after conferring together):

> I say: "It seems to be some kind of a group, I'm not sure how to refer to it, what do you call it, or call yourselves?" She replies: "We're a development community." I ask what "development" means. "Human development" she says. "But what do you mean? What kind of development is that?" "Human development, people developing" she replies, and she goes on with a couple more phrases that include the word development, but doesn't say anything specific (Field notes, Albany, NY, 2/3/2006).

The total ideology of the NT describes the need for a complete personal transformation, and "continuous growth and development", implying a process without boundaries or even an achievable goal. This reflects one of the elements Asch (1952) discusses in his description of propaganda. In a statement that connects to Antonio's (2000) discussion of strong program post-modernism, and its pessimism regarding the possibility of change (as reflected in its "total" rather than "internal" critique), Asch (1952) states that propaganda personalizes conflicts by insisting that the "spirit of men and women alone needs changing and that is it folly to expect much from changes in institutions." (p. 622). While Newman's language can be extremely complex (and I discuss below the function of this complexity), the final ideas are constantly brought back to the essence: there is nothing to know, and therefore performing, rather than knowing, is the road to continuous growth and development.

Indoctrination: Total ideology as justification for total transformation

For those group members who become consolidated in the group, ideology now takes the form of indoctrination for the purpose of retention. As Lofland (1977) reminds us, intensive interaction within the group is necessary for conversion, and also as Berger and Luckmann (1966) state, for maintenance of the new reality (see below). Thus the importance of "continuous growth and development" in Newman's formulation is in the very fact there is no goal, no point of "graduation," no "release date," (unlike in Goffman's 1962 concept of a total institution), no end to the process and thus, presumably, no reason to ever leave the group. It is perhaps not surprising, then, that many stay in social therapy for decades. Newman describes one couple who were "in individual therapy and in group therapy with me; at some point they were also in therapy as a couple" (1994 p. 80). "[T]hey've built the therapy into their life activity […] I've been with them, and they've been with me, half their lives" (p. 87). According to Newman this couple is in their late 30's, and have been in therapy since their late teens, thus engaging in "continuous personal growth" for almost 20 years.

It is in the indoctrination process that this insistence on the need for a total personal transformation intensifies. Berger and Luckmann (1966) refer to this as resocialization or “alternation”:

> Alternation thus involves a reorganization of the conversational apparatus. The partners in significant conversation change. And in conversation with the new significant others subjective reality is transformed. It is maintained by continuing conversation with them, or within the community they represent. Put simply, this means that one must now be very careful with whom one talks. People and ideas that are discrepant with the new definitions of reality are systematically avoided. Since this can rarely be done with total success, if only because of the memory of past reality, the new plausibility structure will typically provide various therapeutic procedures to take care of “backsliding” tendencies. These procedures follow the general pattern of therapy […] (p. 159).

Social therapy is well suited to this task, and is the key (though not sole) site of indoctrination in the NT. Ortiz (2003) describes her journey from social therapy client to NT cadre:

> My persistent anxiety-indeed my collective emotional "baggage"-were inherently related to still prevalent societal inequalities. How then, could I possibly hope to recover when poverty, homelessness and injustice still existed all around me? The answer, of course, was to join this movement. By working to bring about social change, I could eventually assume a more politically advanced, i.e., "historical," identity. Although the process of changing the world was in itself curative, it was still not the solution. "History," in fact, was the cure, I learned, as I studied abstract articles by party leaders. One would be cured, i.e., people would be cured, when history had righted itself.
>
> While commitment was deemed a "personal choice," the struggle for social change could not be an individual or a "nationalistic" endeavor. In and of itself, my writing and previous political activity-indeed, my very existence-was meaningless, I was told, for only through collective action could people truly overcome the horrors of societal oppression. Thus, the "cure" for my depression and anxiety was ultimately conditional upon my becoming a "serious" political activist. And, lo and behold, I had chanced upon this tendency of likewise committed people! I could now ignore all that I had learned. I could now reject the opportunity for a better existence. Or, I could choose to make a real difference; one that would benefit all of mankind. The burden of choice was now mine.
>
> […] Still, I had a few lingering doubts which I brought up in therapy. But, whereas my skepticism and anger had once been encouraged

> as traits which supported the tendency's broader social-political philosophy-my reservations were now considered an "impediment to my development." When I criticized my superiors on the newspaper, or challenged the conjectures of my therapists and their "favored" patients' (i.e., more politically active and therefore "advanced"), I was quickly chastised as "racist," "anti-Semitic," "sexist," "homophobic," "nationalist," "unsupportive," "oppositional" and/or "right wing." […]
>
> By June of 1986, I was fully drawn into the group's underground web of pseudo-revolutionary activity; the International Workers Party. From 1986 to 1990, I worked as cadre (slave labor) for the cult's various front groups, and was ordered to engage in fundraising activities, public demonstrations and political campaigns. I was told that I now lived under constant "discipline," and would have to be available "24/07".

Once within the "reorganized conversational apparatus" as Berger and Luckmann (1966) state, one must be constantly "careful with whom one talks." Denise said:

> [You] never had an opportunity to be really true friends with anyone because you didn't know who you could trust […] Well, you couldn't talk negatively about the group-
>
> **Interviewer: Because?**
>
> I don't know, I was afraid of something. I'm not exactly sure, um, see I had been ganged up on when I first got there and I didn't want that again, and you just kind of, like, for me, I just kept my mouth shut, just don't, don't, don't, you know, just don't show your hand.

The context in which the discourse of indoctrination takes place is very important to the process. The context of social therapy: small groups of people, previously unknown to one another, meeting together over time, sharing private, personal information, fits Schein's (1961)[86] description of the importance of *new* social connections in this reorganized "conversational apparatus." Schein states that when prisoners who knew each other *before* prison would talk to each other they would create a bond of shared hostility to the authorities, and this strengthened their capacity to resist. But when housed in cells with cellmates who didn't know each other and who would then be in struggle meetings together, this would create attachments with cellmates (based on the new

[86] And, in a recent study of terrorist networks, also Sageman's (2004) networks of "bunches of guys."

ideology) and weaken resistance. Schein concludes that: "'struggle' in group cells was the single most effective device used" (p. 193).

As we have seen in Chapter Nine, NTers made new social contacts in the NT and their prior social ties were greatly weakened as a result of their membership. This process is key in providing the appropriate context for the new conversation to occur, and to prevent backsliding or opposition. Again, this is in contrast to the GP where prior social contacts remained strong throughout.

As also mentioned in Chapter Nine, NT cadres do study the work of Newman, particularly in the first year of "cadre training", but according to my interviewees, that largely stopped after they were consolidated as cadre, although social therapy usually continued. The discourse within social therapy, as mentioned earlier, then changed from an initial focus on the individual's presenting problem (in instances where social therapy was the recruitment channel) to a focus on maintaining a high degree of productivity in the group: "giving to the group." Newman introduces this language of "giving" early on in *Let's Develop!*:

> The social therapeutic approach helps people to break out of the getting mode, to put aside the getting principle (where appropriate) in favor of a more sophisticated and gratifying method for living. The people who are most helped by the social therapeutic approach are those who allow themselves to learn how to make giving the organizing principle of their emotional lives. They usually do so with conflicts, of course—which is perfectly fine.
>
> […] So people tend to worry, not surprisingly, that they'll be ripped off. In our culture of getting, people are getting ripped off, emotionally speaking and otherwise, much of the time. If you give more than usual, there's the concern that you'll be the victim—ripped off—more than usual. Paradoxically, it's only when you're unconditionally giving emotionally that you can't get ripped off at all. (Someone named Jesus said that!) What's more, the more you give, the less time you have to spend and the less mental energy you have to exert worrying that you'll be ripped off or resenting that you have been. What a relief! (1994, p. 6).

Celia described how the language in group therapy changed from the emphasis on individual psychological problems to a focus on the group (thus moving from the

propaganda function, where individual concerns were still addressed, to the indoctrination function):

> The younger you were [i.e. as a group member], it was more about your personal development, but down the road therapy was more about stripping your ego and they would say things like—and this was later on when we were full cadre—you couldn't have individual thoughts, you couldn't even want things for yourself, you couldn't talk about yourself, because you were being bourgeois, you were being egotistical, you're thinking of yourself, you're not thinking of others, you're not thinking of the group. […] But later on, if someone were to come into a more experienced group and talk like that [i.e. personally], the response would be something like, maybe by Fred Newman, "What does this do for the group?" you know, "How are we going to build the group? That's what I'm concerned with. Let's talk about that." So that individual and personal things were not even mentioned anymore. I'm talking like once you were all the way in.

"Conflicts" (see below) with the group were dealt with as symptoms of the follower not "giving" enough, and thus the solution was simple: "give more."

Schein (1961) discusses (communist) totalist ideology as all-inclusive: "it recognizes only one plane of existence, the political" (p. 69). This was certainly the case in the NT, where the stated goal was the overthrow of the "bourgeois ego" as part of the revolutionary work of group members (Newman 1974). Schein (1961) stated:

> All aspects of life become related to the political, hence all areas of life become the target of political scrutiny, and the demands for unanimity, though they may originate in a purely political sphere, often spill over into the most minute details of daily living (p. 71).

As Myrna reported in an earlier chapter, all personal problems were subsumed under the political: "If we have personal problems it's because we're not political enough." Another example of this was given by Jacob, a former NT cadre. He discussed the use of the phrase "political sex":

> "Political sex" was a way of channeling, I guess, their carnal desires, into, you know, political activity. I mentioned there was a woman I had a strong attraction to at a certain point so like she used the phrase […] as a way of saying, let's keep it, let's take the energy of whatever you feel, whatever, let's put it back into the work that you're doing. So I understood by

> political sex, in retrospect I understand it again as a way of preventing people from forming individual bonds outside of the group dynamics.

Language to shore up the system structurally by maintaining isolation

As illustrated in the previous quote, the total ideology of the totalist system is well-designed to justify and strengthen the isolating structure of the system. As discussed in Chapter Nine, such concepts as "friendosexuality" are designed to de-emphasize the emotional intimacy of sexual relationships. "Patients were taught to resent all personal relationships […] with therapists denouncing partners as engaging in 'coupling'" (Ortiz 2003a). Maintaining family relationships was referred to derogatorily as "doing family." Family relationships were discouraged as being a distraction from the important work of the group, as "the therapist explained, because they tended to "alienate" and "retard" human growth and development" (Ortiz 2003a). Similarly, while "you weren't told 'You can't be with your kids,' in a direct way, as Sidney reported, "If there's a conflict between doing political work and taking care of your kids, you do the political work […] if you love your kids, you'll do the political work." Further examples of how the ideology is used to justify isolation in the NT are given in Chapter Nine.

Thus the total ideology of the NT is used in propaganda and indoctrination efforts, attempting to subsume all elements of life under the political in the context of grandiose and totalistic claims of engaging in "all of history".

Communicative action in the GP, on the other hand, is rather more directed at building ideas and coordinating action suited to a particular purpose. GP meetings and documents often pay close attention to the meeting and decision-making processes, with an emphasis on helping members to understand and participate. For instance, at a state-wide GP caucus, a document spells out not only the agenda, but also the consensus-seeking and instant runoff voting processes which will be used in the meeting. Illustrating the communicative action focus of the GP, this document states, "The purpose of all sharing [of views and opinions] is to find common ground and not just to air one's own opinion"

(Green Party of Minnesota 2002). This common ground, however, is quite different than the single truth demanded of a total ideology. It is the common ground of particular issues under discussion, rather than a common ground encompassing all questions, and all aspects of life. In this way it is like Arendt's "common sense": a shared sense of reality developed out of a conversation reflecting individuals' experiences and sense perceptions.

The ideology of the GP is stated in its Ten Key Values and Four Pillars (see Chapter 7). These fit with Mannheim's (1936/1985) concept of a particular ideology, in that the ideology forms only part of the assertions of the person espousing the ideology, rather than his or her total worldview, and the particular ideology shares criteria of validity with opponents.

Serious differences do arise in the GP – most recently issues about whether to support Ralph Nader or other Green candidates for presidential races, or whether to ally in any way with progressive Democrats. Sometimes these have become heated enough that a split occurs, and people leave the GP. For example:

> And that I guess was very clear when, when Cobb was selected as the presidential candidate over Nader-Camejo, um and, and, and the, the arguments were absolutely irrational you know. And as a matter of fact there was this one instance um, that was very clear in my mind, I just—whoa, said we have the Four Pillars, nonviolence is one of the biggest, one of the four obviously obeyed and we were at College 1 in the hall […] where this big meeting took place and it had a big banner with the Four Key Values and […] And so here is the, this Coordinating Committee member, there's two of those speaking right in front of the banner and I remember that very clearly because I challenged them on a point where he said something about, we have to tweak the policies of Bush. And so I raised my hand and I said, you know over your left shoulder is one of the Four Key Values—nonviolence, how do you reconcile "tweaking" Bush's policy with that key value, you know, and the guy said, "What?"—he didn't get the question. I mean, excuse me, I just, I, I'm walking—thank you, I've had enough (José).

But generally these debates are able to be conducted internally within the context of all parties remaining in the GP, sharing "criteria of validity" and assuming a common interest in, say, ending the war in Iraq, or slowing global warming. The methods and

actions to take to achieve these goals represent real differences that get discussed, although, of course, not always politely.

Related to this, the process of communicative action in the GP tends not to impinge on all areas of life, but rather is focused strictly on political activities. There is no evidence of indoctrination taking place in the GP, attempting to subsume and control members' lives. Of course, there are individual GP members who may carry their communications to an extreme, insisting on a purity of vision and goals that verge on the absolute. For instance, in a 2007 email correspondence on a local GP listserve, a GPer from another state claimed that he would come to the Midwest to teach people how to live in winter without heating their homes, as a means of fighting global warming. Another GPer replied with a certain Midwestern practicality:

> I hope nobody is silly enough to try it as you would have some plumbing pipes bursting shortly after the temperatures start going below freezing.
>
> What you can do is turn your thermostat down to about 60 degrees when sleeping at night or when nobody is home. Using a programmable thermostat lets you do this without worries of forgetting.

Other GPers may insist, for instance, on vegetarian meals at all events, to the chagrin of some (often rural) people, who see well-raised, or hunted meat as an important and sustainable food source (Sherman). But on the whole these issues are limited in scope, and are up for discussion should people feel strongly about them. There are not generally calls for total personal transformation in the GP literature. Rather there are specific calls for specific actions to address specific problems. For instance, in an article in the *Green Pages,* a local county newsletter, the writer notes that, after a meeting to create local party rules, he,

> wondered if we fell short of balancing party interests with individual rights of members. Trying to prevent errant statements about Greens, we nearly designated exclusive spokespeople and prohibited other members from speaking on behalf of the party (Swanson 2002).

He follows up with a suggestion that meetings be held in a circle to facilitate "multiple voices" with "veritable tensions, different interests and various talents".

The "particular" nature of the ideology is further assured by the local, decentralized principle of GP organizing – in fact there is no central book or books that are held to be repositories of GP ideas. Some, such as *Small is Beautiful* by Schumacher are admired by many GPers, but have no official status as GP publications. And each local is free to publish its own newsletter or other publications. There are, in addition, some state and national publications, but the Ten Key Values and Four Pillars are the only shared central concepts. Otherwise publications tend to be focused on particular organizing activities. For instance, at the time of this writing, the Green Party of the United States home page features articles on the banning of plastic bags in San Francisco and on anti-Iraq War activities (Green Party of the United States 2007).

In the GP there are no elements in the language whose function is to discourage non-GP relationships. In fact, in a recent election campaign, one candidate featured his prior over-commitment to GP work, and his renewed search for balance between GP work and his family life:

> Campaigning for office takes a heavy toll on both candidates and their families. Dave Berger learned this in 2002, and he hesitated before committing to a second run. Concern for his family led him to withdraw his name during the state Green Party convention in June, and when he returned to the race, convinced at last of his own ability to set limits and his family's strong support, a special convention was held to endorse him (The Sunflower 2006).

In my research I have found no special internal language used by GPers, nor different language used with inner party members as opposed to outsiders or new members. This reflects both a non-totalist sharing of criteria of validity with the non-GP world, and a lack of differentiation (or rigid boundary) between those outside (who in totalism would be the recipients of propaganda efforts) and inside (those who in a totalist system would be subject to indoctrination) the group.

These first two elements (the maintenance of dissociation, and the reflection and justification of the totalist structure) have concentrated on the content of discourse. In the

next two sections (loaded language, and peripheral versus central route processing) we look at the form or methods of language use.

Loaded language: The constriction of imagination and thought

Lifton described "loaded language" as the jargon that "expresses the claimed certitudes of the sacred science" (1961, p. 430). Loaded language is the language of total ideology. Lifton states that:

> For an individual person, the effect of the language of ideological totalism can be summed up in one word: constriction. He is, so to speak, linguistically deprived; and since language is so central to all human experience, his capacities for thinking and feeling are immensely narrowed (p. 430).

Thus "canned" language (Main and Goldwyn 1998), and group jargon act as "verbal fetters" (Lifton 1961, p. 430). Lucy (1992) quotes Hoijer who says:

> The languages of human beings do not so much determine the perceptual and other faculties of their speakers vis-à-vis experience as they influence and direct these faculties into prescribed channels (p. 77).

In a totalist system, however, this directing into "prescribed channels" is greatly exaggerated, and the "channels" become fewer and narrower, funneling the individual's language and thus thought, until it is entirely inadequate for communicating individual sensory perceptions and experience. Rhythms of speech and gestures may also merge and become similarly constricted as the linguistic patterns of the leader are mimicked. When Louisa observed a group of "lifer" social therapists together she noted that:

> It's definitely a rhythm and dance that they're doing. Very specific- and they do this talk- that's how they talk- they talk…like…this… [Slow, syllables separated]- it's a constant- I can hear the rhythm. They all sit the same like I'm sitting now, but you know, their legs crossed and they all do their arms a certain way and they do- they- Fred does his arm and he talks like this, and they all- it's a rhythm in their speech definitely- yeah, it's creepy. They talk like Fred- every one of them and, you know, it's obvious.

Colin is not in the group, but his mother is and he is in touch with her and interacts with group members from time to time. He has this to say about the constriction that group members display when engaged in the "group mode":

> So…a month ago or so my father wrote a letter to the editor. Um, I read Cassie Bernstein's [an NTer] response and it had that exact [wording], "Working for change," if, if trying to get, you know, "Working for revolution, or whatever, whatever is a very normal way of saying it, if that's being in a cult, then that's what I am." And then my mom said the exact same line to me. You know, you can talk to them about Nader, and you can be in three different conversations at three different times and hear the exact same thing. […]
>
> **Interviewer: Very carefully controlled message.**
>
> Mmm hmm. But if you only hear it from one person, or even two people, it's not weird. But I'm around them enough that I hear the same message and it, it, I mean it concerns me when I hear it from the, the Bush administration […] because I've seen the spin, I know how just completely screwed up they've made that message, that it's nothing on the truth whatsoever, that it makes me question what I'm hearing from them [the NT] as well. If you can't come up with your own individual thoughts, you can't make an intelligent argument on your own about something without spitting it out verbatim, and then it, it makes me question whether it's true or not, whether it's fact.
>
> […] Most of the conversations are normal, yes. Most of the conversations are normal and like I said, it's only when the group comes up, and I kind of said this in the beginning, it's only when, in those periods when the group comes up, or when other people are involved talking about the group that it really gets, that I get a sense that it's not, that I'm no longer talking to my mom, I'm talking to somebody else.
>
> **Interviewer: Is there a way you can describe the quality of the speech then?**
>
> Scripted. That's, I mean, that's the best way of saying it, it just, it feels scripted. You know, you, when somebody's being, you know, speaking their mind, speaking their emotion, um, you, you sense the honesty in it, I mean, which changes in their inflection, in their voice, there's changes in their, their facial reactions or changes in their body language. Those things kind of stop, and you get, I mean, and those are probably part of some of the things that I key in on, the language changes. You know, I can stumble on words, saying, you know, reading my ABC's, but once you get to a scripted message, you tend to not stumble anymore. And so, those are the

> things that, that really kind of start up. And then, I mean, you're talking about an organization and a group that has *no negative aspects*.

The loaded language, then, has a particular quality in its delivery as well as in its content. Loaded words in the NT include "growth," "development," "performing," and "giving," among many others, which are constantly referenced in NT written and spoken discourse, although the meaning of these terms is never spelled out. The terms are referenced in Newman's academic works, his plays, his popular works, in political literature, in flyers advertising social therapy and even, as below, in a "street performance" fundraising script used by social therapy patients to raise money, supposedly[87] for the Newman-led Atlanta Independent Theater:

> We are using the model of the fifteen-year-old Castillo Cultural Center in New York, where the artistic director, Fred Newman, has created a new approach to theater and performance called Developmental Theater. It's based on an [sic] discovery that all of us – not just trained professionals but all of us – have a capacity to perform, to go beyond ourselves and do what we don't know how to do – and that performatory activity is necessary if human development is to take place (Atlanta Independent Theater 2000).

In another example, a fundraising card for the East Side Institute for Group and Short Term Psychotherapy solicits funds for "development programs here and abroad" (without any further clarification of what such programs might consist of):

> Millions of people around the world see no possibility for development. We have something powerful to offer—something ordinary people experience as genuinely helpful. I believe that we have a responsibility to make sure that those who want social therapy can have it. Help make this possible. Join me in giving the world the gift of growth today (East Side Institute for Group and Short-Term Psychotherapy).

The word "politics", used as an over-arching, total concept, is illustrated in a recent glossy NT publication from the East Side Institute, sent in a "cold" publicity/recruitment package to mental health practitioners. In a full-page testimonial from a "social therapy client" is the following:

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[87] The eventual disposition of these funds is in question given the extreme secrecy surrounding financial dealings, and the many instances of funds being juggled around as discussed by my interviewees, as well as in formal complaints registered by ex-members (Grace, Myrna, George)

> I rediscovered a word that I used to dislike intensely, but that I have learned to love. The word is *politics*. Put that word in front of those other words and suddenly their meaning is revealed. The *politics* of giving. The *politics* of never giving up on someone's capacity to grow. The *politics* of building community week after week. The *politics* of decency. Social therapy is the hand on my shoulder, an unusual guide, never giving answers. Social therapy has given me the world (East Side Institute for Short Term Psychotherapy n.d.)

These terms thus become vague abstractions that can stand for anything. Lifton (1961) calls these types of repetitive, "all-encompassing" phrases "thought-terminating clichés" which serve as "interpretive shortcuts" (p 429).

The loaded language often stays with people for many years after they've left the group. Celia, who left the group 14 years prior to being interviewed for this study, replies to a question about her hopes for the future: "I'd like to um—have grown and, and, and developed and- personally, emotionally, and professionally." She seems unaware that she is still using the language of the group, in spite of the fact she has been very active in working to expose the NT to public scrutiny. Louisa left the group about four years prior to this interview where she says:

> It's like I got a lot of help from that group and then there was a point there where it stopped being effective and it was during that time I think where I was pregnant and different things- maybe- and maybe it was because- well see, I'm caught- I'm still caught in that thinking because I was gonna say it was because I didn't give to the group. That's what they would do- if you didn't give- giving- that was their word, man, that you could- oh my god, I wish I had a dollar for every time they said that word. You know, if you were giving to the group- and see, and if you don't give to the group, then it's your fuckin' fault that you're not getting any help, you know, and so I'm sure I was gonna say I wasn't being giving to the group, but anyway...

Louisa, a long-term social therapy client (though never a fulltime cadre) in particular, had difficulty dealing with the persistence of the loaded language, and the experience of social therapy generally:

> It's left me permanently confused and blaming myself for not being able to push myself beyond my limitations. […] I really think that there was validity to some of whatever they thought this up- I don't know how they did it, but I did see growth- oh god, I almost said it. Growth and

> development. But I do- I know, ugh {laughs} I can't believe that flew out. I need a new word.

Language in the NT narrows vocabulary, and consequently thought, and thus further erodes followers' ability to interpret their own experiences. In some cases this effect, and the inability of former members to engage "fresh" and "autonomous" language (Main and Goldwyn 1998) to describe their experience, persists for years.

In the GP, language is clear and understandable. Little jargon is used beyond references to the Ten Key Values. For example, in a recent issue of *The Sunflower*, a quiz on whether readers are living by the Ten Key Values is offered. Specific, easily understandable elements are featured as, for example:

> *Ecological Wisdom:*
> Do you think about your family's dependence upon the earth for life-giving water, clean air, and safe food? Do you own a bike? Do you know how to compute the miles-per-gallon of your car? Do you purchase local and seasonal food at a farmers' market? Do you buy organic products when you can? Do you recycle cans/bottles/newspapers? […] No matter how few or how many points you counted, you've come a long way in finding out what it takes to be "Green." The Green Party of Minnesota is made up of concerned citizens like yourself with varying shades of green practices, all striving to protect the health of the earth and those who live here. Consider becoming part of this growing movement and political party (Reinhardt 2006).

Areas where the most "jargon-like" language is used are often associated with issues of process, such as consensus-decision-making, or instant run-off voting. But even these elements are usually explained in quite clear detail when presented, or when used in meetings.

Peripheral versus central route processing

In addition to loaded language, another dimension of discourse that is useful to investigate is, as Zablocki suggested (2001a), whether communication is processed peripherally or centrally, as described in the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty and Wegner 1998). In central route processing, focal attention on the content of the message

is required. This is achieved when the individual is both motivated to pay such focal attention, and when he or she has the ability to do so. In central route processing individuals pay attention to the quality of the message or arguments. Peripheral route processing does not require focal attention and takes place when people are either not motivated to attend, or do not have the ability to attend. In peripheral route processing, people attend to secondary characteristics of the message, such as perceived expertise or attractiveness of the messenger or quantity of arguments. People can be discouraged from central route processing and encouraged to peripherally process by creating distractions to prevent focal attention. Such distractions can include fear arousal, rapid delivery of the message (and lack of time to process it), excessive repetition, or complexity of language.

In the NT there are many features of communication that condition peripheral rather than central route processing. NTers are constantly discouraged (i.e. de-motivated) from putting focal attention to NT content. Newman sets this relationship to language up early on in encounters with the NT. In my field work I attended a play, *Mommsen's Future,* written and directed by him at the NT off-off Broadway Castillo Theater. The previous day I'd bought my ticket at the theater, which involved a sit-down interview with a Castillo administrator (at her initiative, not mine). In discussing the play (about a German playwright) she told me:

> The director [Newman] said that when you watch it, 'Don't try to understand the language', just watch and take in the visuals, etc. I asked, 'Is it in German?' 'No, it's in English, but it's very dense.' When I attended the performance, I saw, in the program, and then in a video on stage prior to the live performance, a similar message was repeated, in uppercase letters: *PRETEND YOU UNDERSTAND THE WORDS; LISTEN TO THE MUSIC; WATCH THE PERFORMERS DANCE.* (Field Notes, Castillo Theater, 5/18/2004).

This sets up in theatergoers the expectation that the language will not be understandable (which indeed it wasn't), and directs them to attend to the secondary (non-linguistic) elements: the music, and the dance. Thus the audience is guided to switch off central route processing of the play's spoken language.

The methods used by the NT to discourage central route processing range from the overall principle that "there is nothing to know", to direct commands such as "Don't

try to understand the words," to the de-coupling of language from feelings in social therapy as described above. The manner of using language is, itself, conducive to dropping any attempts at focal attention, and fading off into peripheral processing. I experienced this as an audience member at the Castillo, where understandable content, plot, or narrative line, were non-existent, and the language, indeed, impossible to follow. As I indicated in my field notes: "It was endless stuff that was impossible to concentrate on. Various bits about the Berlin wall, Marx, Jews, existential musings, much stuff that was simply not understandable at all." While the speeches were rapid, dense and (for me) impossible to understand, distraction was provided by the female cast members (who were, incidentally, "lifer" members of the NT). One was dressed in tight silver pants, and the other in a diaphanous summer dress with gold tights. They danced in a highly sexually charged way throughout the speeches.

> Notably in the second half of the show the word "Jew" kept being spoken. Sometimes in clearly prejudicial contexts (i.e. Jews and money, etc.) and then the Harpo Marx character would jump up and honk her horn and shake her finger at the actors - who would look exasperated, and then carry on. This sequence happened maybe 8 or 10 times. […] You heard the prejudicial statements within all this non-understandable rhetoric, and react, and then the Harpo character would react, and so forth, and by the end of it you had no idea what the performers were actually saying/meaning. So in a way you could interpret it any way you wanted. Several people walked out in disgust. (Field Notes, Castillo Theater, 5/21/2004).

Thus distraction from the language used was a key aspect of the performance. As an isolated incidence this may not be noteworthy – after all, theater is an arena in which the way language is processed is routinely manipulated and explored. But in the overall context of the NT it adds another piece to the puzzle of how language is used as part of a totalist system.

Newman's written language is another area in which peripheral route processing results. Not only is his work full of abstractions, repetition, circular references and a kind of pseudo logic, as discussed above, but he makes frequent use of highly distracting parenthetical statements. For example:

> The concept of actions, we would suggest, begs the question (actually, many questions). Consider Jost's formulation: "deciding to commit to a political action." It is, to our ears, epistemologically biased and top-heavy. It presumes, rather than explores, a (kind of) relationship between various kinds of mental activity (deciding, committing, identifying particularities) and a physical (behavioral) doing. Moreover, the relationship (its presuppositions) is essentially dualistic, causal, and expressionistic, with physical doings (including, most especially, speakings) understood as expressions of inner (mental) acts or, at least, goings-on; the implied separation between them requires bridging, which is necessarily understood causally (Davidson, 1980) (Newman and Holzman 1997, p. 101).

There are many other such examples throughout his writings. One sentence, picked more or less randomly, from his earlier *A Manifesto on Method* (1974), contains four parenthetical statements, lodged in his more Marxist phraseology of the period:

> Bourgeois thinking (cognition) is the alienated though productive employment of mental processes (using alienated though productive mental means of production) to produce interpretive beliefs (or more accurately systems of beliefs) which correspond to (a bourgeoisified conception of) reality (Newman and Daren 1974).

The effect of these, often multiple parenthetical statements in one sentence is not to clarify, but to interrupt and further obfuscate meaning. Each set of parentheses requires breaking off from the flow of the sentence. Yet, rarely do they add any new information. Often they merely repeat words already in the sentence. The effect is that one ceases to focus on the meaning of the sentence – it simply becomes too confusing. The result is, one either gives up, or takes Newman's expertise on faith.

This type of discourse, by using distraction and extreme complexity, edges the reader away from a careful reading into the less stressful heuristics of peripheral route processing, namely: relying on the perceived expertise of the source, attending to the quantity of arguments rather than the quality of the arguments and other secondary cues (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). And as addressed in previous chapters, the entire context of the discourse is embedded in a condition of continuous high stress and fear arousal, which further erodes the ability to apply focal attention. Thus careful, centrally processed consideration of NT discourse in discouraged in multiple ways.

In the GP the data suggest that GPers have both the motivation to engage in central route processing, and the ability to do so (enough time, high quality of arguments available, few distractions), unlike NTers. The GP's consensus decision-making process is designed to bring out as much information on an issue as possible, and to keep discussion open as long as is needed by participants. It is thus structurally designed to avoid "groupthink" (Janis 1989) where the leader's opinion dominates and there is premature closure to discussion (Zimbardo and Andersen 1993). A detailed procedure to ensure this is given in the *Consensus Seeking for Caucuses* procedure laid out for a state-wide GP caucus. After detailing the roles of the facilitator, and the "stacker" (who tracks the order in which people have raised their hands to speak) it continues:

> If a time commitment is needed the timer and/or stacker may ask a limit of 30 sec. or 1 min. per person, or whatever fills the time allotted. The idea is that all are able to voice their views succinctly and equally. If time allotted is used, the group may vote for more time within reason (Green Party of Minnesota 2002).

Discussions on areas of disagreement may go on for long periods, sometimes to the point of frustration with the process—particularly on electronic forums. But GPers prefer to err on the side of letting everyone speak as fully as possible. This is a core component of the GP value of Grassroots Democracy.

Information is usually communicated in a clear manner in written materials, using direct and quite simple language. In the course of this study I did not observe excessively dense or convoluted language in GP discourse. For example, the quote below is from an interview with Winona LaDuke while she was the GP vice-presidential candidate:

> We also need to talk about demilitarizing our foreign policy. We're the single largest purveyor of small weapons in the world. Today most of the conflicts around the world are not fought with ICBMs or F-16s, they're fought with small guns—if that's what you want to call an M-16. During World War I, 95 percent of the people killed were combatants. Today 90 percent of people killed in wars are women and children. You do not sell guns to people who violate human rights, who are going to use those guns to mow down women and children. You don't give them guns with my tax dollars (Kristin Kolb-Angelbeck 2000).

This language is clear, the argument is given succinctly, with concrete information. It appeals to focal attention to a specific problem. It elucidates rather than confuses.

The use of peripheral route processing rather than central route processing is a key strategy of the totalist organization. Peripheral route processing encodes memories into implicit memory (which does not require focal attention) rather than explicit memory. It is designed to shore up dissociation by preventing or discouraging clear, focal attention, and is an important means by which the over-arching abstractions of the total ideology are inculcated. As further evidence of this, it is interesting to note that, while the *language* of totalism can sometimes remain in the follower's vocabulary for many years after exit, most former members do not continue to adhere to the totalist ideology. Peripheral route processing, in fact, has been shown to result in only unstable, short-term persuasion, while central route processing results in long-term stable changes of attitudes and beliefs (Petty and Cacioppo 1986). Thus, when the persuasion messages stop—when the follower leaves the totalist environment—the ideology is generally given up, more or less entirely. The GPers studied generally retained their "green" beliefs after leaving the GP, while NTers discarded the NT belief system and engaged in often prolonged processes of rebuilding new sets of beliefs.

The use of language to reassert agency and the integration of thought processes

Of the 12 NTers for whom I have complete data, four have written[88] autobiographical accounts of their experience in the NT. None of the GPers have done so. An African-American former NT member (not interviewed as part of this study) published such an account after leaving, stating:

> I write after much thought and some distance from the New Alliance Party (NAP). When I broke ties with NAP after my 1984 presidential race, I felt I needed some time to evaluate the hodgepodge of contradictions, racism, sexism, and cultism that so revealed itself during the course of my campaign.
>
> I knew when I joined NAP that it was not black-led, and I knew when I left it was not black-led. It took longer to understand that NAP was not even a progressive organization as it also pretends.

[88] Though not all have published – but notably, see Ortiz (1993; 2003).

> Be that as it may, I probably still would not take the time to write about the organization. However, as a long-time activist who made the mistake of joining NAP, and who served on the organization's "Central Committee," I believe I have a responsibility to reveal the intense psychological control and millions of dollars Fred Newman employs to get well-meaning individuals in our communities (they target the black community), to viciously attack black leaders, black institutions, and progressive organizations for purposes of building Newman's power base (Serrette 1987).

These accounts, as Serrette indicates, are usually written because ex-members feel they have a responsibility to others to share their experience, to expose the inner workings of the organization they belonged to. Others, who may not have written autobiographies, have participated in media interviews and found other avenues for telling their stories. Why might this be so? Apart from the question of responsibility, and following Herman (1992), telling the story of their experience is a way to both reassert agency and reclaim their own ability to interpret their experience after having ceded that to the NT. In this reclaiming of their own narrative they also may also move towards resolution of the dissociation experienced between their felt experience and the official narrative allowed by the group. Telling the story from their own perspective, rooted in their own experience, allows the individual to process that experience vividly, centrally, with focal attention, and, in putting language to their experience, it is stored in explicit memory, thus integrating the traumatic memories previously segregated in implicit memory. Unintegrated traumatic memories continue to intrude and disturb daily life years after the fact (Herman 1992). From a trauma viewpoint, telling the story is an imperative for resolving Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Herman 1992; van der Kolk, McFarlane, and Weisaeth 1996).

These personal narratives also bring to the external world, the "inside story" that would otherwise remain under wraps. These narratives can uncover hidden issues, clandestine events, and help to explicate the complex social and emotional forces at work (De Vault 1999; Laslett, Maynes, and Pierce 2000) in the situation of extreme influence of the total organization. Asch (1951) described the societal importance of this task:

> [T]he greater man's ignorance of the principles of his social surroundings, the more subject is he to their control; and the greater his knowledge of their operations and of their necessary consequences, the freer he can become with regard to them (p. 268).

The exposure of the inner workings of such groups may also allow for the possibility of sanctions to be applied in cases of ethical and criminal breaches.

In these varying ways, autobiographers (ex-members) therefore become "knowing, active subjects" (Knorr-Cetina 1981 p. 3) who reclaim their own experience by interpreting it themselves, examining the cult leader's interpretations critically, remaking their own interpretations, and bringing the interior life of the group into the public eye for evaluation.

Not having suffered trauma, nor having entered a "fictitious world" of "monstrous lies" (Arendt 1948/1979), former GPers do not have this "narrative drive" (Levi, Belpoliti, and Gordon 2001). While they may work in different groupings, such as in José's case, and may harbor some resentments at their treatment by various individuals, or in a particular local, they do not seek to "expose" the inner workings or deceptions of the group. They may disagree with certain actions, and may or may not continue to voice those disagreements. But as such actions were generally not carried out behind a veil of deception, there is no drive to unmask them, contrary to the seemingly benign veil of therapy/theater/independent-politics of the NT.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have shown how language is used in the NT in the service of concealed strategic communication. The NT, and Newman, more specifically, uses concealed strategic communication in order to pursue a private agenda of domination and exploitation, not made public to followers who are led to believe they are pursuing a revolutionary and liberatory social and personal agenda. The elements of Newman's concealed strategic communication discussed here include: the shoring up of dissociation by disabling followers' autonomous use of language and interpretation of their own experience; the imposition of total ideology (which, among other things, justifies the

follower's isolation), and the gearing of communication to reduce critical thinking through the use of loaded language and peripheral route processing.

I have discussed how a total ideology contributes to the dissociation of individuals' thought processes, shoring up the dissociation already put in place through the induction of fright without solution. The language of totalism thus has two aspects – to contribute to the processes of dissociation by creating confusion and forbidding individual construals of personal experience, and, once dissociation is in place, substituting the total ideology as the only allowable construal.

In contrast, the GP practices a (sometimes flawed) form of communicative action in which considerable care is taken to explain processes and to have clear, understandable communication. The consensus-seeking process, while it may be frustrating and inefficient at times, is fundamentally concerned with airing a variety of opinions about specific topics with the goal of achieving mutual understanding to coordinate action.

Learning to inspect and analyze totalist discourse is a key element in understanding the processes of totalism. Further, the reassertion of "communicative agency" by former members of totalist groups through oral or written autobiographical narratives is an important source of both in-depth knowledge of the processes of totalism, and of data about otherwise concealed activities – data which would usually not be available to researchers (Ayella 1993; Lalich 2001b).

The markers of totalist discourse—a dissociating rejection of individual construals of individual experience, a total ideology, loaded language, and peripheral route processing of those beliefs—are not the same as deviant, odd, extreme, magical, or other types of beliefs that may, perhaps, be distasteful to the mainstream. Rather, the analytical focus needs to be on these structural and functional markers of discourse which can identify a totalist system as the source of such discourse. These analytical tools can potentially be of great help in identifying totalist systems from the "outside", without the difficulties and risks inherent in entering such systems.

Chapter 13

Conclusion

> *While isolation concerns only the political realm of life, loneliness concerns human life as a whole. Totalitarian government, like all tyrannies, certainly could not exist without destroying the public realm of life, that is, without destroying, by isolating men, their political capacities. But totalitarian domination as a form of government is new in that it is not content with this isolation and destroys private life as well. It bases itself on loneliness, on the experience of not belonging to the world at all, which is among the most radical and desperate experiences of man.* (Arendt 1948/1979)

Introduction

The core theoretical proposition of this study is that totalist systems achieve deployability in group members through the induction of a primary, disorganized attachment of members to the charismatic authoritarian leader, or group as proxy. This is achieved by establishing the organization as the sole safe haven available to the group member. The restriction of alternate, "escape hatch" attachment relationships is thus a critical aspect of the system. Further, as alternate attachments are forbidden at a structural level, so the imposition of an absolute ideology forbids the consideration of alternatives to the group at the cognitive, or symbolic, level. Within this structurally and ideologically constrained environment, threat of some kind is introduced (within a cycle of assault and leniency) in order to trigger attachment behaviors—the seeking of proximity—to the group. It is in this seeking of proximity that the strength of the bond to the group develops. I proposed that disorganized attachment, resulting from the group's construction of a situation of "fright without solution", would be observable in an individual's discourse about his or her relationship to the group. This discourse would also reflect the constriction of thought brought about by the constricted totalist language.

Thus there are three interconnected threads:

1. At the *structural* level, a charismatic authoritarian leader sets up a steep hierarchy based on a strong bond to him or herself, while simultaneously removing alternate attachments from followers. Secondary leadership is unstable.
2. At the *emotional or affective* level, the leader provides attention, “love”, leniency, to create a sense of safe haven, while also setting up conditions of fear arousal or threat (assault element of the assault/leniency cycle). Fright without solution results with associated confusion, disorientation, dissociation.
3. At the level of *discourse*, the group espouses a total ideology which allows no alternative or individual interpretations, thus buttressing the isolating social structure and constricting and maintaining the segregation of followers’ thought processes.

These three elements are linked and result in the disorganized attachment of followers to the group (as the embodiment of the charismatic authoritarian leader). Once such an attachment is formed, the group member is likely to become hyper credulous—lacking the cognitive resources to think through their situation—and ultimately deployable. See Figure 4 below.

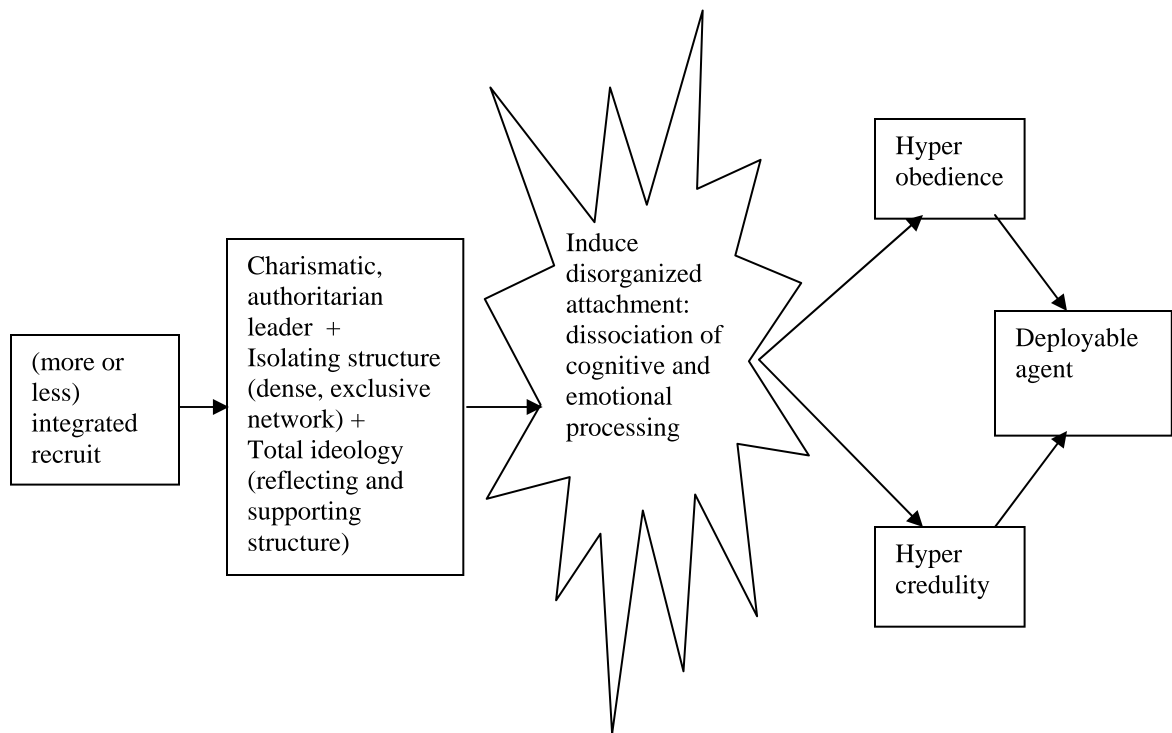


Figure 4.
The process of dis-associating cognitive and emotional processing in the creation of a deployable agent.

Findings of the study

In embarking on this study I expected to find that the NT fit the criteria I defined for an ideal-typical totalist system. As developed in Chapter 3, these criteria are:

- Leadership is charismatic and authoritarian situated in a single, living person who wields ultimate control. Secondary leadership is appointed by the leader and is subject to purges, promotions and demotions at the will of that leader.
- The system is hierarchical, with a closed, dense, cohesive and highly centralized inner network shape.

- Coercive persuasion techniques are used.
- The ideology is a total, all-encompassing ideology. Sources are few, relying heavily on the leader or prior leader's words. The ideology and its sub-parts may change at the whim of the leader.
- Attachment relationships that compete with attachment to the leader or group are controlled in order to minimize or negate alternate attachments. Members demonstrate disorganized attachment (trauma bond) to the leader or group.
- Followers are exploited.

The NT were a close fit to these criteria. Newman is a charismatic and authoritarian leader who has ultimate control over all aspects of the NT. He alone appoints the secondary leadership. The NT is structured as a highly centralized hierarchy, with a closed, densely networked inner party structure[89]. There is also an extensive peripheral membership associated with NT front groups through which members both enter and exit the inner party (although some remain more or less permanently in the periphery and never attain inner party membership). Although I expected to find a fluctuating, unstable secondary leadership, this was only partially the case: much of the secondary leadership has remained stable over many years, with occasional, though notable exceptions. The ideology of the NT is total, centered upon Newman's discourse, and is controlled by him. The ideology has changed, as predicted, at Newman's whim, depending on the opportunities discerned by him at any given time. Group members' close relationships are controlled through a variety of mechanisms (sometimes implicit rather than always explicit), thus limiting external or internal intimate and supportive ties, and instead focusing attachment on to Newman or to the NT as a group. Former NT members demonstrate a disorganized attachment bond to the NT. And finally, as evidenced by the in-depth interviews, by archival sources, and high scores on the Group Psychological

[89] Given the leader's ultimate control over all aspects of the group he or she (in this case Newman) may bypass the hierarchy and directly interact with rank and file group members. This is indicated by dotted lines in Figure 5. Such engagement across hierarchical channels also serves to destabilize the secondary leadership, a useful result for the leader who wishes to maintain total control.

Abuse (GPA) scale, followers were exploited, and subject to coercive persuasion. See Figures 5 and 6.

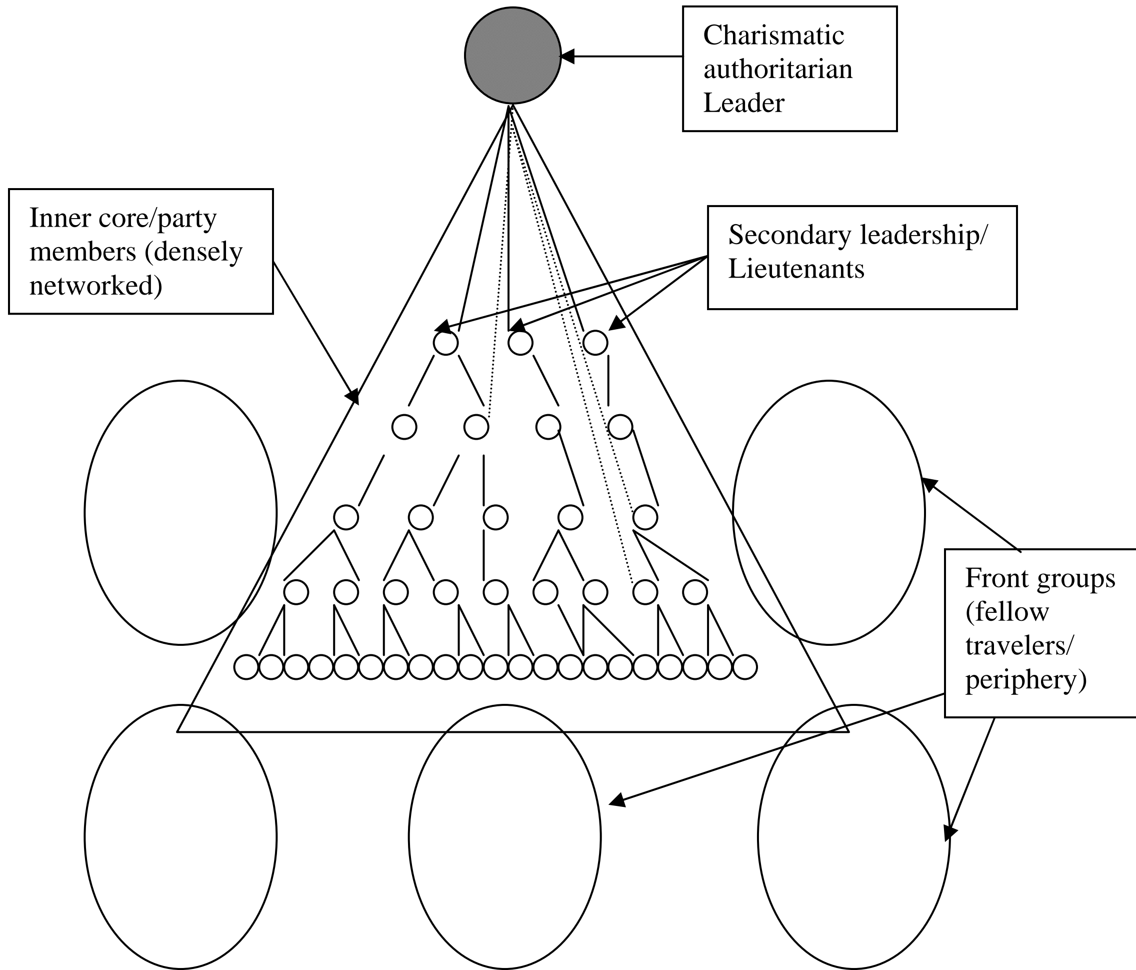


Figure 5
Structure of a totalist system

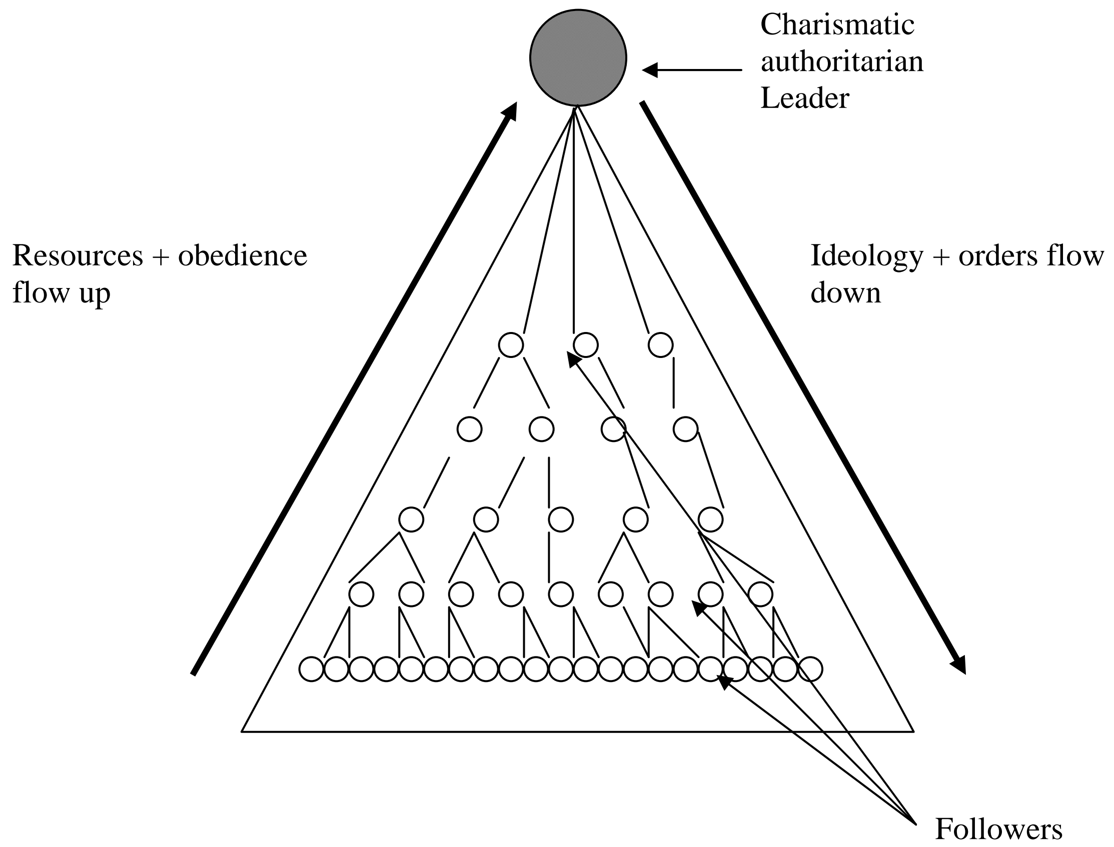


Figure 6.
Direction and quality of interactions in a totalist system

The GP, on the other hand, demonstrated none of these features of totalism. There is no single leader of the GP nationally, or in the local groups I studied, and in fact the GP remains markedly on guard against what they term the "cult of personality". Leadership is elected democratically at all levels of the GP, and is often rotated in order to avoid the problems of depending on individual leaders, and any potential concentration of power. The structure of the GP is decentralized and flat. Locals have only loose ties to regional or national structures, and maintain considerable autonomy. Membership is rather fluid, and criteria for membership quite lax. In other words the boundaries of the party are fuzzy and the party is not a dense, cohesive and centralized grouping, but rather, a loose collection of persons who are active, some more so than others and at different times. Former members may not even clearly see themselves as former members, but rather, as being on an indefinite "hiatus". The ideology of the GP is anchored in the Ten Key Values and Four Pillars, but beyond that multiple sources are called upon. Many individuals contribute to substantive discussions about the philosophical, strategic and practical goals of the GP. The ideology is not controlled by a single leader. The attachment relationships of GPers are not impacted by membership in the GP other than that, in a few cases, people have formed intimate attachments with other GPers they meet in the course of their tenure. No GPers demonstrated disorganized attachment to the GP. Neither the in-depth interviews nor the GPA scores indicated exploitation or mind control.

Social network patterns of group members

The entire organizational networks were not examined for this study. However, the structure of each group is at least partially reflected in followers' ego-centric networks. Before entry, both NTers and GPers had comparable numbers of close relationships (3.0 and 3.36 respectively – not a statistically significant difference), about average for Americans as reported by the 1985 General Social Survey. I had expected to see a greater difference in these before-group ties, showing that NTers had weaker close social

networks, but this was not the case. The quantity of pre-existing social ties alone was thus not a predictor, according to the data presented here, for membership in a totalist group.

Baumeister and Leary (1995) state that cults "attract people who are socially isolated or lonely" (p. 522). However, the (granted limited) findings of this study would rather support the notion that *any type of group* may attract those who have limited social connections. Some of those groups may be cults. Whether or not that involvement turns out to be totalistic may simply be dependent on situational factors, such as the nature of the organizations these isolated persons run into, rather than a result of these persons actively seeking out totalist organizations.

Arendt (1948/1979) and Fromm (1941) both saw atomization, isolation and lack of a meaningful place in the social world resulting in vulnerable "masses" who, lacking structures that organized them in their own interests, could then become drawn into blind loyalty to totalist organizations. They did not suggest that these isolated masses would *only* be attracted to totalist organizations, but rather pointed to the lack of availability of other types of organizations that would support their class interests, such as, for example, unions. In this vacuum, totalism then has an opportunity to recruit and to further isolate followers. Arendt saw the resulting loneliness as the "common ground for terror" (p. 475) which "leaves no space" for public or private life but only has space for the "self-coercion of totalitarian logic [which] destroys man's capacity for experience and thought just as certainly as his capacity for action" (p. 474).

The *quality* of the recruit's prior network ties, and the existence of other, weak ties, may also be a factor that predicts vulnerability to cult recruitment, but that was not examined in this study. What does seem salient is how successfully the group is able to erode new members' pre-existing ties. This is where the strength and quality of individuals' social networks is likely relevant. Are people in the recruit's social network likely and/or able to resist efforts to detach them from the recruit? Thus an interesting study would be to compare the quality of pre-existing social networks of persons who either resisted or succumbed to retention attempts by a totalist group.

During their group membership the number of NTers' close relationships more than doubled to over six close persons, while GPers increased their close ties only

slightly: from 3.36 to 4.27. Eighty-one percent of NTers' close relationships were with other group members, compared to 39% of GPers. Thus dense, within-group ties, along with few outgroup ties, were found in the NT, as expected for a totalist organization, supporting, among others, Lofland's (1977) observation that intensive within-group interaction is required for conversion. Further, the NT ties were multiplex: NTers had multiple ties to one another, which could include a combination of living, working, doing therapy, socializing, studying and/or volunteering together. GPers tended to have much more separation between their GP and non-GP ties, and showed almost no change in their prior, non-GP relationships throughout the life of their membership. After leaving their groups, NTers experienced a sharp drop in close relationships (losing 50% of them on exit), largely due to losing friendships with other NTers who remained in the group. GPers showed almost no change in the quantity or quality of their close relationships after leaving the GP.

Members of both groups experienced statistically similar levels of helping and sharing of feelings within their social networks during their group tenure. I had expected to find higher levels of helping but lower levels of sharing of feelings among NTers (illustrating instrumental but not affective ties). Thus I failed to take into account the therapy culture of the NT in which sharing of feelings was central. This sharing of feelings is also a part of the "cult of confession" (Lifton 1961) in which a part of the process of thought reform is to maintain "an ethos of total exposure - a policy of making public (or at least known to the Organization) everything possible about the life experiences, thoughts, and passions of each individual" (p. 426). Thus this was a theoretical error in my initial formulation. It may also have been an error in operationalizing measures of affective or attachment ties within the group. Following Zablocki (2001) I expected to find low levels of differentiation among ties with other group members (i.e. few within-group attachment ties) but this was not successfully measured in the Close Relationships Schedule questions. A better indicator of this was found in the in-depth interviews, as reflected in results reported in Chapter Nine. These data showed some qualitative indications of such undifferentiated relationships in the NT

in ways that were not present in the GP. However future work could improve on this element of the study.

A significant difference was found in terms of sharing of doubts about their group: GPers shared doubts at a statistically higher rate than NTers, a finding which was expected. This reflects a lack of support for internal dissent within the NT, supporting the view of many scholars that would predict uniformity and high-consensus within such groups (i.e. Arendt 1948/1979, Lalich 2004, Martin 2002, *inter alia*).

Attachment to each group

I had predicted that NTers' relationship with the group would be one of attachment rather than simple affiliation and that NTers would demonstrate disorganized attachment status in relation to their group membership. I expected GPers to show neither the qualities of relationship that indicate an attachment relationship had formed (i.e. extreme distress on loss, and feeling that the group was irreplaceable) nor any signs of disorganized attachment. Both these elements were quite starkly demonstrated. Of 12 NT Group Attachment Interviews (GAI), 11 showed Unresolved/disorganized attachment status to the NT and one was borderline. Of the 11 GP GAIs, there were no signs of an attachment relationship having formed, nor were there indicators of Unresolved/disorganized attachment. The attachment subcategories were also informative and warrant further study: the majority of NTers studied tended towards the Preoccupied attachment subcategories, which would predict the intense separation anxiety they experienced on leaving the NT. All the NTers reported traumatic exits from the group, and experienced difficulty after leaving. And all reported experiences of extreme control, abuse, exploitation or trauma while in the group. GPers tended to the Secure classifications with only two of them reporting fear as part of their exiting process, and only three reporting fear or trauma as part of their experience while in the group.

During their group tenure, NTers, as predicted, experienced a high degree of control by the group over their personal attachment relationships, including relationships with family members, romantic partners, close friends and children. This control had the effect of disrupting, or weakening, these relationships. GPers' attachment relationships

were (with the exception of two persons who became romantically involved with other GPers) unaffected by their GP membership.

The NT disrupted members' close relationships, whether within or outside the group, at the same time as it attempted to strengthen members' allegiance to the collectivity. Members' entire lives became encapsulated in the group, which then made it hard to leave, or, in some cases, even to imagine life outside. This contributed to the sense that the group was a safe haven and individuals became attached to the group as the source of all the elements of life: emotional, economic, social, personal, political and cultural. GPers maintained activities such as jobs, school, intimate relationships and socializing outside the GP, and thus the GP formed only a part of their life experience during their membership. Leaving the GP was thus not seen as either a complete break, nor as an all-encompassing trauma, but rather as a relatively benign moving on, or "fading away", leaving open the possibility of later reinvolvement.

Thus the conjecture proposed at the start of this study—that members of totalist systems would demonstrate disorganized attachment to those systems—is supported by the findings. These findings, and the key role of fear or threat as a cornerstone of disorganized attachment, support and develop the work of other scholars. Zablocki (2001a) put forward a model (based on the work of Lifton, Schein and Sargent) describing a resocialization process that occurs within a totalist social structure set in place by a charismatic leader. He see the process proceeding simultaneously on both cognitive and emotional tracks leading to "states of hyper-credulity and relational enmeshment, respectively" (p. 187) and resulting in a strong attachment and dependence on the leader and other group members. He suggested that brainwashing is a traumatic process, and that therefore "psychological traces" (p. 177) should be observable in persons who have gone through such a process compared to those who have not. These psychological traces are precisely what is measured in the Group Attachment Interview, (an instrument that, while itself not yet validated, is structured closely on the AAI, a widely validated measure). However, in a refinement of Zablocki's model, this study suggests that, while the brainwashing process does indeed involve both the cognitive and emotional tracks, the essence is that it *splits and disintegrates* (or, as Bowlby would have

it: segregates) these tracks from each other, and thus prevents the integrated cognitive processing of sensory experience.

Lifton (1961) discussed a process of thought reform that takes place within a totalist environment. He viewed the process as one where, within the isolating and polarizing pressures of the totalist situation, and propelled by a fear of annihilation, the individual experiences a symbolic death and subsequent "rebirth" by which he or she merges with the totalist organization (although, as he points out, "independent elements of personal identity" [p. 435] remain, thus resulting in what he terms "doubling"). Lifton described how both the development of, and vulnerability to, these systems rises during periods of "cultural crisis and rapid historical change" (p. 437) which weaken people's "psychological moorings" (Singer and Lalich 1995 p xii). Schein's (1961) term for the same phenomenon is coercive persuasion, where individuals are changed through a three stage process: unfreezing their prior integrated equilibrium; changing their beliefs, attitudes and behaviors via an agent of change; and then refreezing these changes into a new equilibrium through rewards and social support. Schein noted that these changes were more effective as a result of "a soft approach which stimulated fear" rather than a "harsh accusing approach" (p. 174) stimulating hostility, which was more likely to breed resistance. Lalich (2004) puts a dynamic of love and fear as one of the central elements in her analysis of the cultic bond. Thus in all these scholars' work we see described the key role of fear within a dynamic of assault and leniency.

Lofland (1977) described a process that he called "total conversion". He delineated situational elements of this process: the formation of affective bonds with cult members, the lack of strong or available attachment bonds outside of the cult, and a process of intensive interaction within the cult. He alone among these scholars did not point specifically to fear as a key element in the creation of deployable agents, although he did note that, in the group he studied, all "interpretations point to the imminence of the end" (p. 58) which would undoubtedly be a fear arousing message. Similarly, his clear description of the cult-affective relationships by which followers "balmed their collective wounds" (p. 60) is reminiscent of the attachment safe haven concept.

None of these scholars suggest that *all* persons in situations of totalist thought reform become successfully resocialized into deployable agents. In fact, most of these studies suggest a range of individual variations in response to the situational pressures. However these studies (and the history of last seventy odd years), along with the classic social psychological studies of Milgram (1974), Asch (1952), Sherif (1937; 1961) and Zimbardo (1999), do indicate that the majority of persons are susceptible to some considerable degree to the pressures that occur within totalist systems and that it is predominantly situational, rather than dispositional factors that help or hinder individuals' ability to resist such pressures.

Discourse and ideology

As expected, the language of NTers was significantly impacted by their group membership. Language was used as part of the NT's concealed strategic communication, and contributed to the shaping of members' thought processes, as would be predicted by the linguistic relativity hypothesis. This shaping took place through a variety of means including instructions to decouple conversation from experience and feelings, the use of loaded language, the imposition of a total ideology and the privileging of peripheral over central route processing, all of which served to constrict independent thought. However, contrary to the linguistic relativity hypothesis, the experience of NT membership then also shaped the language of members, which shaping could be seen, in some cases, many years after the fact. NT membership affected thought processes (through inducing disorganized attachment) of members which in turn could be seen later in the language usage observed in the Group Attachment and semi-structured interviews. This was seen in the slips and disoriented elements of the GAIs, and in the reporting of canned, loaded language in the group, as well as ongoing and sometimes unconscious use of that language. Some NTers discussed continued difficulty with trying to move away from the loaded NT language while others simply noted their strong distaste for the NT manner of discourse. Several NTers created autobiographical accounts of their experience in the NT after leaving in order to either warn others, and/or to make public illegal or unethical activities they had witnessed, and to thus make public the "concealed" story of the NT.

Some produced such accounts in order to gain an autonomous understanding of what they had experienced.

No GPers drew attention to the manner of GP discourse. Their accounts of their experience were "fresh" and did not contain loaded language, nor the slips and disorientation characteristic of disorganized attachment. Certain key terms did recur, for example, references to the Ten Key Values and processes such as consensus-seeking, but these were concrete descriptors rather than the "thought-terminating clichés" of loaded language. GP discussion and GP materials focused on particular elements of a particular ideology rather than over-arching absolute principles (albeit with some exceptions on the part of individuals). The overall effort within the GP was to engage in communicative action to reach mutual understanding to coordinate action. No GPers in this study wrote their own autobiographical accounts of their GP membership after leaving, likely as a result of not feeling the need to expose any internal workings of the GP as these were, on the whole, and in principle, open and transparent.

A theory of disorganized attachment in totalist systems

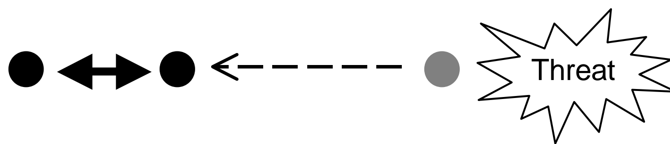
In this section I will summarize a theory of disorganized attachment in totalist systems. A totalist system comprises the six features detailed at the beginning of this chapter: a charismatic authoritarian leader, a closed, dense hierarchy, the use of techniques of coercive persuasion, a total ideology, the removal or constraint of competing attachment relationships and the exploitation of followers.

Disorganized attachment

A schematic diagram of secure, organized attachment is sketched below in Figure 7. The caregiver is represented by the circle on the left, and the subject by that on the right. When the subject experiences threat, he or she will seek proximity to the caregiver as shown in the second element of the diagram. The caregiver is then functioning as a safe haven. Once the threat has passed, and the subject has achieved comfort, he or she will then seek to explore his or her environment once more. The caregiver is now functioning as a secure base. This relationship is open, flexible and responsive. In the cases of

Preoccupied or Dismissing attachment, the subject is respectively more clingy or more distant. The Preoccupied tend to remain in a proximity-seeking mode, while the Dismissing remain in an exploratory mode. In all three cases, however, the attachment is considered *organized* and therefore somewhat predictable and reliable for the subject. They are able to adapt, more or less, and function in an organized manner in relation to their attachment figures.

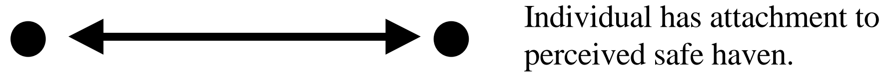
Secure attachment



Attachment figure provides **protection**: a **safe haven** from situations of threat

After threat has passed, individual returns to exploration. Attachment figure is used as a **secure base**

Figure 7
The Attachment bond – Secure Attachment (Organized)



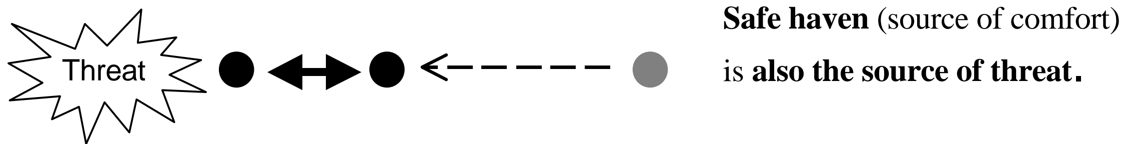


Figure 8.
Disorganized Attachment or the Trauma Bond

In disorganized attachment however, threat emanates from the attachment figure (who is either frightening or frightened). When the subject experiences fear arousal he or she seeks proximity with the attachment figure. However this does not attenuate their fear arousal, and may, in fact, exacerbate it, as they are approaching the source of fear, rather

than escaping it. Thus the attachment strategy fails in its goal of terminating fear arousal and achieving comfort, leaving the individual in a condition of fright without solution. The individual's thought processes disorganize, resulting in a segregation of systems, the segregation of explicit and implicit memory (i.e. higher cognitive processing is no longer integrated with more "primitive" areas of the brain involved with processing sensory inputs regarding the relationship in question). The individual is thus cognitively confused, disoriented and dissociated. Further, failing to achieve comfort means he or she is not able to terminate his or her attachment (proximity-seeking) attachment behaviors, and thus does not return to explore his or her environment. The bond to the caregiver is strengthened at the same time as the subject's cognitive processes disorganize.

As described in Chapter Three, the personal history of the totalist leader, and particularly his or her early attachment experiences, is likely to be rooted in unresolved loss or trauma, consistent rejection, and lacking, as Miller (1980) suggests, any "benevolent witness" (another way of conceptualizing an "escape hatch" from the condition of fright without solution)[90]. Thus the leader learns the dynamics of disorganized attachment from his or her caregiver(s), and perhaps, later in life, from other totalist leaders with whom they may temporarily associate (during which time they may also learn organizational methods that support these dynamics). Disorganized attachment predicts interpersonally controlling and sometimes violent behavior, both of which are seen in totalist leaders.

The leader creates the organization initially through one (disorganized) dyadic relationship at a time. These relationships are then networked organizationally with the leader controlling the organization, the total ideology that supports it, the systems of isolation and fear arousal, and the overall shaping of programs and activities[91]. Thus, at the meso level of the organization, a quantity of networked, dyadic relationships grow to

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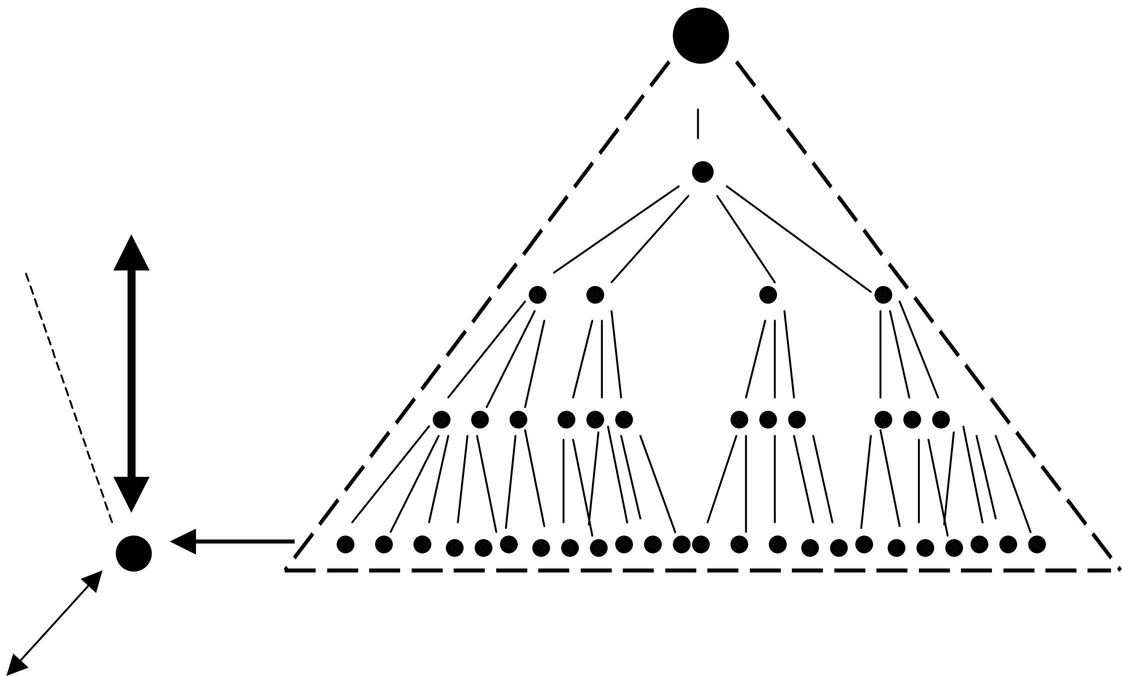
[90] Access to Newman's early history is lacking, with the exception of some details discussed earlier in Chapter Six. Thus this element is not uncovered in the study.

[91] At a certain point in an organization's development, it becomes possible to recruit groups of persons, by merging with or taking over other organizations. However, this is a risky proposition if the other organization is totalist—as was the case with the merger with LaRouche in the 1970s—only one leader need apply. And where the other organization or group is not totalist, then the retention process still needs to occur on an individual, rather than group, level.

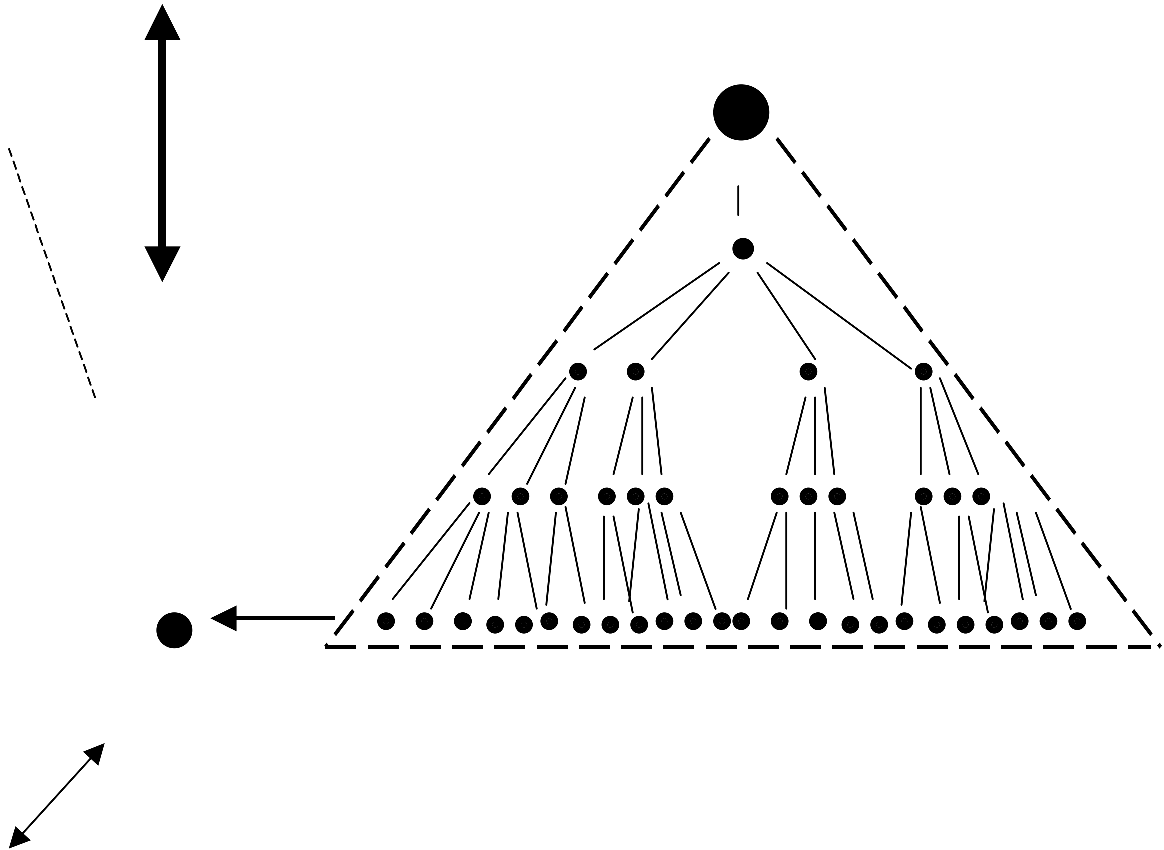
become an organization that is firmly under the leader's control. Its closed, constricting features, its total ideology, and the pattern of inducing disorganized attachment are initiated, modeled, and upheld by the leader.

Figures 9 through 11 illustrate this process at the organizational level. In Figure 9 a potential recruit encounters the organization. They are still connected in some way to relationships outside the totalist system, though of course the quantity and quality of these non-cult relationships varies by individual. Figure 10 shows the recruit beginning to weaken ties with their extra-cult relationships. The cult actively encourages such distancing, on the one hand, and on the other begins to fill up the recruit's available time with meetings, activities, within-group relationships, and so forth. As the recruit's external ties are dwindling, and their internal ties to the group are strengthening, the group starts to function as a safe haven. At that point the group can present a threat of some kind, causing the recruit to engage in attachment behaviors to seek proximity to a safe haven (Figure 11). Having lost prior potential safe haven attachment relationships, they approach the group, which is also the source of threat. If recruits lack external, or strong internalized "escape hatch" attachments, they find themselves in a condition of fright without solution: the bond to the group strengthens, at the same time as the failed attachment strategy causes cognitive confusion, disorganization and so forth. The total ideology can now be consolidated as a new explanation of the individual's experiences to resolve the recruit's cognitive confusion. The recruit is now in a position to become a hyper credulous, hyper obedient, deployable agent willing to implement the leader's orders.



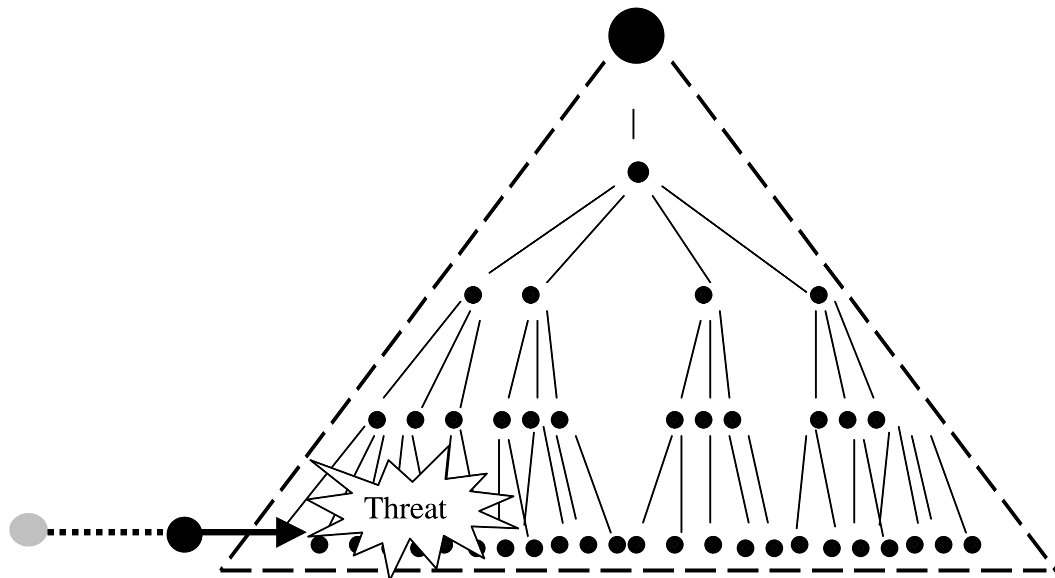
Recruit encounters the group. External network is still intact.

Figure 9.
Meeting the Totalist Group



Recruit is pulled away from external attachments. Group is positioned as safe haven.

Figure 10.
Entering the Totalist Group



Threat emanates from the group. Alternate attachments have been stripped away. The group is the only safe haven available. The individual forms a strong, disorganized attachment bond to the group.

Figure 11.
Formation of trauma bond, or disorganized attachment, to the totalist group

Many such individuals, united within the organization by their loyalty to the leader (or to the organization as the leader's proxy or "embodiment") and adherence to the ideology and methods it utilizes, support and maintain the organization, to greater or lesser degrees. The leader has thus created and structured a system that can reproduce these relationships of disorganized attachment and then deploy hyper credulous and obedient followers to further his personal and organizational goals. The group is now in a position to act as an organized and unified block to achieve the leader's goals and may be able to have an impact at a societal, macro level. The NT, for example, has certainly impacted New York politics, both in the city and the state. However, this has been relatively small and contained unlike the global impact of, for instance, the Al Qaeda 9/11 attacks. Other totalist organizations currently have national or global effects such as the Lord's Resistance Army which has created upheaval and great losses in Uganda. Even a relatively small totalist organization can have large societal impacts: the deaths in Guyana of Jim Jones' followers (and the congressional delegation sent to investigate him) have had long-standing cultural and symbolic impact in the larger society as an example of the human costs that can result when totalist leaders gain such complete control of followers.

In larger scale cases, as with the Lord's Resistance Army, there are then second order effects at the societal level due to a massive increase in trauma among the population – both among current or former followers as well as their family members and other external victims of LRA-initiated violence. Thus the trauma caused by such a group is visited on outsiders—not just followers—and becomes both a personal and social condition that bodes ill for the future of the society as a whole. Conditions are set in place for a generation of people to carry unresolved trauma and loss, thus repeating, and extending, the incidence of disorganized attachment in the population. This can then produce a ripple effect down the generations as this unresolved trauma is passed on in the form of disorganized attachments to children. Thus it becomes critical to address policies to increase security of attachments in the society as a whole, by providing economic, political, and emotional stability. Efforts such as national truth and reconciliation

committees are key to allowing victims safe environments in which to narrate their experiences of trauma as a means of coming to resolution with those experiences.

Both Lifton (1961) and Schein (1961) have noted variations in how individuals respond to totalist situations. And while this study does not provide data sufficient to fully develop those ideas empirically, the attachment approach does offer strong theoretical arguments to explain individual variations based on pre-existing dispositional attributes of followers. That is, the Secure would be predicted to be somewhat influenced by the system, but, as Lifton (1961) noted, to be "obviously confused" on exit, and then consciously seek to understand their experience. The Secure could also be expected to be more resilient[92], and to recover more quickly. The Dismissing might be predicted to either resist (but, as Lifton mentions, through "pseudo strengths" involving denial and repression) or to become victimizing lieutenants. The Preoccupied may be over-represented, easier to recruit perhaps, more susceptible to guilt mechanisms and identity confusion, and with a more difficult, prolonged recovery process. And the Unresolved/disorganized may also be overrepresented, and then in their trajectory through the organization, follow the paths of their dominant subclassification, as stated above. Both Lifton and Schein discussed how, in their view, it was how well integrated the personality structure of the follower was that determined their resilience to the system. Security of attachment seems a useful model by which such integration can be defined, operationalized and observed through the Adult Attachment Interview.

This theoretical approach can also help understand the formation and dispositions of totalist leaders and the resulting organizational outcomes. While totalist leaders may not be available for attachment interview analyses, the qualitative descriptions of such leaders (see above) support the model I have proposed – that totalist leaders are likely Unresolved/disorganized, or Cannot Classify, with a dominant subclassification of Dismissing, predicting behavior that is controlling of others and more likely to result in

[92] Importantly, Lifton states: "Indeed, in thought reform a prisoner had to submit to some degree of environmental influence as the price of survival. […] To survive thought reform and retain absolutely no trace of its influences was an ideal impossible to achieve" (p. 149)

interpersonal violence (Lyons-Ruth and Jacobvitz 1999). Violent offenders with such attachment styles are over-represented in clinical and prison populations (IJzendoorn, Feldbrugge, Derks, C. de Ruiter, M.F.M. Verhagen, M.W.G. Philipse, C.P.F. van der Staak, and J.M.A. Riksen-Walraven 1997). In this study I have shown that Unresolved/disorganized status is an attribute of the relationship between followers and their group. Taking this into account, along with situational pressures and total ideologies that emerge in the isolated, rigid confines of totalist organizations, we can predict that the controlling behaviors found in totalist groups are often likely to develop into violence. Normal self-protective mechanisms of followers are sidestepped through the processes outlined above, and resulting ego dystonic behaviors can occur. These behaviors, molded as they are by the highly controlling persona of the leader, are rarely benign, and given the right set of circumstances can become physically, as well as psychologically dangerous.

At the meso level of the organization, attachment theory clarifies why the particular features of totalism cluster together in predictable ways to make up this distinct social form. In order to be able to control followers—to create a guaranteed attachment—the leader needs to isolate the follower from alternate attachments (or even the internalized representation of such attachments), in order to induce "fright without solution". Thus the structure must be rigid, both structurally and ideologically, to remove and prevent such attachments. Further, internally to the system, alternate attachments must be minimized and controlled, while still embroiling the follower in "intensive interaction" with others. Therefore the totalist system must walk a fine line: interpersonal interaction is required, in order to keep the follower tied into the system, yet these relationships must not be so close and trusting that followers can share their honest perceptions about the system together[93]. If followers were able to do so, and gain social support for their perceptions of reality, they risk re-integrating their thought processes, and being able to think their way out of the cognitive and affective trauma bond, and they may also form dissenting minorities to threaten the system. To prevent this, then, the

[93] Zablocki refers to this as interchangeability or "low level of differentiation in affective ties between one alter and another" (p. 184) – in other words, these are "replaceable" and thus not attachment relationships.

intensive interpersonal interactions, as Schein (1961) states, must be ritualized, rather than functioning in informal and private ways in order to give feedback about the reality of the situation. Further, Schein notes the elimination of the private, or as Arendt (1948/1979) would say, the collapsing together of the private and the public realms, thus annihilating both. Thus we see the predictable organizational control of personal life, including, particularly, areas of potentially threatening (to the system) attachments, namely: close friendships, family relationships, sexuality and reproduction.

At the macro level, attachment theory predicts increasing insecurity of attachment during periods of social crisis and upheaval (Bowlby 1988). Further, an increase of Unresolved/disorganized attachment would be expected in times of both the post-modern condition of atomization and loneliness and during times of society-wide trauma and loss such as war, epidemics, natural disasters and so forth (Lifton 1993). This helps to explain the rise of totalism during such periods. There are several resulting causal effects. On the one hand an increased incidence of Unresolved/disorganized or Cannot Classify persons means more potential controlling and violence-prone individuals in the population. There may also be people who are generally isolated, regardless of attachment status, who are looking to belong (Baumeister and Leary 1995) and seek to join groups in a general way. There may also be more insecurely attached and vulnerable persons who are less resilient to totalist retention processes. Further, if families and communities are weak or dispersed, individuals have fewer available secure attachments which might mitigate or pull against totalist recruitment and retention. And finally, totalism can, itself (unless mitigated by society-wide reconciliation or recovery processes), set up the conditions for its own reproduction by creating conditions of social upheaval through war and terror—thus leading to an increased potential for future Unresolved/disorganized and insecure attachments.

The limits of the study

Internal validity

This study set out to measure and compare differences in attachment status, social networks, and patterns of group and individuals' discourse in two groups: one which fit

the ideal-type of a cult, and one which did not. Several features ensure internal validity. I employed a strategy of triangulation of data through use of multiple and varied sources: interviews of persons active in each group across its lifespan, use of a variety of archival data covering a span of opinions, use of a validated instrument—the Group Psychological Abuse scale, and my own observations of group events. I also used a new instrument, the GAI, which I first piloted, and then introduced in this study. The GAI is closely modeled on the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) which has been validated across a wide range of studies.

The GAI demonstrated significant differences in group attachment status between the two groups, which were also strongly differentiated by the Group Psychological Abuse Scale. A remaining and key weakness in the study, however, is possible bias and subjectivity in coding the GAI as I was the only person involved in coding. I did initially verify coding of specific passages of several interviews with an AAI coding trainer to mitigate coder bias. However, it would further strengthen the study to have a third party blind code at least a sample of the interviews. This is a relatively simple project requiring only an available AAI coder, brief training in differences in GAI coding, and some additional funding.

As mentioned earlier, another weakness in the GAI was the lack of a specific question regarding leaving the group. This should be fixed in the next version of this instrument. The GAI is however, a potentially useful instrument for further research into coercive persuasion. The proposition that a relationship of disorganized attachment lies at the heart of this process is falsifiable through use of the GAI: it can be administered to persons claiming or believed to have been through a brainwashing process within a totalist structure and further compared with those who have not, and the theory either validated or disproved.

In terms of the measuring of social networks, there still exists some difficulty in measuring the quality of the relationships within the totalist system. I had attempted to measure sharing of feelings, helping, and sharing of doubts. Part of this was to operationalize the ability to gain social support for perceptions of reality from others, as well as support in articulating dissenting opinions – and this does seem to have been

effectively measured by the questions on sharing doubts. But an elusive element remains – the question of the weakening of within-cult attachment relationships to other individuals. I had attempted to get at this through the questions of sharing of feelings and helping, but these were not adequate for the task. Thus this is an area requiring improvement. Questions more directed to feelings on loss of those relationships, and other approaches drawing on the attachment literature to determine attachment relationships would work better here. In other words, a method is needed to differentiate within-group attachment relationships from undifferentiated, replaceable alters, as discussed by Zablocki (2001a). On the other hand, the quantity of close relationships was effectively measured, using simple questions drawn from the GSS.

An inductive process was used to analyze discourse used by the group, which resulted in stating several analytical dimensions: communication to shore up dissociation, the imposition of an absolute ideology, the use of loaded language, and peripheral route processing. I examined spoken and written discourse occurring in a variety of settings: interviews, observation of events, web sites, printed materials and broadcasts. These dimensions are suitable for use in future research along these lines and could certainly be more fully defined, validated and extended.

Finally, a key issue remains in terms of the retrospective nature of the interviews. The participants in this study were all former members of their groups. I had expected that it would be difficult to recruit current NTers into the study, and indeed none came forward to be interviewed. This difficulty was not encountered with GPers, but to keep the comparison groups similar, and thus preserve a valid comparison, I thus chose to focus on former, rather than current GPers as well. The fact that I interviewed former members does not invalidate the GAI results, however, as the GAI is closely modeled on the AAI, which is specifically designed for analyzing retrospective accounts, and is, in fact, targeted to the very process of recalling and narrating memories of events and relationships. The semi-structured interview accounts of participants supported each other's narratives, and, along with archival data, provided triangulating data for verification of these accounts.

As participating in the study was strictly a voluntary process, both groups were self-selected. Therefore it is possible that a self-selection bias exists. But the fact that the results of the GAI and the GPA were so starkly different between the two groups would also tend to moderate any likelihood that the results are specific to the conditions of retrospection and self-selection.

External validity

As mentioned above, current members of the NT did not step forward to participate in this study. This is a predictable response that fits the overall isolating, controlling and secretive features of a totalist organization and is a fundamental obstacle facing any researcher of such systems (Ayella 1993; Lalich 2001b). So, although this may be a self-selecting group of former members, the use of the GAI to look at impacts of membership after the fact can be generalized to former members of other groups. Where access to *current* members is available, it would be very interesting to administer this instrument to ascertain its effectiveness in that context. The AAI has been used with clinical populations, and its validity upheld in those instances, and so I would fully expect to see equivalent and valid results with current group members should they be available.

Equally, the NT is just one totalist group. It shares a set of characteristics with many other types of totalist systems, but also has many particularities: it is not, for instance, geographically isolated in a compound, it is not involved in armed struggle (though it does reportedly have weapons), and it is political and not religious in its ideology. But in this study I was concerned with how the combined set of characteristics that define a totalist system affect social networks, attachments and discourse. Thus, the unique features of the NT do not theoretically alter the expected outcomes. Any group that shares that set of totalist characteristics would be a suitable candidate for replicating this study as long as former (or, less likely, current) members are available and willing to participate.

I believe that this study is generalizable to a broad range of groups and situations, and in fact, with further replications to validate the methods used, may be useful as a tool to evaluate whether or not a given group (or relationship) is totalist. The process of

isolating followers and inducing disorganized attachment that I have studied here is the same fundamental process as experienced by victims of domestic violence, kidnap or hostage victims, cult members, and persons affected in various ways (through prisons, concentration camps, the military, political parties, or even the general population) within totalitarian states. As Zablocki (2001b) has recently stated:

> There exist striking homologies in observed responses across all of these types of events, and it is right that our attention be drawn to trying to understand what common theme underlies them all (p. 194).

In more recent literature, studies of terrorism overlap with the cultic studies literature, sometimes examining the same groups; for instance Aum Shinri Kyo (Lifton 1999; Richardson 2006) or Christian Identity groups such as the Covenant, Sword and the Arm of the Lord (Jurgensmeyer 2000; Stern 2003). Stern (2003) explicitly uses Lifton's (1986) concept of "doubling" in order to understand terrorism, particularly in relation to the seemingly incomprehensible (especially in the light of evolutionary-based thinking) action of suicide bombing. Many terrorism scholars (Jurgensmeyer 2000; Richardson 2006; Sageman 2004; Zimbardo 2004) note two features of suicide bombers: that they are "not crazy in any meaningful sense of the word" (Richardson 2006 p. 117) and that: "they do not act alone; they are selected, trained, supervised, and encouraged by a group" (p. 117).

Sageman (2004), uses some of the literature on cults to argue against the brainwashing hypothesis while at the same time constructing a model that resembles, in all other aspects, a cultic system. For example, he states that the jihadists he studied, "become embedded in a socially disembedded network, which, precisely because of its lack of any anchor to any society, is free to follow abstract and apocalyptic notions of a global war between good and evil" (p. 151). He further states that: "As in all intimate relationships, this glue, in-group love, is found inside the group. It may be more accurate to blame global Salafi terrorist activity on in-group love than out-group hate" (p. 135). Here he only misses the fear, or assault element to complete the picture. Perhaps using the GAI with former, or imprisoned terrorists, would bring the rest of the picture into focus.

I believe that this study, although not of a terrorist group, could be generalizeable to the study of terrorism, and particularly suicide terrorism. It seems highly likely that the same processes are at work in the NT as are used in the recruitment and conditioning of suicide bombers and other deployable agents of fundamentalist terrorist groups. Terrorist networks buoyed by extremist ideologies do not appear randomly. They are the product of leaders who create relationships, structures and systems in which to form guaranteed controlling attachments with followers. Of course ideology is important in who the targets are (both for recruitment and attack). Certain ideologies will attract certain people in certain social conditions. But the *fundamental or total* nature of the ideology is the universal element. This is the necessary ideological reflection of the closed system, which itself is likely to be the reflection of the leader's controlling personality, seeking to capture guaranteed attachments. Doubling and the engaging in ego dystonic behaviors of followers is driven by the intensity of that dynamic. Ideological fundamentalism is the institutionalized method by which the leader creates relationships of "fright without solution" within closed, isolating organizations.

The analytical methods used here—the comparison of social networks before, during and after membership; attachment status to the group as classified by the GAI, and the nature and functions of the group's discourse as observed in the speech and written materials of the group in question—are all relevant and applicable to the broad class of social systems in which coercive persuasion resulting in hyper credulity and hyper obedience is observed.

Future directions for research

As suggested above, a key step for further research would be to apply the GAI in different contexts, to former (and perhaps current) members of a variety of groups, including other cults and terrorist groups. This can both further validate this instrument and the attachment theory approach used here, as well as further generalizing the work.

Understanding the psychology of the leaders of such groups is also clearly an important direction for future work. A relatively simple first approach would be to classify the attachment statuses (employing the AAI, not the GAI) of leaders, where

possible, though of course accessibility is a major obstacle here. Other approaches developed by attachment researchers might allow for alternate means of assessing attachment status through biographical accounts, or analysis of the leader's discourse in other contexts. In this way the hypothesis generated here–that totalist leaders can be classified as Unresolved/disorganized *or* Cannot Classify with a major sub- or alternate classification of Dismissing—could be investigated. Additionally, ongoing application of the GAI to followers may yield useful information on sub-classifications of followers, testing the hypothesis that followers would tend to be both Unresolved/disorganized in relation to the totalist group, with a sub-classification tending to Preoccupied. It may also be interesting to test whether sub-classifications differ according to position in the group hierarchy. Do lieutenants tend to lean more to the Dismissing compared to those lower in the hierarchy?

Another important area of work is the further investigation of family relationships within totalist groups, including romantic and parent/child relationships. This study has shown why interference with such attachment relationships is key to the functioning of totalist systems. I hypothesize that such interference is therefore predictable within such systems. This has direct ramifications, especially for the welfare of children brought or born into totalist groups.

Finally, it would be very useful to develop additional means of identifying totalist groups from an outsider's vantage point. Given that many totalist groups present themselves on a "frontstage" to the public through spoken or written discourse, further work to codify markers of such discourse would be useful and could be applied to prevention and law enforcement efforts.

Applications and policy ramifications

This analysis suggests several areas for attenuating the predicted ongoing growth and increase of totalist organizations. These areas are no different than those that address so many other social problems we encounter in the contemporary world. First is the need to develop integrated, resilient, open social networks that are protective and protean: able to shift shapes as the world changes. Such networks are open, overlapping, with a variety of

strong and weak ties, as well as attachment ties. They are not exclusive and closed. They are not so weak as to lack any cohesion at all, nor so strong that they isolate, control and constrain members (Pescosolido and Rubin 2000). If one strong tie falls away, another tie (perhaps previously a weak tie) must be positioned to step in. Protective social networks thus have redundancy built in. The *awareness* of the need for such networks is key, so that people can consciously work to develop them. Social structures that enhance the development of such networks are also key: neighborhoods, schools and public realms where people's ties overlap rather than being strictly compartmentalized. These are arenas in which human connections—but connections that are open, flexible and responsive, rather than rigid and closed—are facilitated rather than avoided.

This connects directly to the need for attention to early attachments, which require not only emotional resources, but also, as Bowlby (1988) pointed out, economic and social resources to support families. All of the forces—war, disease, poverty, natural disasters and atomization—that are pulling at communities and families are implicated. In that sense an increase in totalist organizations is merely one more dangerous outcome of the Age of Fragmentation (Lifton 1993). On the other hand, the steps we take to resolve many of the other troubles of our time can pull the social forces towards integrated, supportive social relationships that may mitigate the factors that lead to totalism. Potential solutions thus support and strengthen each other, which can give us needed hope through the benefits of synergy across these various efforts.

As we further define and understand totalism, we can also provide tools which can be used to establish legal sanctions on groups that violate criminal laws and/or human rights. This work is already taking place in Europe (de Cordes 2006) and perhaps can be extended in the US. This is particularly important given the current trends towards weakening social networks: weak social networks are especially vulnerable to totalism and less able, without legal precedents and means, to independently sanction totalist leaders and groups.

Education is a key element of policy that can impact this issue. Understanding the strength of the need for, and the mechanisms of, attachment, can be taught at all levels of the educational system. Similarly, the dangers and markers of totalism can and should

also be taught to children and young people so that they may protect themselves (Asch 1952; Lessing 1987). Social service agencies and workers also need to be aware of how these systems operate (Bardin 2005). This awareness can improve investigative work and methods to alleviate the difficulties faced by families locked within these systems.

Although the NT is not a terrorist group, it is armed and it does control deployable agents as well as considerable financial resources. At a minimum the public should be aware that they demonstrate all of the features of a totalist group, and as such should be approached with caution. As one former NT member reported:

> You know, [although] I don't think that they are prone to violence—some other people might disagree—I do think they are extremely dangerous.
>
> **Why? What's dangerous about them?**
>
> Because I remember feeling like I would take a bullet for Fred Newman or Lenora Fulani and I would do that if they ever…if things had speeded up or if things had been different (Celia).

In focusing on this group, with its set of public operations, and relatively accessible pool of former members, I hope that I have been able to shed light—further clarified by a comparison with non-totalist Green Party locals—on the mechanisms common to a broad range of totalist systems which share a core set of features: the induction of disorganized attachment to a group through a cycle of assault and leniency within an environment where alternate attachment relationships have been removed, and where the system is supported by a total ideology. Understanding the risks associated with such combined patterns of social interaction can, on the one hand, help us be alert to developing problems, and on the other, to work to build open and supportive social networks with corresponding belief systems in opposition to the suffocating structures of totalism.

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