DORIS MCILWAIN

# IMPATIENT FOR PARADISE

Charisma, Personality and Charismatic

New Religious Movements

This book was originally a thesis, submitted in 1990, which was awarded

the Tasman-Lovell university medal from the University of Sydney.

*Some find themselves in life*

*like Michelangelo's prisoners in stone - eternally*

*almost free.*

Doris McIlwain (1990)

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## Overview of the study - a Model of Personal Change

This book asks two questions: why does one person (rather than another) feel drawn to New Religious movements?   And why are they drawn to one style of movement rather than another?

It considers the adequacy of existing explanatory accounts of recruitment to New Religious Movements [NRMs], from being brainwashed to being an active seeker.  By NRMs I mean those groups defined by their doctrinal innovation or importation from another culture, and formed around a charismatic leader. The Brainwashing or coercive persuasion paradigm assumes that there are no predisposing features of those who become involved in NRMs.   Others think psychology is over-emphasised, like a sociological account by Snow Zurcher and Ekland-Olsen (1980) which seeks to redress overly exclusive attention to psychological variables.   Their model emphasises the importance of structural variables such as the existence of 'discretionary time' and having a friend involved in the NRM.

My work shows that a psychological focus in explaining movement involvement need not entail a de-emphasis of the relevance of current life circumstances, such as social bonds, and life stress, nor a failure to

acknowledge the importance of the group's ideology in lending definition to a person's felt difficulties.

I propose a new model of personal change.  I call it the *Rites de Passage* model to acknowledge its beginnings in Anthropology in 1908 with Van Gennep's work.  It actually is made up of three broad rites. Many researchers have suggested the same three, which include the *disruption* of the life environment and sense of identity*, transition* where one is not what one was, nor yet what one will become – a vulnerable, troubled and doubting time for many, *and reincorporation* where one arrives at a new sense of self, new lines of association, with a new socially-sustained identity and, sometimes, a new name. I suggest that conversion can be viewed as an example of re-socialisation. The historical lineage of the model is traced from Van Gennep's (1908) anthropological work to studies of brainwashing in the work of Schein (1957) and Lifton (1961).

Since the emphasis is on the profile of a seeker, specific focus is placed on the early phases of this process where disruption occurs in existing coping techniques and social supports as a result of disruptive life events, and consideration is given to other relevant precursors of movement involvement.

Lofland and Stark's (1965) model forms the conceptual framework from which literature regarding differences in life stress, social bonds, prior behavioural involvement in NRMs, and prior cognitive spiritual orientation can be addressed. The work of Galanter (1980, 1989), Barker (1981, 1984), Heirich (1977) and Snow and Phillips (1980) provides

substantial evidence for the existence of pre-existing differences between affiliates (who make contact with such movements) and non-affiliates (who do not).

This book addresses two forms of differential involvement asking

    i)       why does one individual rather than another become involved

    ii)     with a given genre of movement rather than another?

The Rites de Passage model proposed here, which is a modified version of Lofland and Stark's (1965) account of cult conversion, is tested placing NRMs in a comparative context with a secular self-help agency: a therapy group. People with disrupted social identities might seek movement involvement, but what distinguishes whether they seek out a secular or spiritual movement, and if spiritual – what determines the appeal of eastern or western spiritual groups?

To explore these questions, four groups of affiliates to three different eastern NRMs are compared to a therapy group, (Richardson and Kilbourne, 1984), two control groups (a student sample, and a sample from the general population) and a western NRM. There are 160 people who were involved overall.

They each completed a battery of questionnaires at point of first contact with the movement, to distinguish what lead up to movement involvement from what might happen after belonging. Exceptions to this were the western NRM (who were already members) and the inclusion of a graduate re-birthing group (who had done three months of

intensive re-birthing training. They were deliberately included to make it easy to compare attributes of people pre-involvement and post-involvement.

Measures were completed regarding life events and their psychological impact using Henderson, Byrne and Ducan-Jones' (1981) recent life events inventory and impact scales using a twelve month time frame. A modified version of the Interview Schedule for Social Interaction (by Henderson et al, 1981) was used to assess the availability and adequacy of acquaintance-level and intimate bonds in the recent past. Mental health was assessed using Galanter's (1980) General Wellbeing Scale and Tellegen's Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (1982).

Recollections of early family relations were assessed using Likert scales derived from the detailed comparative study by Ullman (1982) which supported the psychoanalytic hypothesis regarding troubled early parental relations, suggesting that current life difficulties re-evoked early life problems.

Since disruption is seen as a necessary but not sufficient condition for movement involvement (Greil, 1977) the therapy and eastern groups were not expected to differ from each on the disruption and loneliness measures, and they did not differ. They were expected to have experienced more disruption in greater isolation than the control groups and those already belonging to a spiritual group – namely the western NRM. The therapy and eastern NRM groups did differ from the others in these respects.

The value-added form of the model merely specifies that a substrate of stress and disruption suffered in relative isolation and loneliness will increase the probability that some form of social agency will be sought. Disruption experienced in relative loneliness is the first component of differential recruitment to movement involvement, or 'differential openness' as it is termed here. So the brainwashing model does not hold as there are differences between those drawn to movements compared to control groups.

Do personality differences contribute to which movement genre appeals? A strikingly different personality profile emerged of those drawn to eastern NRMs. Differences were predicted and found between the eastern groups on the one hand and therapy group, control groups and western group on the other, when personality variables were considered. Relevant features of the profile included: a lack of traditionalism, a challenging attitude to conventional authority (assessed by Ray's (1971) balanced F scale) and absorption - a tendency to experience perceptual phenomena indicative of an absorptive or mystical tendency (Tellegen's MPQ was used to assess this personality feature).

The eastern groups have a personality profile of being: unconventional, somewhat impulsive and highly absorptive in perceptual style. This profile distinguished them from all other groups.

Beliefs are also a big feature shaping how open a person is to one movement rather than another. There was harmony between the

orientation of the person's beliefs and the orientation of the movement. The more intensely a person believed, the more open to movement appeal they were, provided all the other lead-up features of the model had been fulfilled. A person's beliefs were assessed, at point of first contact with a movement using a spiritual orientation scale [the SOS]. The SOS was developed by me across three pilot studies using Coombs Unfolding Technique (Coombs, 1964) to produce a metric ordinal scale which assesses general spiritual beliefs (which underlie any spiritual worldview), eastern and western spiritual beliefs.

A major finding of the study was that a markedly distinctive feature of those drawn to NRMs is a spiritual orientation consonant with that of the movement approached. The SOS revealed a strongly demarcated pre-existing eastern spiritual orientation in those drawn to make contact with Eastern NRMs, which set them apart significantly from all other groups. The Western NRM, (already members of their group) had a western spiritual orientation, to the exclusion of an eastern orientation, while the eastern groups were more eclectic. Both eastern and western NRMs were spiritually more intense on the general spiritual items of the SOS, suggesting these items are central to any spiritual worldview.

All of the major predictions of the Rites de Passage model were supported. The model provides a welcome link between a sociological and psychological focus on movement involvement. The systematic differences between affiliates and non-affiliates of NRMs at point of first contact, suggest (contra contemporary brainwashing models, though not the sophisticated models of Schein and Lifton) that recruitment is

unlikely to be completely due to NRM design: the results suggest participants are likely to be interested and consenting.

In summary, it is shown that those drawn to New Religious Movements of an eastern kind are indeed non-traditional, have a high incidence of recent life events and suffer a sense of community isolation and loneliness. These are considered as factors which might lead a person to modify an unfulfilling lifestyle by seeking a social solution. More is needed to explain a person becoming a seeker.

A portrait of a seeker is lightly (sketched against a background of this dissatisfaction) which includes personality variables like an impulsive, present-oriented pleasure/pain regulatory style, being high on absorption - a mystical perceptual style, and having both an intensity and a congruence of spiritual orientation with that of the ideology of the movement approached. These are considered potential influences on the genre of movement contacted, and are suggested as explanatory of the second facet of differential openness to movement involvement.

Disruption sets a person seeking; personality shapes to which appeals s/he is open. The relative privilege of the Western NRM in terms of reduced stress, availability of community and intimate social support suggests that involvement does provide a relief effect, though caution must be exercised in interpreting this difference as these groups differ in membership status and spiritual orientation. The distress and neediness of those contacting movements for the first time is apparent, which suggests that movement contact might be a response to felt

dissatisfaction interpreted within a spiritual worldview. An eastern spiritual worldview is a highly significant distinguishing feature of affiliates, and is the final phase of the Rites de Passage Model.

Speculative theoretical consideration is offered of the data's implications for a psychoanalytic consideration of movement involvement, in the light of Cushman (1986), Deutsch (1983), Halperin (1983) Doi (1971) and Kohut's (1977). Theory and research is adumbrated concerning differential openness to charismatic appeal.

I offer a final chapter which haunted the footnotes of the original work and which I presented to a specialist group at the University of Sydney in 1992. This chapter addresses why Freud got it so wrong in proclaiming that religion an illusion with a limited future. It explores the familial and cultural origins of charisma and shows why psychoanalysis got it so right about why many seek a world of demand and response rather than one of cause and effect.

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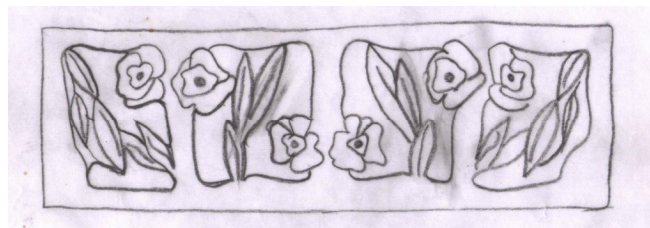
## Models of Conversion

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*The recesses of feeling, the darker blinder strata of character, are the only places in the world where we catch real fact in the making.*
William James

**1. CONVERSION TO RELIGION: PANACEA OR OPIATE?**

From its earliest beginnings, the psychology of religion has been concerned with conversion; the moment of certainty said to characterise the direct, almost mystical apprehension of the divine. A spiritualist himself, William James (1902) emphasised the 'fruits' of conversion in the benefits derived by the individual, rather than the origin of the experience. He viewed ontological questions as beyond the scope of psychological enquiry. Freud (1927) was not so chary. For him the 'outside agency' was a projection of early parental relations, and religion, an illusory alliance with a powerful deity deriving from wo/man's need to understand and be protected from the superior and crushing forces of nature. Religion was assumed to have an explanatory and consolatory function. It was a compensation for the renunciation of instinctual gratification required by civilized life. Like Marx, he asserted that the god(s) we create and use have their drawbacks. In so far as religion is a fantasy solution to stress, it can be seen as promoting the conservatism of adaption to the status quo, rather than taking action on one's dissatisfactions to bring about a new social order (Marx and Engels, 1964). To Marx, religion was an opiate; to Freud, an illusion with

a limited future. Illusion or otherwise, religion has not had the limited future Freud suggested. Nietzsche's (1882) proclamation of the death of god and the secularisation literature of the 1960's notwithstanding (Shiner, 1967), religion has a virulent new growth in what have been termed religious cults. New Religious Movements [NRM], as I shall term them, provide unusual challenges to these historical perspectives on religion. Yet certain issues endure. Modem research is still concerned with the explanatory and consolatory function of religion and conversion. Conversion is still a special issue: it forms the major avenue of recruitment as, by dint of cults' "deviant" status, few are born into them. It is perhaps testimony to the importance of the issues NRMs raise that not all accounts of conversion to them have been dispassionate and scholarly.

Accounts vary from those who see it as an instance of brainwashing, to a perspective to secular problem-solving agencies (Kilbourne & Richardson, 1984), such as therapies and the flourishing natural health agencies, to those who regard it as a product of a spiritual calling.

## 1.1 The Challenge of New Religious Movements

Eister (1972) describes cults as "deviant but non-schismatic bodies" meaning that they do not derive from any parent religion within the community. They are deviant due to doctrinal innovation or importation. If innovative (like the Jesus Movement, or Pentecostalism), their heresies may be subsequently incorporated into the orthodoxy. If their cult status derives from their importation from countries of Eastern religious traditions, (like the Nichiren Shoshu, Rajneeshism, and the

Divine Light Mission) then they are likely to continue to be regarded as cults despite length of history in the new culture. Being non-normative 'alternative' systems of belief and devotion, cults are characterised by Yinger (1970:279) as "religious mutants, extreme variations on the dominant themes by which [wo]men struggle with their problems." The 'deviance' implicit in the definitions of cults has come to have connotations richer than mere non-normative status; the term cult is quite pejorative in America (Beckford, 1979). For this reason, they will be referred to as New Religious Movements in this study.

In contrast to Marx's characterisation of religion, far from endorsing the status quo, cults are often quite millenarian western or mystical eastern belief systems. There are a number of features of NRMs which have led to their being viewed as threats. Some of the following characterise *some* groups:

- An unconventional belief system

- Visible changes evident at joining (e.g. in name and attire)

- Communal lifestyles and the removal of people from their past social ties (termed encapsulation)

- Experimental sexual mores

- Followers labour without receiving individual remuneration

- The 'spiritual master' may wield excessive power (viz Jonestown), or stand to gain (e.g. Bhagwan's 100 or so Rolls Royces)

Differences in organisational structure, recruiting practices and beliefs of the various cults, are often overlooked in the portrayal of the groups in media and some research. Such a blurring of distinctions hinders

accurate understanding of the groups. It is an example of the mechanism of prejudice where, through stereotyping, gross similarities are emphasised to the exclusion of disconfirming diversities. Beckford (1979) says that there has been a strategic or political use of language regarding cults. The Goelter Report (cited in Richardson, 1980) provides a telling example of this. It sets out a typology entitled: "Youth in Destructive Groups". The conclusions that the groups are destructive are only as sound as the evidence, which in this case is methodologically flawed. The scientific core of Goelter's report is an opinion poll where only 4% of the participants had ever attended a sect meeting, and only 25% of whom could actually name a sect. Such evocative language on so slender a scientific base makes it difficult to sort the sensational from the actual.

The construction of cults as dangerous stems from a number of practices said to characterise them, like deceptive recruitment techniques and brainwashing. The analysis hinges on a number of philosophical assumptions regarding free-will and personal responsibility. These assumptions touch the tacit beliefs shared by researchers, laymen and the legal profession alike (Beckford, 1979). The threat they pose may derive from the challenge Beckford (1979) suggests they present to "deeply rooted values of moderation, balance and responsibility". The communal ideologies and lifestyles of some NRMs, he suggests threaten an assumption that in Western democracies society is "a reasonably cohesive federation of tolerant collectivities and institutions" (p.177). They also threaten what he terms the "implicit sociology" of the layman that a "normally socialised individual is resistant to pressures towards

collective thought, sentiment and action" (p.179). Psychological research on social influence shows how tenuous is such an assumption (Festinger, 1954; Asch, 1956: Milgram, 1974).

The concern that 'normal resistance' may be undermined by NRMs may contribute to the fact that of the numerous attempts to explain conversion to NRMs, the most popular in the press is that of coercive persuasion. Delgado (1977) is a representative voice of those highlighting the resemblance of conversion to brainwashing: "The recruit never has full capacity and full knowledge at any given time. One or other is always impaired, to some degree, by cult design." The Lasher Amendment 2 and the rise of what by many was deemed to be a new cult - deprogramming (the empire strikes back) reveal the influence of this framework on how NRMs have been viewed. However, the differences among NRMs have been blurred and there is a dearth of empirical, comparative data on the applicability of features of coercive persuasion at least as brainwashing has been outlined by Schein (1957) and Somit (1968).

Systematically documented and methodologically rigorous evidence establishing the use of these techniques in "cult" recruitment is lacking. There is suggestive evidence that deceptive recruitment occurs and that emotionally taxing techniques are used by some groups, (Heftman, 1982; Conway & Siegelman, 1978) but the adequacy of the data base and the statistical conclusions are questionable (Kilbourne, 1983, 1986). There is also a failure to use the field experimenter's equivalent of control groups, by considering the extent to which such techniques may

characterise a number of accepted social groups. In the absence of such considerations, few conclusions can be drawn. Further, there is some evidence (which does not rely on a single case study: cf. Heftman, 1982) regarding the absence of brainwashing techniques (Galanter, 1980), techniques which, for the purposes of this study, include: physical restraint, information control and social pressure. There is also evidence establishing the absence of allegedly adverse outcomes of participation in activities purported to produce the symptoms of brainwashing (Kilbourne, 1983, 1986).

The implications of the coercive persuasion paradigm for psychological research is that it assumes no predisposing features of the individual, that anyone is potentially grist for the mill. Conversion is assumed to be the product of elaborate recruitment techniques rather than the product of a religious calling, and predispositions to involvement are displaced from research concern. This is not the case for Lofland and Stark's (1965) model of cult conversion, which addresses the role of psychological response to disruptive life experiences and a person's seekership or religious orientation, in predisposing a person to NRM contact.

While the part of the model dealing with these features has been accorded little credence theoretically and little direct empirical testing, it seemed ambitious to return to a model already two and a half decades in the literature, revive it with some conceptual critique and linkages made to anthropological literature (Van Gennep, 1908/1960) and Schein's (1957) work with prisoners of war, and then take very seriously the compounding effects of disruptive life events, inadequate social

resources and a religious orientation. Would the outcome of having all these things happen to one person at once, to an individual whose psychological substrate may have a vulnerability, a neediness, in part due to inadequate early parental relations, be spiritual affiliation? The conceptual overlap between this model, and the work of Van Gennep and Schein was sufficiently consistent to be inspiring. Research addressing individual parameters of the model offered data that provided further encouragement. It seemed worthy of empirical testing, given that the outcome might be a step towards systematising a lot of interesting results within a wider deterministic model.
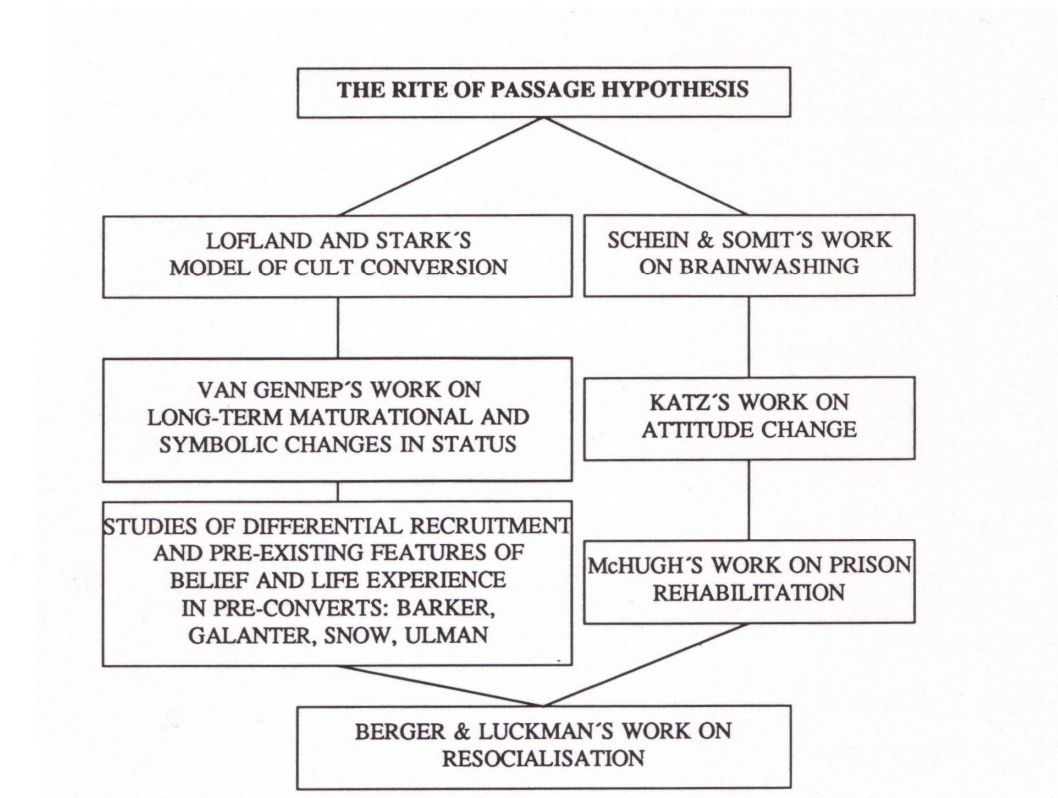


Figure 1. Literature which influenced the development of the Rites de Passage Model

## 2. CONVERSION TO NEW RELIGIOUS MOVEMENTS: LOFLAND AND STARK'S MODEL

### 2.1 A Descriptive Outline

The seven "necessary and constellationally sufficient" (p. 874) features of Lofland and Stark's (1965) model are as follows:

For conversion a person must:

1. Experience enduring, acutely-felt tensions

2. within a religious problem-solving perspective

3. which leads her [him] to define [her] himself as a religious seeker

4. encountering the cult at a turning point in her [his] life

5. wherein an affective bond is formed (or pre-exists) with one or more converts

6. where extra-cult attachments are absent or neutralized

7. and where, if [s]he is to become a 'deployable agent' [s]he is exposed to 'intensive interaction' (Lofland & Stark, 1965: 874).

An advantage of Lofland and Stark's (1965) model of conversion to New Religious Movements is its emphasis on the unique nature of religious beliefs. Since they accord religious orientation an important role in conversion, this specificity means that they escape the criticism made by Zygmunt (1972) of those motivational analyses which assume the interchange ability or "psycho functional equivalence of movements" (Zygmunt, 1972:452). While the model covers all phases of involvement, recruitment commitment and conversion, this study focuses on the features of lifestyle and personality which may 'predispose' a person to

NRM involvement most clearly assessed at the person's first contact with a NRM.

Lofland (1978) suggests that the model is an example of "qualitative process theorising" and that it is therefore perhaps of limited generality in explaining conversion to NRMs other than the Unification Church on which their series of stages was based, post hoc. Their initial formulation addressed the causal necessity and sufficiency of each of the stages for conversion to occur, and it is viewed in this light for the purposes of this study. More rigorous analysis than merely the qualitative or descriptive level is merited given their model has some prominence in the literature as a post factum ordering schema (Downton, 1980) has historical, conceptual links with Van Gennep's anthropological work and Schein's work with prisoners of war (considered in detail below), and captures the important stages of the process of conversion.

The seven features of the model are incorporated in a value-added form. In keeping with Smelser's (1963, cited in Sampson, 1971:357) original formulation, Lofland and Stark (1965) note that the "ordering principle is activation rather than temporal occurrence alone" (p. 863). However, the temporal sequence is important if one is attempting to ascertain whether certain needs and beliefs pre-dated NRM involvement, or whether they are interactional and emergent.

## 2.2 The Status of Converts' Accounts of Conversion

*Memory is words, we remember what others say and record of ourselves stones with the runes.*

<div align="right">Louis MacNeice, *Eclogues from Iceland*, (1964)</div>

Zygmunt's (1972) remark that most studies addressing the notion of movement appeals do not consult affiliates regarding their perception of movement features requires a reply. There are a number of problematic issues in using members' accounts as data. As he notes, the view of movement ideology as a Problem Solving Perspective [PSP] is the most reductive and therefore the most resisted explanation of movement involvement. Thus there are problems with 'just asking' the convert for his or her account. As Rokeach (1963) notes "There are often compelling reasons, conscious or unconscious, why [s]he will not or cannot tell us."

One important difficulty with a convert's account is its retrospective character: it is difficult to separate the effects of participation from predispositions to participate. The 'motives' for participation may only become evident in hindsight, and may then be conveyed or acknowledged in a highly rationalised form (Beckford, 1979; Mills, 1940), perhaps exaggerating the depravity of pre-conversion life and the salutary effects of participation to reduce cognitive dissonance regarding the decision to join. In short this ideology, or as Mills (1940) terms it, this 'situated vocabulary' of the cult, social desirability (Galanter, 1980) and cognitive dissonance may influence the nature of the motives or reasons avowed, or s/he just may not consciously know.

This is one reason for seriously addressing a theoretical formulation of possible predisposing variables in the form of a model that enables us to make a priori predictions, which, when empirically tested allow us to modify or reject the model. Modification or rejection occurs when predictions are refuted with adequately operationalized measures with appropriate sample groups and controlled empirical grounds. We will return to consider possible modifications of Lofland & Stark's model after considering some criticisms derived from a theoretical and empirical critique of the model.

## 3. THEORETICAL ISSUES

*There is havoc enough on familiar earth beneath familiar skies, but in a time of discoveries that overturn unquestioned beliefs, then, in small pockets of the everyday world, an inexplicable chaos may reign.*
Janet Frame (1988)

### 3.1 Disruption as Necessary Precedent to Personal Change

Lofland and Stark (1965) specify that the potential convert will have experienced problems which, while not qualitatively different from the general population, are experienced 'more acutely' and for a prolonged period of time. They provide no data in support of this claim, but suggest that their interviews with the formative members of the Unification Church [UC] in America, revealed that the nature of the tension is of 'frustrated aspirations', a concept reminiscent of Glock's (1964) notion of relative deprivation. Within the model the importance of these tensions

is in the degree to which they disrupt "old obligations and lines of action" and discredit an individual's normal coping strategies.

Since conversion is the predominant recruitment avenue for NRMs, joining a NRM religion (if any) into which one was primarily socialised. On a social-psychological level, this is an example of resocialisation (Berger and Luckman, 1967). Theoretically, it has been argued that for resocialisation to occur, some disintegration in previous lifestyle patterns must occur (McHugh, 1972; Zygmunt, 1972). Zygmunt notes that the "recruitment of adherents is significantly contingent upon the weakening of attachments at least to those arrangements it is trying to change". McHugh (1972) says that as resocialisation involves some unlearning rather than "merely the successive expansion of learned norms on a congruent base" (p.70l) typical theories of socialisation will not suffice. He suggests that 'disintegration' is a necessary precedent for resocialisation; "a fission of values making new fusions possible, not inevitable" (p.708). As his concern is with prison rehabilitation, he suggests that, "To the degree that continuing relationships reinforce the old values, the old values can be discontinued only by discontinuing the relationships" (p.704). He suggests that merely introducing new values will not introduce conforming behaviours as "the organised relationships in the inmate social system serve as vehicles for the expression of old values" (p. 704).

McHugh (1972) outlines two forms of disintegration which have since emerged, from the consistent support they have received in the

literature on movement involvement, as highly influential variables. They are:

- Normatively meaningless events - a disruption in routine
- Subverted interpersonal relationships - the social isolation of individuals.

As discussed in detail in Chapter Two (sections 6.1 and 6.2), there is reason to suppose that social bonds do not merely act as buffers from stress, but have a positive and independent contribution to an individual's wellbeing, robustness and resilience, to the extent that they affirm and sustain personal identity, and provide an interactional basis through which personal difficulties or troubles are identified and reacted to (Emerson & Messinger, 1977). Duck & Lea (1983) reject the notion "that personal relationships are formed only from affective roots and that the disruption or breakdown of relationships is merely an affective disturbance" (p.53). The incidence of anxiety and depression at the breakdown of relationships suggests to these researchers that they act as the "vehicle for the fulfilment of some deep human need" (p.55). Duck and Lea suggest that relationship breakdown acts to threaten identity. It is suggested therefore that the confluence of the two disruptive variables outlined by McHugh, namely, a disruption in routine experienced in isolation, (especially if part of the disruption is a recent rupture in significant relations likely to have provided support, relations which were difficult to find or will be to replace) may commence a rite of passage for the person as new ways of coping, and interpreting the events are sought. Emerson and Messinger (1977) suggest that if denial or withdrawal is not possible responses, there is an increased likelihood

that a person will seek an outside agency in times of trouble, and suggest that "an initially ambiguous trouble crystallizes as new ways of dealing with it are sought and implemented and prior ways are determined to be ineffective and rejected" (p. 127). Examples of such outside agencies are provided by NRMs, or psychotherapy.

## 3.2 Conversion as Rite of Passage

The possible effects of disruption of relations and in the symbolic status of an individual III producing transitions in identity has a long history, outlined in Van Gennep's classic text *Rites de Passage* (1908/1960). He addresses various communities' orchestration and ritual acknowledgement of changes in an individual's social role, contingent on their arrival at maturational or socially-defined thresholds.

A *rite de passage* in fact consists of three rites:

*Separation* - from a role previously held in society

*Transition* - a liminal state where one is not what one was nor yet what one will become; a point of great ritual and ceremony

*Reincorporation* - the reintegration of the person into his/her new role in the community, often with new name, and certainly with a new set of expectations and contingencies operative.

The generality of these stages is suggested by their echo in Schein's analysis (1957, 1973) of the attempted 'brainwashing' of American soldiers by the Chinese in Korean Prisoner of War camps in the 1950's.

He specifies a similar three stages:

*Demolition* - where attitudes and behaviour patterns are rendered 'fluid' by disconfirming an individual's definition of self and situation, or at least by providing a lack of confirmation

*Transition* - an attempt to achieve a redefinition of an individual's situation via a change in frame of reference, and/or "new standards of value and judgement" where new attitudes and behaviours are acquired from available sources of information and experience

*Restabilisation* - where new behaviours and attitudes are rendered relatively permanent, integrated into the wider personality pattern and significant ongoing relationships, (Schein, 1973:250, cited in Pentony, 1981:14).

In Van Gennep's analysis and Schein's initial work, the emphasis is on the element of 'design' by some human agency in disrupting the attitudes and behaviour of an individual. Similarly, research using the brainwashing analogy to explain NRM involvement stresses NRM strategies. In a somewhat similar vein, Zygmunt acknowledges that "many motivational analyses have given insufficient attention to a movement's agitational endeavour as an unrest-defining medium" (p. 457). However, Schein (1973:10, cited in Pentony, 1981) in his later work takes a position which informs the present study; "most disconfirmation which precipitates change comes in the ordinary course of living, from those in the immediate social environment", Since the notion that disruption precedes belief and attitude change has some theoretical and empirical support, and it has been suggested that social groups provide support for those attitudes and beliefs, at issue then is how this

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disruption occurs. A related issue is whether it occurs *prior* to contact with the NRM as a group, or contact with a NRM member. The significance of the disruption from the point of view of NRM involvement is its discrediting of a person's problem-solving perspective. This disconfirmation can occur when such a perspective no longer seems to deal with the problems an individual encounters in everyday life, or "when significant others upon whom the individual depended for the maintenance of his perspective become unavailable" (Greil, 1977:119).

It is not suggested that the *genre* of affiliative outcome is predictable from the nature of the disruption. In other words, it is not suggested that only 'spiritual problems' may result in NRM involvement. Anthony, Robbins, Doucas and Curtis (1977) suggest that the similarity in assumptions of some psychotherapies and eastern mysticism may lead some people to regard them as "*alternative* methods of changing reality by changing their perceptions of it" (p.863). Certainly a number of their sample had vacillated between the two.

These historical sources provide support for the stages of Lofland and Stark's model which concern predispositions. The research on disruption (specifically Greil (1977) and Berger & Luckman (1967)) establishes that it is a necessary but not sufficient condition for conversion, a point that is recognized by Lofland and Stark in their emphasis on the value-added form of the model. They suggest that enduring tensions on their own cannot bring about conversion. Disruption alone could lead to any number of problem-solving outcomes. The argument rests on how disruption facilitates subsequent recruitment and conversion to a NRM.

## 3.3 Disruption - Does Enduring Stress and Tension Promote Affiliation to Social Agencies?

Heirich's (1977) study of conversion to Pentecostalism uses control groups and attempts a more quantitative assessment of the influence of predisposing features. He operationalised stress in terms of stress-producing circumstances such as; major role shifts, birth order and parental background. A 'yes' to any probe regarding the occurrence of stressful circumstances in the preceding two years was sufficient to credit a respondent with 'actively-felt psychological stress'. While he found that 83% of the Pentecostal converts reported such stress (with 50% having had major role shifts) two thirds of his (Catholic) control group also reported stress and a higher proportion had been involved in major role-shifts.

Due to the fact that Heirich's (1977) study is not a direct test of Lofland and Stark's model, there are a number of ways in which it fails to test the role of disruptive tensions in predisposing a person to NRM involvement. Firstly, Lofland and Stark do not suggest that the converts' problems are objectively different from those in the general population, but that they were 'acutely' experienced and caused enduring tension. A 'yes' to a probe does not capture the impact of events on the person. The two year time-frame is perhaps broader than optimal for an accurate retrospective assessment of stress (Henderson, Byrne and Duncan-Jones, 1981).

In a direct test of the model, Snow and Phillips (1980) use an even broader time frame. They gathered data on problems4 experienced, and

the number occurring within given categories (e.g. material or characterological problems) *at any time prior to cult encounter*. Despite the fact that Lofland and Stark (1965) do not suggest that a convert's problems would differ qualitatively from those of the general population, but might merely be felt more acutely in terms of their impact, Snow and Phillips (1980:434) suggest:

> Until we know whether the problems experienced by the preconverts are greater in number and qualitatively different from those experienced by the larger population, it is unreasonable to assume a causal linkage between prestructured tension and susceptibility to conversion.

Snow and Phillips (1980) did find that preconverts had had problematic lives. Sixty-nine per cent of the sample indicated that prior to, or at the time of encountering the Nichiren Shoshu of America [NSA] they were experiencing one or more spiritual problems and 50% claimed to have had interpersonal, characterological and material problems. They suggest that it is only an uncritical look at these findings which lends support to the suggestion that acutely-felt tension is an important precipitant of conversion (Lofland and Stark, 1965; Richardson & Stewart, 1977). However, they suggest that a control group is required before any conclusions can be drawn. In lieu of a control group they used a 1957 survey of how American adults view their mental health, and 1976 survey data. Neither of these alludes to the presence of uniquely 'spiritual problems'. Snow and Phillips had suggested that the nature of the problems related importantly to the nature of the solutions sought, but waived this consideration in regard to their control

group. Those problems which were qualitatively similar in survey data and spiritual groups occurred with much less frequency in the survey data.

There was a higher incidence of problems in those drawn to the NRM, yet Snow and Phillips (1980) conclude that "our data do not indicate a state of acutely-felt prolonged tension to be a necessary precipitating condition". The importance of a control group is not contested, but the nature of their control group and the logic underlying its use are both problematic. They do not assess the duration of problems or the associated psychological impact, which leaves those details of their conclusion unsubstantiated.

Further, Lofland and Stark suggest that enduring, acutely-felt tensions are only necessary conditions. Finding that a control group had problems of a similar nature does not refute its role in precipitating conversion. The question is not how much variance this feature accounts for (as Heirich, 1977 attempted to assess) but *how* it influences conversion. The *form* of the value-added model is important. As Lofland and Stark note, problems can be resolved in any of a number of ways. It is only when such tension occurs in an individual who is open to a religious interpretation of events that such disruption will result in religious affiliation. Snow and Phillips (1980) have adequate grounds to suggest that disruptive life events are not a sufficient feature of conversion, but they do not establish that they are not necessary features. To do that they would have to find converts who had not experienced acutely-felt tensions, which Lofland and Stark (1965) suggest refer to "frustrated

aspirations" and which may span all of the categories of problems outlined by Snow and Phillips (1980:434). Snow and Phillips suggest that despite the high percentage who did claim to have problems, "many others were not aware of having had any severe problems prior to conversion" (p.435). However, they provide only sample testimonies from the movement's newspaper rather than quantitative data as to how representative these were from the samples they took. The nature of such data is problematic. The letters may not be representative and may have been selected for the newspaper to maximize movement appeal, attempting to reach even those not aware of having problems or of needing movement help.

Other studies attempting to test Lofland and Stark's model by addressing the occurrence of disruptive life events in the pre-contact phase of affiliates' lives vary in their psychometric adequacy. On a small sample of Christians (an inappropriate group to explore conversion to new religious movements) Austin (1977) found (from an open interview without specific probes as to the duration of problems and their psychological impact) that 5 out of 9 subjects 'fitted the tension condition'. Austin gives specific details as to 'why they could not continue to live as they did before' which addresses the disruptive nature of the tension. However, sample size, the freeform data and the orthodox nature of the group makes this at best a suggestive contribution to empirical testing of the model.

Seggar and Kunz (1972) also used an inappropriately orthodox group in their test of the model. They questioned subjects on life crises

experienced two years prior to joining. In assessing the psychological impact of such events, they asked the question; 'how did you feel about it at the time?' This question evoked colourful responses as to how they felt, which included: disgusted, elated, discouraged (p.180), none of which is amenable to precise interpretation regarding the degree of disruption attendant on its occurrence.

To assess the impact of problematic life events in terms of enduring psychological distress requires a study with a narrower time focus and psychometrically more precise measures. Galanter, Rabkin, Rabkin and Deutsch (1979) used a questionnaire which they composed and refined with a sample of Unification Church [UC] members. They developed 'general wellbeing' and 'neurotic distress' scales and retrospectively assessed members' scores for four time periods:

• The period deemed 'most symptomatic' (by the subject) prior to NRM contact

• Immediately before contact

• Right after conversion

• The preceding two months

Distortion due to social desirability influences was minimised by carrying out research under the auspices of the church - the leaders gave specific instructions for frankness.

It was found that members had experienced serious psychological difficulties prior to joining: 39% felt they had serious emotional problems: (30% had sought professional help and 6% has been hospitalized) whilst 23% had had serious drug problems. Their responses

yielded neurotic distress scores that were significantly higher before joining than at the time of the study, though scores on the General Wellbeing Schedule were still lower than a matched comparison group. In conclusion, Galanter et al (1979:169) wrote that prior to joining

> many were apparently experiencing considerable emotional distress, leaving them open to an alternative perspective that would provide relief.

The tighter time focus of this study is admirable. Problems still remain as with any retrospective accounts. Use of Galanter's scales with affiliates contacting a movement for the first time would mean that accounts would be minimally influenced by the 'situated vocabulary' of the NRM or the possible need-arousing and problem-finding function of NRM involvement (Zygmunt, 1972; Gerlach and Hine, 1970; Beckford, 1978; Snow and Phillips, 1980). It would permit assessment of those who discontinue involvement prior to conversion. This was an avenue of research noted as lacking by Galanter et al. (1979) and remedied by Galanter, (1980). Such measurement is attempted within this study.

## 3.4 Stress and Tension - Definitions and Techniques of Assessment

Broadly, stress can be said to arise out of the occurrence of discrete events; due in part to the period of readjustment imposed on an individual. The presence of continuously problematic life events might be referred to as *strains,* Thoits (1982). In assessing potentially stress-producing life events, the objective character of an event must be assessed independently of the response to the event. To this end, life events are typically operationally defined as experiences that cause a

person to substantially readjust her or his behaviour patterns, (Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend, 1981; Holmes and Rahe, 1967.) One of the assumptions made in positing life events as productive of stress is that "the organism is fundamentally intolerant of change" (Perlman and Peplau, 1981), which in the case of people who might be termed 'sensations seekers' might not be the case, (Smith, Johnson & Sarason, 1978). Within the 'life events as stressors' paradigm, change is seen as imposing a period of readjustment during which the system attempts to achieve homeostasis. The adverse consequences depend not only on the number of life events, and the magnitude of change imposed, but on the quality of life events as well. The quality of life events refers to such attributes as: their desirability, the degree of control people have (or feel they have) over them, and whether they are scheduled life cycle transitions. The stressing effects of negative or culturally undesirable life events seem to be the primary influences on the positive relationship found between major life events and psychological distress, as desirable events tend to produce only a slight increase in distress. The relationship between the *number* of events and later disturbance is only moderate: ranging from correlation values of .17 to .35, (cf. Mueller et al.,1977; Rabkin and Struening, 1976, in Thoits, 1982: 145). In short, some individuals who experience many events do not become distressed, while others who experience few events become highly distressed (Hinkle, 1974, in Thoits, 1982:145). These anomalies require explanation. Pearlin, Lieberman, Menaghan and Mullan (1981) suggest that life events may lead to stress by dint of their "adversely altering the meaning of life strains", or by creating new strains or intensifying pre-existing strains. They suggest that this interaction of stresses and strains

may influence one's self-esteem or sense of mastery, and in this mediate way influence psychological distress. From this point of view, enduring strains are both a product of life events and a channel through which life events have a damaging effect on psychological well-being. In summary, they suggest that persistent hardships may diminish self-esteem and mastery and may be important in the causal process leading to psychological distress. The evidence they present to support these postulated mediator variables will be considered below. It seems evident then that the intensity of stress cannot be gauged from the intensity of its sources, as certain mediators are viewed in the literature as relevant to the stress process. Two most frequently cited are social supports and coping styles.

Both are pertinent to this study, as *the rite of passage* focus is on the role of disruption in setting a process of transition into play, defined above in Greil's succinct analysis as disruptive events experienced in isolation. Further, it is suggested that a religious problem-solving perspective may be seen as a cognitive coping style. This will be discussed in detail below, but in brief, an eastern spiritual perspective might permit the (re)interpretation of life events in a manner which gives troublesome, and perhaps 'normatively meaningless' events a place in the wider scheme of life, since, from this perspective, transience and change are expected rather than stasis and security.

Further, troublesome life events, whether they are seen as a part of suffering that inevitably arose due to a past lack of awareness, or as a sign that one is working through 'bad *karma*', they are at least no longer

without any form of explanation, rhyme or reason. A comparison will be made below regarding Kobasa, Maddi and Kahn's (1982) concept of 'hardiness' and how the defining features of hardiness relate to the style of interpretation of events promoted by many eastern spiritual worldviews.

For the moment, discussion will concern the early phases of the *rite of passage* towards movement contact, considering the literature which debates whether psychological or structural variables give the fuller account of differential recruitment. It will be suggested that the two dimensions of explanation concern variables which are rarely empirically separate, and, in the cases of concepts seen as predispositions to movement involvement, like 'appeal' and loneliness, both structural circumstances and individual appraisal of them are indispensable features of such predispositions.

## 4. STRUCTURAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL ACCOUNTS OF DIFFERENTIAL RECRUITMENT: A CRITIQUE

The channels of recruitment vary according to the degree to which life-style and belief system render possible or permit the continuance of affiliative networks outside of those provided by the NRM. Groups like the Hare Krishna, which Wallis (1979) terms 'world-rejecting' seem to discourage the maintenance of pre-existing bonds, and their rural and communal lifestyle renders such bonds less likely (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olsen, 1980). In contrast the Nichiren Shoshu value attachments outside the group as a means of facilitating movement growth. The relative 'encapsulation' of group members (that is, to what extent social

networks are restricted to uniquely movement-related relationships), influences the importance of active recruitment techniques such as public proselytizing to strangers, compared with the role of pre-existing social networks as avenues of recruitment.

## 4.1 Active Recruitment Techniques: Direct and Deceptive

Recruitment refers to the means by which a NRM attempts to make contact with and secure potential participants. Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olsen (1980) outline the general outreach and engagement options for passing on movement information and promoting movement aims. They distinguish the mediate or face to face, public or private nature of these channels.

The recruitment techniques most akin to brainwashing are those which resemble capture, in that they are highly deceptive. Lofland (1978), (see also Robbins, Anthony, Doucas and Curtis, 1976), outlines techniques of public and personal confrontation which involve 'picking up' the 'prospect' (potential convert) and 'hooking' him or her by engaging him/her in issues of concern to them, making them indebted to a cult member, and obtaining their consent to a meal or weekend away. In these ways prospects are removed from their normal social environment. The techniques are more reminiscent of seduction rather than capture however. Galanter (1980) notes that people attending a workshop reported no overt coercion or physical deprivation during that period, and 97% said there was no more than disapproval expressed at any point to discourage them from leaving the church. It is unlikely that those attending a two day workshop were already brainwashed into

protecting the Unification Church's reputation. However, the large percentage reporting no strong discouragement of attempts to leave may be misleading, as not everyone can be assumed to have made such attempts. Evidence that fully 90% reported some prior commitment to Eastern or Fundamentalist Christian groups (53% acknowledged a moderate prior commitment) supports the portrayal of recruitment as seduction of the willing rather than capture.

In spite of this evidence, this group is perhaps the most widely acknowledged as using elaborate and deceptive recruitment techniques. It seems that their tactics fall short of the 'capture' phase of Schein's initial formulation of brainwashing. From the high degree of prior spiritual involvement it seems more likely that the participants were interested and consenting.

For the Nichiren Shoshu NRM, active proselytizing (called *shakubuku*) such as telling people about the sacred scroll, and the group's mantra believed to unlock its powers is incorporated within the belief system of the group as an act of mercy. As Kanter (1968:499) appositely notes, such "an intersection of organisational requisites and personal experience" or the linking of self interests to organisational requirements is a primary mechanism for ensuring continued commitment. Further, such a witnessing may reduce a convert's own dissonance (Festinger, Rieken, and Schachter, 1956).

Regarding deceptive recruitment, a number of researchers note that during the early phases of commitment, NRMs may avoid initial

proselytising (Lofland, 1977; Stark and Bainbridge, 1981). They suggest that people do not join a NRM per se, but begin by taking part in its activities. However, research on these 'activities' (discussed below) reveals that they are quite explicitly religious in theme. This suggestion that people do not join a movement but merely take part in activities raises the interesting question of how deeper commitment arises. Commitment refers to the processes of aligning self-interests with the interests of the movement: for an individual to maintain involvement after first contact, "predispositions must be ordered, put into the service of the movement [and] linked with its values", (Zygmunt, 1972: 462). It involves the investment of personal resources and a progressive decline in competing options, through a process which Becker (1960) terms "making side-bets". That commitment often occurs without conscious knowledge does not necessarily imply that brainwashing has occurred, or that a movement orchestrated commitment independently of the particular needs and beliefs of the individual. The notion of side-bets refers to the fact that a given level of involvement can constrain an individual's future by involving other interests originally extraneous to the direct lines of action (Becker, 1960). Commitment may arise piecemeal, "the person becomes aware that [s]he is committed only at some point of change, and seems to have made the commitment without realizing it" (Becker, 1960: 38).

Commitment is a matter of degree, encompassing instrumental, affective and moral commitment. Kanter (1968: 501) notes the relevance to analyses of commitment of the distinctions Kelman (1958) draws between compliance, identification and internalization.

Internalization is where commitment is sustained by an individual's beliefs and attitudes and is conceptually akin to conversion. It must be noted that dependence on a charismatic leader may produce commitment which strongly resembles conversion but may in fact be based on identification, that is, commitment may be a result of a desire to please the leader rather than as a result of a belief in the 'rightness' of his/her message. This is perhaps a precursor to the introjection of movement values, but, more likely, may continue to co-determine involvement in some cases. Moscovici (1980) reiterates the distinction between conversion (private acceptance) from mere public agreement (or compliance) when the 'agent of change' is still present. The importance of a change in cognitive orientation as the hallmark of conversion is evident in Schein's original work with Prisoners of War. In the situation of coercive persuasion some American prisoners did not collaborate, and some actively resisted acceptance of any part of the communist ideology. Very few chose to remain behind when repatriation was possible. Pure contact - however continued or constant - does not ensure that an individual will accept a collection of people as a reference group. Even where collaboration -and isolation were used to break down informal group structures, there were few true 'conversions'. As a term, brainwashing was first coined by Lifton (1963), as a rough translation for a term used by a Chinese person (more literally translated as – to vomit bitter water) to refer to re-education. It is hard to see why the brainwashing metaphor has had such explanatory currency, for Schein's (1957) meticulous accounts of techniques used on American prisoners of war in North Korea, portray them as unsuccessful in achieving anything more than behavioural compliance. The

"participants" had been physically captured, and the captors had the power of torture and life or death over them. Yet, even then compliance was only achieved when guards had complete social and physical control. This entailed an uneconomic output of man hours for the resulting twenty-one "brainwashees" who chose to stay behind when repatriation was possible.

Schein notes that some of these may have been motivated to avoid the severe repercussions feared on their return to the US for their conspicuous collaboration. It seems that capture and sheer pressure does not lead to a change in beliefs and values in most cases. The captors did not succeed in truly becoming a "reference group" by which means values, attitudes and beliefs are supported or changed. They remained a group expediently formed: a mere physical assemblage. Mere contact with a group does not entail their necessarily having "referent power." For most men it seemed that the rewards for collaboration were high enough to justify to themselves the actions taken. Lifton (1963) notes the case of one young man who needlessly offered information potentially leading to the detection of a young resistance worker, and was unable to rationalise his behaviour to himself other than as a gesture of sincerity to his captors. This case closely resembles true conversion in that it is an attitude change towards the Chinese perspective maintained without direct coercion. Schein (1957) suggests that those most prone to truly identifying with their captors had had dissatisfactions with their way of life in the United States. This individual difference in terms of psychological predisposition was beyond the control of the captors, and worked serendipitously in their

favour. Such individual differences may determine to whom "self-transformation" agencies appeal. These differences may hinge on psychological traits or the complexity of a person's recent life experience. Those liable to be attracted to a change of belief system and lifestyle may be those who have had a "rough lot in life" for whom stress, frustrated aspirations, and a sense of loneliness and meaninglessness have become the hallmarks of their lifestyle and mental life. This entails the notion of a selection effect, or differential recruitment rather than the paradigmatic capture of the first phase of brainwashing. However, it could be alleged that such needs could have been aroused in those making contact with the groups, rather than being a pre-existing factor influencing the group's appeal.

Greil (1977) suggests that it is "orientation to a group and not membership in that group that leads to conversion" (p.12l). He notes that an individual's cognitive orientation will influence his or her selection of a new perspective and a new reference group, even at the recruitment stage. The efficacy of the capture and force paradigm for achieving conversion or long-term commitment is highly questionable. Recent evidence from Barker (1981, 1986) and Galanter (1989) suggests that new participants could not have mistaken the spiritual focus of even the most introductory activities of a number of NRMs. Galanter (1980) notes of an introductory two-day workshop put on by the Unification Church that:

> The principle activity is a series of six one and a half hour lectures, which convey the most salient points of the 'Divine Principle' - the religious doctrine of the Unification Church. The discussions and

some other sharing experiences are more oriented toward intellectual exploration of religious concepts than emotional catharsis (p.1575).

Barker (1981) notes that those turning up to a UC workshop without realising in advance the religious content "left rather hurriedly" when it began. The Unification Church is a strongly western millenarian group. In the less familiar eastern groups, inability to recognise activities as spiritual may be a factor, promoting the suggestion that these groups use deceptive recruitment. However, those whose conception of religion does not necessarily centre on the worship of a deity, the religiosity of even the most introductory activities of eastern groups is quite apparent. The introductory lecture of the former Rajneesh group conveyed the miraculous abilities of Rajneesh, his uniqueness, and the possibilities of self-discovery and inner peace afforded by following him. The introductory workshop entails a series of meditational techniques, terminating with *satsang*; literally, the company of truth, where Bhagwan is greeted through ritual chanting.6 The introductory meeting of the Nichiren Shoshu involves chanting a mantra 7 to the sacred scroll.8 All these activities are quite overtly religious.

## 4.2 Pre-Existing Social Networks As Recruitment Avenues

Aside from recruitment techniques specifically orchestrated to swell the numbers of an organisation, pre-existing social networks and group ideology can function as "recruitment catalysts" (Zurcher & Snow, 1976). Zurcher & Snow (1976) claim a growing number of sociological studies show "the important role of pre-existing social relations in the structuring and channelling of movement recruitment" (pg.55). They

suggest that: "The potential participant, whatever his or her interests, socioeconomic status, cognitive state or motives, has to be informed about, and introduced to a particular movement" (pg. 54). The importance of social networks as a recruitment avenue to NRMs has been established by a number of researchers (Lofland & Stark, 1965; Gerlach & Hine, 1970; Heirich, 1977; Galanter, 1980; Snow & Phillips, 1980; Snow, Zurcher and Ekland- Olsen, 1980; Stark & Bainbridge, 1980; Downton, 1980; Seggar & Kunz, 1972).

Their bridging function in bringing together potential recruits and a particular movement was demonstrated, in Pentecostal groups, by Gerlach and Hine (1970). They note that 51/67 of their sample were recruited by personal contact with familiar others. They also note that further questioning of the 16 who indicated they were "drawn into the movement by the direct action of God" revealed significant relationships with relatives and friends to have been involved (Gerlach and Hine, 1970:79-80)9. That social networks form a recruitment avenue is both undeniable and unsurprising for those NRMs which do not require the severing of personal bonds with those outside the group.

However, analysis of NRM recruitment solely in terms of structural features like social networks is less than fully explanatory, one readily apparent example being the wide range of affiliative options they present. Richardson and Stewart (1977) suggest our social environment is a virtual 'supermarket of ideas' characterized as "a large and differentiated opportunity structure of possible ways to interpret and resolve felt problems" (p.827). Given that the web of an individual's

social networks may be a smaller and less differentiated opportunity structure, it is still likely to contain more than one option. Social networks are likely to have little predictive validity regarding in which generic option of change one is likely to become involved. They have been shown to be important in recruiting new members to any number and form of communal activities: agrarian radicalism (Petras and Zeitlin, 1972), the peace movement (Bolton, 1972), riot participation (Wallis, 1979), and (if it can be deemed a 'communal activity') hysterical contagion (Kerckhoff and Back, 1968). Pre-existing social networks may not merely function as sources of information but also as sources of social influence. This difference has not been addressed in the sociological literature. Influence may take the form of social pressure, or vicarious modelling of desirable changes possible with commitment and conversion (Zeitlin, 1985) or testimonies as to the efficacy of the belief system and the community of followers for reinterpreting and resolving felt problems.

Heirich (1977) examines the role of social influence from the point of view of how 'encapsulated' in uniquely NRM-related relationships individuals became prior to conversion to Pentecostalism. On the basis of his data he suggests "it would be erroneous to assume that it is social *influence* rather than simply social contact that accounts for the conversions that occurred" (p.669, original emphasis). He notes that after encounter with movement members, the seekers, as he terms them, sought the advice of family and friends. Most (70%) remembered only positive or neutral advice, unsurprisingly as 40% sought feedback from friends who were themselves Pentecostals. Heirich seems to imply

that advice being positive or neutral debars the encounter from being one of influence. Family and close friends are significant others and it is unlikely that what they say is taken lightly, especially given that the individual selected them as confidantes. The 30% who recall positive responses from non-members perhaps reveal to us the status of this movement within the community.

Encapsulation, the tendency to restrict interaction to those who had already been "baptised in the holy spirit" did aid conversion (92% joined) but was not a necessary condition as 70% of those who were not *encapsulated* joined. Heirich notes that while immediate social contact could account statistically for half of the findings regarding who converted, the findings depend on a single measure, that of frequency of previous mass attendance; "mass attendance was almost twice as powerful an influence as are all others combined" (p.670). Yet he notes that:

> Given its lack of relationship to the other social influences measured in the Multiple Comparisons Analysis ... it is not clear that Mass attendance represents a distinctively social influence in itself (p.670).

Using an Automatic Interaction Detection programme, he concluded that the impact of social networks is

> striking indeed - *for those already oriented towards a religious quest* ... If one is not already a religious seeker such contact is insufficient in most cases to produce a 'change of heart' (p.673, original emphasis).

The route to conversion which most closely approximates the brainwashing analogy, that is where there is a lack of religious interest which nonetheless results in conversion due to strong social influence, is a possible but infrequently occurring combination according to Heirich (1972:673).11 Further, the impact of social networks in his study seems to rely on the individuals concerned already having a religious orientation. Heirich's test of social influence operationally defined as encapsulation is not a definitive test of how social influence operates, but he does reveal that it operates in conjunction with individual beliefs being consonant with those of a social movement, as even though 75% of the people were introduced to the group by "trusted associates and friends" (p.667) the majority (83%) were already oriented towards religion.

An interactional approach to the study of NRM involvement is required (Zygmunt, 1972). Participation is the result of psychological features of the individual and the more structural features of their life environment which bring them within the movement's orbit. To assert the importance of studying psychological predispositions is not to suggest that recruitment is completely specifiable in terms of an intra-psychic focus. To assume that this is a necessary assumption of any consideration of the psychological features of a recruit is to mistake a 'predisposition' for a unicausally efficient feature. Predispositions, for example motives, beliefs, personality traits, loneliness, disruption due to recent life stress, determine involvement only in relation to the features of movement ideology and organisation. Certainly, some theories like Turner and

Killian's (1972) "Convergence Theory" focuses on the differences in cognitive orientation between joiners and non-joiners. Others like Tech (1965) regard the conjunctions between individual needs and the movement's perceived promises of satisfying them as the "crux of the social psychology of social movements (p.17)". He acknowledges, but does not specify the bridging function of social networks in bringing about contact between the two. In brief, the needs and cognitive orientation of an individual are not suggested as sufficient for conversion, but as contributing to the likelihood of involvement within the conditions specified by a wider model. For example, a religious orientation may influence which options are salient and/or appeal to an individual out of the array of options available in the media or opportunity structure of social networks.

## 4.3 Beyond an Either/Or Account: Structural Features and Pre-Existing Motivations and Beliefs

The tenability of the distinction between the structural and psychological features relevant to movement involvement has been laboured in some detail, because misunderstandings have occurred in the literature regarding the assumptions and scope of a psychological focus on predispositions to movement involvement. For instance, Zurcher and Snow (1981) acknowledge that 'cognitive state' might be conducive to, but not sufficient for movement participation (p.454). Yet two pages later, they indulge in the massacre of a straw man when they suggest that to focus on "susceptibilities and predispositions" implies that:

the tenets of a movement's ideology are self-evident given a particular personality, background or set of frustrations and discontents. Such an assumption is sociologically untenable (p.456).

Psychologically it does not hold water either. Neither is it a necessary assumption of such a focus as shown above; substantiated with references which predate their argument. This study is concerned with demonstrating how pivotal it is to consider of psychological predispositions in any account of differential recruitment, while Zurcher and Snow (1976) seem concerned to redress an imbalance of what they view as "inordinately exclusive attention" to the "psychological effects of problematic structural conditions or personality variables in differential recruitment to social movements". They make the criticism that:

The social-psychological-motivational approach tends not to consider the role of ideology in relation to movement recruitment and participation... (p.456)

Selectivity of focus may be the case in research practice, yet congruence between individual needs and the promises of a social movement to satisfy them has been shown to be crucial to the social psychology of movement involvement (Toch, 1965). The agitational function of social movements and NRM's in particular cannot be bypassed in favour of viewing them as solutions to pre structured needs and tensions.

I think it is highly likely that NRM's lend definition to the needs they seek to satisfy. Gerlach and Hine (1970) ignored the issue of predisposing needs and life events and assumed that a refocussing of needs occurred

at first contact with the movements. While this refocussing is one of the defined functions of ideology;

> it provides a picture of the world as it is and as it should be. It provides a guide for action by which the desired changes can best be achieved. At the same time it underscores what is wrong, attributes blame and responsibility... " (Zurcher and Snow, 1981:456)

It must be noted that some need resulted in contact in the first place. It is impossible to give an account of movement appeal without taking an individual's motivation and belief into account. The 'appeal' of a movement's ideology as a 'recruitment catalyst' derives from its mobilizing function, its role in articulating a pre-existing problem, focusing blame and justifying action. One is rarely motivated to change a satisfying state of affairs, so some disruption or problem is likely to precede action, even if the movement intensifies and clarifies the nature of that problem. As Zygmunt (1972: 458) notes:

> movement characteristics become 'appeals' not merely because they exert direct influence upon the people who are exposed to them, but rather because individuals are motivationally predisposed to perceive, evaluate and respond to them selectively.

In short, appeal is a psychologically conjunctive concept, residing wholly in neither the characteristics of the person or in movement ideology, but existing as a relation between the two.


## 4.4 Differential Openness to Involvement: outlining two types

Having argued that psychological features of an individual's life circumstances, personality and beliefs are important determinants of

involvement, a consideration of the complexities of differential recruitment is appropriate. There are two features of differential recruitment which need to be considered:

1) Why is one person rather than another recruited into a movement?

2) Why does a person become involved in one *genre* of movement rather than another?

Neither type of recruitment can be explained without consideration of the individual's needs and beliefs. The two are distinguishable in terms of the differential salience of needs and beliefs in each.

*Type One Differential Openness - needing something*

The first type of differential recruitment will be termed **Type One Differential Openness** where individual motivation and personal and social resources determine *whether* a social agency is contacted in times of strife.

*Type Two Differential Openness - needing something particular*

 **Type Two Differential Openness** to movement involvement concerns how consonance of cognitive orientation determines which genre of movement appeals, or which gives the most meaningful diagnosis of life situation. This simple distinction is important to this study. The different forms of differential recruitment have not been teased apart in the literature, perhaps because it has been assumed that the movement can ignite both need and credulity. Those who wish to emphasise uniquely the 'pull' factors in differential recruitment need to address evidence, such as that presented above, that in most cases involvement is

voluntary or at least consenting. The 'capture by deception' explanation seems of limited relevance to most recruitment experiences. The sociological recruitment emphasis outlined above focuses on social networks as recruitment avenues. Researchers such as Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olsen (1980) explicitly do not consider the role of individual belief and motivation in contributing to movement involvement, either assuming that everyone undergoes a refocussing of needs and beliefs at movement contact, or only addressing reasons people give for not joining. Though pre-existing life circumstances and beliefs are not directly addressed, they are included in an implicit manner. Richardson, Stewart and Simmons (1979) note of Gerlach and Hine's (1970) model, that 'the incorporate such considerations in an unsystematic and implicit way. Gerlach and Hine's model begins at the commitment phase when contact has already been made with the movement and therefore does not address possible predisposing factors. Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olsen, (1980) suggest that an important factor in differential recruitment is structural availability, which for them means being "minimally involved in proximal and demanding social relationships" (p.793). This leaves a person with more 'discretionary time'. Their emphasis derives from a study they conducted with students classified as 'sympathizers' with certain political or religious groups, who nonetheless failed to join. The reasons most frequently given for non-involvement were that they "did not know anyone actively involved", "did not have enough time", or they "were not invited to join". This suggests that knowledge about and sympathy with a particular movement is not sufficient cause for involvement. Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olsen (1980) conclude:

> Had their lines of action not been constrained by competing extra-movement commitments and demands, and had they been asked by a member with whom they were acquainted, then presumably they would have become a participant (p.794).

They suggest that a social bond with a group member is important for differential recruitment, but not always enough to get them involved. Even if there were movement members in one's social networks, not all friends participate in activities when invited. The reason for this, within their framework, is *lack of time*. However, their study held constant another potentially important determinant of differential involvement, namely whether an individual's beliefs are consonant with the language, assumptions and aims of a social movement. I call this having a 'consonant cognitive orientation'. Snow and colleagues held this feature constant by selecting subjects who were 'sympathizers'. They explicitly acknowledge the importance of ideological consonance when they note that "social action on behalf of non-coercive organisations is unlikely in the absence of instrumental, affective, and ideological alignment" (p.795).

They don't consider the role of individual motivation because they suggest that people do not become involved in movements *per se*, but merely take part in their activities where they can be provided with the 'motives' for joining and participation, motives which they suggest are "generally emergent and interactional rather than prestructured", (p.795). When Zygmunt (1972) suggested that the mobilizing function of movements in arousing, intensifying and defining needs should not be neglected, he was not ruling out that there might be *prior circumstances*

which might motivate a person to join (Type One Differential Openness as outlined above), and that there might be pre-existing beliefs which might influence which kind of movement seemed most meaningful to join (Type Two Differential Openness). Part of the difference of emphasis may result from an eliding of motivation in the causal sense (of what got you there in the first place) and the 'avowal' in language and in hindsight of what you think got you involved. This is the philosophical issue of causes vs reasons revisited. Avowal of reasons may be influenced by the local vocabulary and beliefs of the group with which one affiliates: the actual causes effective at the time are not influenced in this way. The former may follow an action; the latter never can, unless some alternative to efficient causality is being suggested, such that the causes of one's behaviour follow after the effect. This is not a position the author finds compelling.

It has been suggested that motivation accounts for Type One Differential Openness and consonance of beliefs for Type Two. However, once the broad genre of movement which appeals has been influenced by the orientation of an individual's beliefs, it may well be that interpersonal contacts determine specifically which of a broad array of (say) religious groups is attended. It may well be that the orientation of a person's beliefs is due in part to social influence (the ontogeny of spiritual beliefs is an area beyond the scope of this study). However, the distinction made here is that the needs are not necessarily aroused by the specific movement with which affiliation occurs; though they may be given meaning within that group. Some aspect of the spiritual beliefs has perhaps brought release or satisfaction, and has been retained. In other

words, the formation of a spiritual orientation may occur due to a number of encounters with literature, and with impressive others, as a piecemeal sedimentation, of which, like increasing behavioural commitment, the person may not be consciously or self-reflexively aware.

## 4.5 The Centrality of Psychological Predispositions to an Explanatory Account of Differential Openness

To suggest that such considerations are vital to a complete account of involvement is not to take the position criticised by Snow and Phillips (1980) who suggest that the study of

> prestructured tensions and cognitive orientations.... ignores the fact that movements function as important agitational, problem-defining, need-arousal and motive-producing agencies. (p.437).

This may be to overstate the importance of movement ideology. Without data from prospective studies, or studies which assess participants at point of first contact with a movement, it cannot simply be alleged that a group 'does it all'. It cannot simply be alleged that the group in every case arouses the very needs it then seeks to satisfy. Neither can it be assumed that we need have no further interest in whether joiners differ from non-joiners in terms of factors which may influence their desire to contact a public agency, such as recent life experiences, personal and social coping resources and cognitive orientation. From Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olsen's (1980) study where sympathizers agreed with movement ideology but did not commit any personal resources, the possibility cannot be excluded that they were not motivated to join, despite the fact that they had sufficient contact

with this supposedly 'motive-producing agency' to become sympathetic to its aims. The proximal and demanding social networks which left them with no discretionary time might have had important psychological consequences, perhaps providing them with social contact, support, identity-maintenance, and enhancing their capacity to cope with problematic life events. These resources might reduce a person's *need* to seek outside sources of explanation and consolation.

Zygmunt (1972) provides a cogent summary which has implicit the two aspects of differential involvement: both a general motivational readiness (Type One Differential Openness) as rendering one person rather than another 'prone' to recruitment, and a more specific readiness (Type Two Differential Openness) regarding why a person gets involved in one *genre* of option rather than another. He suggests that the key feature may be:

> the relative meaningfulness of the 'diagnoses' of people's predicaments purveyed by different movements, largely through their ideological presentations. Thus in terms of his[her] general condition of alienation an individual might be a potential candidate for either religious or political conversion, but undergo one rather than another, mainly because [s]he finds [her]his problems more meaningfully defined in one set of ideological symbols rather than another (p.460).

In summary, a consideration of the role of psychological predispositions illuminates two elements of differential recruitment, or, to speak in a voice which does not assume 'active agent' strategies of the NRMs, two forms of differential openness to the appeal of NRMs. These

predispositions are not timeless intrapsychic conflicts, though they may be underpinned by enduring, trait-like tendencies of an individual. They refer rather to the manner in which life events are experienced: the acuteness of the suffering endured as a result of them, the origins attributed and solutions sought. They refer to a capacity to adapt to changed circumstances. In their current theoretical form, these predispositions do not preclude consideration of movement ideology, but form a vital component of the source of the differential appeal of the ideology of one movement over another.

Having excavated the notion of predisposition from some slight misrepresentation, the way is perhaps clear for a detailed consideration of those predispositions which render more likely affiliation to NRMs.

## Predispositions to Movement Involvement

### 5. A QUESTIONING OF TRADITIONAL MORAL VALUES

New religious movements are deviant by definition. To the extent that they postulate the potential operation of spiritual forces which are beyond, or operate through the material world, they give a religious account of existence and as such have claim to spiritual status. The belief system is a source of appeal, and yet for some, a feature of these groups which renders them less than palatable. The nature of the explanatory premises, particularly of Eastern monistic groups is not acceptable to everyone. The study of NRMs has forced researchers to undertake a reanalysis of the breadth of spiritual conceptions and endeavour. In addition, aspects of lifestyle, and worship practices of these groups challenge convention. For some people they may be seen as a threat to cherished values, to the nuclear family, to orthodox religion. It is perhaps only those who have already found reason to challenge features of a traditional way of life that would be drawn to NRMs in the first place.

There is evidence to suggest that there has been a general movement away from orthodox religious institutions (Needleman, 1975). Perhaps the movement has also been away from orthodox western belief systems. Stark and Glock (1970)'s data concerning followers of the Christian Church certainly found that there was a reduced level of assent

to certain beliefs and that this reduced level of assent was related to a corresponding decrease in ritual involvement in the church. They note:

> These data strongly testify that the institutional church, predicated as it is on traditional theological concepts, tends to lose its meaning and its ability to move men as these concepts become outmoded (p.217).

They add that a feature of the new theology is an emphasis "not on how one prepares for the next life - the reality of which the new theology does not seem to deny – but what one does to realize the kingdom of God on earth" (p.2l7). Needleman (1975) noted this disaffection with spiritual orthodoxy in the West, which he saw as a failure of traditional Christian beliefs to meet modern needs.

It seems from the literature that the present spiritual climate in the West is characterised by twin themes of a movement away from traditional western religious beliefs and a more individual and present-oriented spirituality, one more akin to emphases of traditional eastern religions. If these features of the new theology are permeating traditional Western theology, it is likely that those drawn to NRMs will be even more innovative with regard to spiritual practice and belief and less traditional in this regard. Judah (1974, cited in Foss and Larkin, 1979) suggested that NRMs recruited those who still adhered to the values of the counter-culture of the 1960's in America, who endorsed spontaneity rather than control, an existential 'here and now' orientation rather than a postponement for the future, and promoted a positive valuation of non-possessive sexuality. Broadly speaking, these

movements recruited those people whose beliefs were already at odds with conventional aspirations and values. Given that NRMs have been portrayed as 'encapsulated critiques of convention' (Beckford, 1979) and are often unorthodox in so far as they have communal living arrangements, a pooling of labour and resources, and certain of them have members labour without receiving individual monetary reward, they may be expected to attract people who are less traditional than the general community. This would be especially true of NRMs of an Eastern orientation rather than charismatic offshoots of Western religions like Pentecostalism, where the doctrinal innovation responsible for their new religious status leave foundational values (of respect for one's parents, and the integrity of the nuclear family) consonant with those of the wider community. It is possible that they may be even more traditional than the general population in these regards.

A good empirical index of the level of an individual's traditionalism is provided by Tellegen's (1982) Traditionalism subscale of the Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire [MPQ] which assesses the degree to which an individual endorses high moral standards, supports traditional religious values and institutions, condemns selfish disregard of others, deplores permissiveness, endorses strict child-rearing practices and values propriety and a good reputation. A low scorer on the other hand, does not belabour the importance of high morals, considers traditional religion outdated, questions established authority, sees merit in selfishness, values rebelliousness and freedom of expression, does not believe in punitive discipline and is not very prudish.

Given that less traditional people are in some sense marginal, in that they have points of difference with the dominant culture, it is possible that they do not have the same sense of belonging, of social integration and a sense of community, especially if their points of difference have not become a rallying point for group social activity. They may be less adequately socially contextualised, and have less access to people who sustain their sense of identity.

## 6. LONELINESS AND ALIENATION

For Zygmunt (1972), the readiness to be recruited is captured by the phrase "a general condition of alienation". This is supported by Downton's (1980) assessment of the members or *premies* of the Divine Light Mission who claimed that they felt, prior to NRM contact, a sense of alienation from others and society, a feeling of personal inadequacy and a sense of aimlessness and meaninglessness. Alienation and anomie are generally associated with sociocultural disintegration and an attenuation of community relationships. On this societal level of analysis the breakdown of traditional structures and institutions has been linked with the emergence of cults, (Wallis, 1979; Glock and Stark, 1965; Stark and Bainbridge, 1981). The link between a sociological level of analysis and a psychological level is nicely captured by Henderson et al. (1981) who note that these "attributes of society in general" may address "the resources an individual has in his[her] personal network or primary group" (p.7). Seeman (1959) notes that isolation is an important feature of the general condition of alienation; he is careful to note that this is

not merely physical isolation. He takes individual preferences for solitude into account by defining isolation which is indicative of alienation in expectancy or reward terms as "what remains when sheer sociability is removed". This encompasses the unquestionable individual differences, and differences over time, as to how objective social isolation is viewed.

## 6.1 Social Bonds: Their Importance and the Consequences of Their Absence.

Whether social bonds act as a buffer to stress or contribute independently and directly to well-being (effects which Thoits (1982) notes are confounded in the literature) they have been implicated in the maintenance of a sense of personal identity (Greil, 1977; Duck and Lea, 1983) and mental health (Henderson et al, 1981). The loss of social support has many ramifications, adumbrated above, (Greil, 1977; McHugh, 1972; Schein, 1957).

## 6.2 Support Systems as Mediators of Stress

A support system is not necessarily co-extensive with a social network. "Support comes when people's engagement with one another extends to a level of involvement and concern." (Perlman and Peplau, 1981:340). That is, it is a characteristic of a quality of the relations one is able to find within a network. This goes some way towards an adequate operational definition of support, but not far enough. As Thoits (1982: 146) notes, "...most investigators have not attempted to formulate a precise conceptual definition of social support, and few have attempted to

develop valid or reliable indicators of the concept." Several researchers have noted that support is a multi-dimensional concept, constituted by such dimensions as the amount, types (socio-emotional and instrumental), sources (kin or colleagues etc.), and structure of social support networks which are all important. It is important to attempt to systematically identify specific distress-relieving aspects of an individual's support system. Thoits (1982) suggests that some of measures used by contemporary researchers may be interpreted as measures of life strains rather than as types and/or sources of social support. She notes: "The conditions under which effective aid is obtained have yet to be determined" (p.147). A definition of social support is put forward by Kaplan et al., «1977), in Thoits, 1982:147), who suggest it entails: "the degree to which a person's basic social needs are gratified through interaction with others". They define basic social needs as including: "affection, esteem or approval, belonging, identity and security. These needs may be met by either the provision of socioemotional aid (such as affection, sympathy, and understanding, acceptance and esteem from significant others) or the provision of instrumental aid (such as advice, information, help with family work or responsibilities, financial aid)", (in Thoits, 1982:147). The social support system [SSS] is defined by Thoits (1982) as: "That subset of persons in the individual's total social network, upon whom he or she relies for socioemotional aid, instrumental aid or both. Note that this definition does not require that supportive relations be reciprocal or symmetric." So, to demarcate a person's SSS one can operationalize a variety of dimensions:

**I. The structural properties of the SSS:** size, density, accessibility, kinship reliance, frequency of contact, stability etc. This dimension will be assessed only in terms of the availability of social support within the present study.

**2. The functional properties:** the perceived amount and adequacy of socio-emotional and instrumental aid received from support system members. This dimension is referred to as the adequacy measures within the present study.

### 6.3 Social Support: A Buffering or a Direct Effect on Stress?

Several investigators have hypothesized that an individual's SSS may moderate or buffer the effects of life events on his or her psychological state. (Thoits, 1982, cites the following: Antonovsky, 1974. 1979; Caplan, 1974; Cassel. 1976; Cobb, 1976; Henderson et al.. 1978; Kaplan et al., 1977; Liem & Liem, 1978). This has been termed the "buffering hypothesis" by Thoits (1982). It suggests that individuals with a strong SSS should be better able to cope with major life changes than those with little or no social support. "This hypothesis entails an interaction effect: the occurrence of events in the presence of social support should produce less distress than should the occurrence of events in the absence of social support", (Thoits. 1982:145). However the evidence for the buffering hypothesis has been called into question by the detection of a theoretical and methodological confounding of life events and social support measures. The direct effect of life events on support and the interactive (buffering) effect of life events with support may be seriously confounded.

While life events are defined as experiences that cause an individual to substantially readjust her or his behaviour patterns. (as mentioned above), an examination of life event scales reveals that many important events are interpreted as losses or gains of supportive relationships e.g. the death of a spouse, divorce or a shift In residence. Further, not only may life events themselves be conceptually and operationally identical with changes in the SSS but they may produce changes in the SSS, e.g. a divorce (which tests the loyalties of friends), promotion, or hospitalization.

In summary, life events can be direct indicators of changes in social support, can cause additional changes in social support, or can have both of these effects. This confounding of variables has profound implications for research on the buffering role of social support. This is especially the case for studies that measure social support after life changes have occurred. The individual's current support level is likely to be a product, at least in part, of prior life changes.

The systematic bias in the simultaneous classification of respondents by current support level and prior life change experience is revealed in the simple four-fold table drawn up by Thoits (1982).

TABLE 1. Classifying Respondents by Current Support & Prior Life Change

|                  | Low Support | High Support | Row means |
|------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|
| Life change-Low  | A           | B            | I         |
| Life change-High | C           | D            | II        |
| Column means     | III         | IV           |           |

The distress scores of respondents experiencing undesirable life changes and who (in part as a result) are currently unsupported, will be averaged into cell C. Distress scores of respondents who have experiences no stressful events or desirable changes, and who as a result are currently supported will be averaged into cells **B** or **D**. As Thoits summarises:

> the direct effects of prior events on support places respondents into cells of the table representing the interactive effects of events *with* support. (Thoits, 1982:149, original emphasis).

The substantial difference between cells **C** and **D** deemed indicative of a buffering effect may be due to this systematic misclassification of respondents.


## 6.4 Prior Estimation of Support

If support is assessed prior to examination of life events results may still be biased in favour of the buffer hypothesis, in that the presences of social support may reduce the likelihood of some events occurring, and Thoits (1982) presents some evidence to support this: (Bruhn et al, 1966; Langlie, 1977; Lin et al, 1979c, in Thoits, 1982:150). As an example of this, an angry worker may receive advice from her friends so that a confrontation with the boss is averted preventing the worker's loss of a job. An absence of social supports may increase the likelihood of such a negative event. If so, those initially lacking support will fall into cell C and those initially with it will fall into cells Band D. A direct effect, this time the preventative effect of support on the likelihood of an event's occurrence will be confounded with the interactive or buffering effect. What is needed is detailed longitudinal data on an individual's sources, types, and degrees of support obtained from their social support

network. To remove the confounding effect of the influence of event occurrence on support availability, and the interactive effects of events with support, only data from those individuals whose support level did not change from time one to time two could be analysed.

Thoits (1982) used the data from Myers et al, 1971, 1972, 1974 and found that

> in the absence of confounding, and when support level was measured before events had occurred, the buffering hypothesis was unconfirmed (p.153).

Of primary interest is partialling out the direct causal, and the interactive influences of life events and social support upon each other and upon distress. Thoits (1982) provides such a model. She suggests that there are theoretical bases (Cooley, 1902; Durkheim's anomie theory) and a limited but suggestive empirical base to suggest that social support does not merely moderate the impact of life events, but also (or instead), has a direct main effect upon psychological well-being. Social support may be an important etiological variable in its own right, (Berkman & Syme, 1979; Brown et al, 1977; Henderson et al, 1978; Miller & Ingham, 1976; Morawakai, 1973; Roy, 1978; in Thoits, 1982). Within the present study it is not possible to identify so far in advance those likely to contact NRMs such that is can be assessed whether social supports have a buffering effect on stress, or main effect on wellbeing. The confound is especially complex in this study as it is predicted that those drawn to NRMs will not merely have experienced many recent life events, but that many of these events will be concerned with social exits, that is, with the recent depletion of social resources.

The research implications of such empirically confounded measurement procedures are considerable. They are not swept aside by this study, but are adjacent to its main concerns. Given the focus on the forces which have lead a person to a turning point whereby it is suggested aversive life experiences endured with inadequate social support have in part lead to movement contact, there is a specific interest in the recent decline in social support networks as a life stressor. Thoits' (1982, 1983) insightful analyses inform and support a suggestion made by Cohen (1988:22) regarding the importance of a qualitative analysis of the nature of the life events which have occurred, rather than mere indicators of the total incidence of life events, which (anyway) have a limited, though positive, relation to the experience of stress and the occurrence of symptomatology. An important concern in this study is the loneliness of affiliates prior to movement contact.

## 6.5 Loneliness and Movement Contact

Snow et al (1980) and Lofland and Stark (1965) suggest an absence or 'neutralisation' of extra-movement attachments is conducive to movement participation. Exactly what is entailed in that absence requires closer attention. Perlman and Peplau (1981) define loneliness as "the unpleasant experience that occurs when a person's network of social relations is deficient in some important way, either quantitatively or qualitatively" (p.31). Loneliness, then, is not synonymous with structural unavailability of social bonds. To assume it is would be to miscategorise 'happy loners' and those individuals who feel 'lonely in a crowd', (Henderson et al, 1981). Loneliness implies that social contacts

are inadequate in some way; perhaps in level of intimacy and reliability of association, or due to an individual's chronic or current level of need or because contacts in particular categories are lacking (e.g. there is no-one in whom one can frankly confide). It may be that those present fail to provide certain social 'provisions' (Weiss, 1973, cited in Henderson et al, 1981). The structural availability of social contacts does not address the psychological component of their adequacy.

Loneliness seems to be a feature of the life situations of those drawn to NRMs (Balch and Taylor, 1977; Barker, 1981; Catton, 1957; Downton, 1980; Galanter et at, 1979; Galanter, 1980; Lofland and Stark, 1965; Snow and Phillips, 1980). The appeal of NRMs may relate as much to the 'horizontal' relationships provided by a religious community as to the 'vertical' relation to the 'divine'. Loneliness may mean one can be influenced by a new acquaintance that endorses beliefs moderately discrepant from one's own, and may mean one changes one's own beliefs rather than risk rejection.

This may influence differential recruitment, and, in part account for the fact that not everyone with existing movement contacts gets involved, and not everyone approached by a group member participates further. The quality of existing social bonds relative to those offered by a movement seems to determine continued involvement. Galanter (1980) found that those electing to stay on after a weekend workshop rated bonds outside the NRM as less adequate than those available within the workshop. The reverse was true for those electing to leave. Residential workshops require complete, thought temporary departure from

existing social relations, and may not even be undertaken by those with a full social calendar. While Barker (1981) does not address the psychological significance of isolation for the affiliates contacted in her three-nation comparative study of the Unification Church, isolation emerged as a significant feature of their pre-contact experience. Specifically she notes a decline in access to social networks and an absence of a close relationship. She notes that:

> While most in the control group who were not living with their parents were living either with their spouses or a group of friends of the same sex, those in the British DC group were most frequently living alone.(p.84)

Prior to joining, those contacting the group were more likely to live alone, compared with the general population (and for this to have been a recent change) and were more likely to have no enduring relationship (many with no expectations of ever achieving one). Those contacting the group (at a workshop) tended to be single, with only a quarter enjoying a satisfactory non-marital relationship, 7% having just ended one, and 39% saying they had no prospects of developing such a relationship. This accounted for 78% of the workshop group who went on to join as full-time members. While the majority of NRM respondents surveyed had acknowledged that prior to joining they had spent time with a few close friends rather than large groups, "those in both the DC and the workshop groups were quite likely to have *changed* from having a few close friends to spending time by themselves in the period immediately before meeting the DC" (p.85, original emphasis). Only 4% of the control group compared to 28% of the workshop group and 37% of the British DC (33% of the total DC response) spent their leisure time alone during

the six months before contact. Barker's survey data suggest that in addition to isolation, many held enduring pessimistic beliefs about the likelihood of close, satisfying social contacts.

It seems clear that those drawn to NRM involvement have not only experienced an untypically high level of stress in the recent past, but have done so in a state of relative loneliness. The loneliness is compounded in some cases by pessimistic extrapolations to the future of the likelihood of ever having emotionally satisfying human involvements. This is a frustrating, saddening, and vulnerable condition, but it is not self-evident why this would lead to spiritual involvement rather than any other remedial social course of action.

A number of studies allude to an absence of supportive networks in the pre-recruitment phase for those who subsequently make contact with NRMs (Galanter, 1980; Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olsen, 1980; Balch & Taylor, 1977; Catton, 1957; Downton, 1980; Barker, 1981). Barker's (1981) study is interesting from a rite de passage point of view. It suggests that this 'absence' is a recent change in life circumstances. Greil (1977:119) notes that such an absence may discredit a person's problem-solving perspective when "significant others upon whom the individual depended for maintenance of his perspective become unavailable". The effect of a decline in social and personal coping resources may mean that problems which were previously shared and expediently resolved may now endure and be felt more acutely when they are faced alone. Less effective problem-solving may be a function of an increase in problematic life events prior to movement encounter. This

is the sort of ordinary-life disruption which may be the beginning of a rite de passage of personal change.


## 7. SPIRITUAL INTERPRETATION OF LIFE EVENTS AS COPING STYLE

The role of social supports as mediators of stress, or as independent contributors to a person's wellbeing and mental health, are likely to influence how stressful life events are experienced. There are other possible mediator variables which may account for the lower distress levels experienced by some individuals who may have a similar frequency of life events to others but who are nonetheless not so afflicted. These variables include personality characteristics, constitutional predisposition, health practices and coping techniques. Personality dispositions have both cognitive and behavioural components. Kobasa et al, (1982) point out that at the level of cognitive appraisal personality dispositions constitute bases for experiencing stimuli in a particular fashion and as having a particular meaning.(pI69) They suggest that at the 'action level' personality dispositions "energize a particular set of activities" believed to be appropriate. Lazarus (1966) subsumes cognitive appraisal and related actions under his term 'coping'. He details the features and phases of the process of coping, focussing on the nature of the event which instigates the coping process. Kobasa et al, (1982) emphasize the influence of personality dispositions on coping processes as a mechanism whereby 'personality' has a buffering effect on the impact of stressful events. They suggest that personality dispositions which mitigate the effects of stressful life events are those which render events more meaningful, less overwhelming, less undesirable and more amenable to active control or transformation,

rather than as events to be avoided. Such dispositions are valuable in avoiding illness-provoking biological states such as adaptational exhaustion (cf. Seyle, 1956 in Kobasa et al, 1982) or depressed immunological surveillance (cf. Schwartz, 1975, in Kobasa et al, 1982). Rendering suffering and disruptive life events more meaningful and even as a positive sign of change is one of the functions which this account of NRMs suggests is provided by the movement ideology, and in charismatic groups, by the leader(s) timely interpretation of it.

Integrating various theoretical and empirical discoveries leads Kobasa (1979) to propose that: "hardiness is a constellation of personality characteristics that function as a resistance resource in the encounter with stressful life events." (in Kobasa et al, 1982:169). Hardy persons, Kobasa et al, (1981) suggest, have curiosity and tend to find their experiences interesting and meaningful. Further, they believe they can be influential through what they imagine, do and say. They expect change to be the norm and regard it as an important stimulus to development. So they make optimistic appraisals, and perceive changes as natural meaningful and interesting in spite of their stressfulness, (pp. 368-369). For such people, actions are taken to find out more about the changes, to incorporate them into an ongoing life plan and to learn from their occurrence whatever may be valuable for the future. It is in this way Kobasa et al., (1981) suggest "hardy persons transform stressful events into less stressful forms." (p. 369).

The features making up the 'hardiness' constellation are:

• Commitment

• Control

• Challenge

These have immediate intuitive appeal, but present difficulties for operationalisation for empirical research. They define commitment as consisting in: "the tendency to involve oneself in, (rather than experience alienation from) whatever one is doing" (Kobasa et al., 1982:169). Commitment allows people to have a generalized sense of purpose "which allows them to identify with and find meaningful the events and persons in their environment." In short, their relationship to themselves and to their environment is characterized by "activity and approach rather than passivity and avoidance."

Control, (as contrasted with powerlessness), entails the belief in one's ability to influence the course of events, (Averill, 1973; Phares, 1976; Seligman, 1975, in Kobasa et al, 1982). This is not a naive expectation of one's having complete determination of events, but of oneself as having definite influence through the exercise of imagination, knowledge and skill. Events, for such a person, would be experienced as the outcome of one's decisions and actions, and not as unexpected or overwhelming.

Challenge (as opposed to threat), entails "the expectation that it is normal for life to change, and for development to be stimulated thereby" (Berlyne, 1964; Csikszentmihalyi, 1975; Maddi et al, 1965 in Kobasa et al, 1982). Changes are seen as incentives to growth rather than as threats to security. So challenge affects the appraisal of events

and also is suggested as leading to attempts to "transform oneself' and grow rather than conserve and protect a former lifestyle.

Kobasa et al., (1979) suggest that as challenge fosters openness and flexibility it should allow "the integration and effective appraisal of even exceedingly incongruent events", (in Kobasa et al., 1982:170). They found that executives high in stressful events but low in illness showed greater commitment, control and challenge than executives in whom similar life event frequency was associated with illness.

However, a number of studies in this area are retrospective studies:

1. The Kobasa study (1979).

2. Johnson and Sarason, (1978) which showed a relationship between having an internal locus of control and a lower correlation between stressful life events and illness.

3. Smith, Johnson and Sarason, (1978) showed the effectiveness of challenge in that; "Only subjects low in sensation-seeking showed a significant relationship between negative life change and discomfort".

The retrospective nature of these studies means that the personality data could be a result of illness and stress, rather than explanatory causal variables. Kobasa et al., (1982) in a prospective study, controlling for prior illness level, showed that a tendency toward commitment, control and challenge functions prospectively as a resistance effect and that this is especially so when stressful life events mount.

## 7.1 Differential Appeal - Why New Religious Movements?

*Our region is so full of ever-present divinities that it is easier to find a god than a man.*

Quartilla, in Petronius' Satyricon

As mentioned above, Greil (1972:708) suggests that disruption produces "a fission of values making new fusions possible, not inevitable". Given that stress and disruption may lead a person to seek explanation and/or consolation from any of a number of sources what influences the nature of the solution adopted must be addressed. That is, what determines differential involvement in one social option rather than another? It is suggested that it is a person's beliefs which determine which type of solution appeals from the vast array of ideologies present in his or her "opportunity structure" (Richardson and Stewart, 1977) provided by media and social network avenues. Disruption, then, is a necessary but not sufficient condition for change.

One aspect of problem-solving perspectives that is likely to influence how much they appeal to someone, is whether they address problems and doubts that the person is currently, or perennially experiencing, and, how well they do it. Zygmunt (1972) suggests that one source of the appeal of an ideology is its relative 'plausibility'. Plausibility may concern the manner of portrayal of a belief system, the emotional welcomeness of its message, or the extent to which it extends basic beliefs already deemed possibly true by an individual. Just how much cognitive change is required for conversion to occur is a moot point. Researchers differ

with regard to the elements they specify as changing at conversion, e.g. beliefs, values, universes of discourse, interpretive schemata (as Snow and Machalek (1984) in a thorough review of conceptions of conversion note). It is the fact that change occurs in elements central to a person's belief system that makes it conversion, and that those new or previously peripheral elements are of a *spiritual* nature that makes it a religious conversion.

William James also portrays conversion as the moment when "religious ideas, previously peripheral in [his] consciousness now take central place and...religious aims form the centre of...energy" (1960:20). So, in these terms, when a person acculturated into a religion of a western theistic orientation affiliates with one of the many religions of an eastern orientation, it is an example of conversion. What leads to such a change in belief structure has been addressed from a number of perspectives.

## 7.2 The Role of an Individual's Worldview: Conversion or Adhesion

Conversion is a generic name for change, 'a drastic alteration of a former state' (Salzman, 1966: 10). In an editorial comment to a collection of papers on the subject, J.T. Richardson (1977) noted the lack of "a thorough conceptual analysis of the terms conversion and commitment" (p.802). This brief outline is merely to explore whether, by suggesting that an affiliate already endorses basic religious tenets as true prior to involvement with a specific movement, this study has radically altered the accepted meaning of conversion.

The conceptual issues implicit in conversion are:

• How rapid and extensive must a change be before it can be called conversion?

• What changes at conversion?

• Does conversion necessarily entail the acquisition of new beliefs?

• Does conversion necessarily entail renouncing former beliefs?

## 7.3 The Suddenness of Conversion

A sudden conversion agrees well with classical examples like St. Augustine, St. Theresa of Avila, and Paul of Tarsus. The notion of a 'crisis' at conversion is frequently emphasized (James, 1960; Salzman, 1954, 1966; Sargant, 1957). However, as a defining criterion, the abruptness of conversion is fraught with difficulties. As Salzman (1954) notes;

> Most change, possibly all, is gradual in its development, but since it culminates in a specific moment of alteration or conversion, it may seem to the observer to be an instantaneous, unexplained, mysterious event. (p.63)

An important distinction may be made between conversion as process and conversion as outcome. The conversion 'process' has been broken down into recruitment, commitment and conversion phases, though at what phase of NRM contact cognitive and emotional change characteristic of 'outcome conversion' occurs cannot be assumed. Snow and Machalek (1983) note that conversion cannot be equated with membership, or even with ritual joining (where such ceremony exists). One must look elsewhere for the defining features of 'outcome conversion'. Outcome conversion concerns a change in beliefs and values which may be expressed in different actions and affiliative

patterns. Its nature underscores the importance of taking individual beliefs, and their consonance with the NRM into account.

## 7.4 What Changes at Conversion?

According to Snow and Machalek (1984) the literature provides quite an array of elements considered as those which change at conversion. Adding some of the recently discussed papers to their list results in the following array: 'identities' and 'basic perspectives' (Travisano, 1970; Richardson and Stewart, 1977), the 'habitual centre of energy' (James, 1960), central values (Lang & Lang, 1961), values, beliefs and attitudes (Turner & Killian, 1972). To this can be added 'behaviour patterns' (Shibutani, 1961:523), 'life' (Gordon, 1974), one's paradigm (Jones, 1978) 'one's ultimate sense of grounding' or 'root reality' (Heirich, 1977, pp. 553, 674-676), one's 'informing aspect of consciousness' (Snow & Phillips, 1980), or one's 'universe of discourse' (Berger, 1963; Travisano, 1970; Snow and Machalek, 1983). This last term is used in Mead's (1934, pp. 89-90) sense of "a system of common or social meanings" which is constituted by participation in a "common social process of experience" (cited in Travisano, 1970:594).

Travisano (1970) uses 'identity' not as a substitute for 'self' but in symbolic interactionist terms as a product of participation or membership in social relations". He uses the term Identity in the manner defined by Stone (1962):

> when one has identity, he is SITUATED – that is, cast in the shape of a social object by the acknowledgement of his participation or membership in social relations…others PLACE him as a social object

by assigning him the same words of identity that he appropriates for himself or announces (Stone, 1962, cited in Travisano, 1970: 596-597, original emphasis).

'Identity' in this sense, along with 'patterns of behaviour' may well change at conversion, but may equally change with any membership of a new group, not necessarily equivalent to conversion (Greil, 1977; Snow and Machalek, 1983). These changes may facilitate or derive from conversion but they are too global to be indices of it. Goffman (1959) describes how, one frequently dramaturgically changes 'roles', changes which do not capture the deep commitment associated with conversion. It is by now a catch phrase in psychology that behavioural compliance is not synonymous with private acceptance. Jones' (1978) suggestion that conversion "is not simply (or even need be at all) some specific 'internal' experience, but a reorganization of the 'world' in a transformative manner" is the basis by which he hopes to distinguish conversion from mere compliance. The use of the term 'world' here refers to a consensual world of shared meanings. However, in contrast to Jones' assertion, it is suggested that conversion (at least) involves cognitive change, and is therefore necessarily at least in part an 'internal' experience. Jones (1978) refers to conversion as the transformation of the 'world' of shared meanings, but, for such meanings to be inter-subjectively shared, they must exist intra-subjectively as values, attitudes and beliefs. If such cognitions change, then such change has repercussions for the experience of the subject, and as such in anchored by individual epistemology.

Snow and Machalek (1983) outline four descriptive indices of a more central change at conversion, which they view, in keeping with Meads' terminology, as a change in one's 'universe of discourse'. Mead's (1934) definition of a universe of discourse not only includes the idea of a system of shared meanings, but also the notion of its being a "broad interpretive framework" (pp. 88-89). So if conversion consists in such a change, exactly what this entails must be assessed. There are (at least) two ways in which a system of framework of beliefs, values and attitudes may change;

- A change in the constituent elements
- A restructuring of pre-existing elements such that there is a change in those holding central position.

In psychology, the centrality of belief is a widely used spatial metaphor for beliefs which (like the beliefs Rokeach terms 'primitive' beliefs) if changed would have wide repercussions for the rest of the belief system. Central beliefs, as operationally defined for research purposes, are those which are held with greater intensity (as assessed by a higher numerical score). This does not capture the degree of logical entailment, or constraint which seems to exist between these beliefs and more peripheral beliefs. Such central beliefs are those which are held with greater intensity than peripheral beliefs, and, if changed, would have widespread repercussions for the rest of the belief system. These central elements are seen as important to the nature of the belief system, in much the same way as are the 'super-ordinate value' or 'posture' which Converse (1964) in his analysis of belief systems, suggested organized more specific attitudes and beliefs.

It is a change in the central elements of a belief system which constitutes conversion. A religious conversion is where the central elements come to include beliefs related to the operation of sacred forces, attitudes as to the importance of ascendant masters or emissary prophets, and values relating to the desirability of 'enlightenment' or some related 'vision of man' (Wach, 1958). This is how the present author distinguishes conversion from more minor changes. In attempting to make this distinction Turner and Killian (1972:338) suggest that conversion, as opposed to more minor changes is a kind of reversal, while Lang and Lang (1961: 153) specify a "complete turnabout in central values". Snow and Phillips (1980) suggest that "conversion involves the adoption and use of a new or formerly peripheral universe of discourse" (p.431) and that it "effects a significant change in problem-solving perspective" (p.436). The literature supports the contention that the sine qua non of conversion is that it entails a change in the central elements of a person's belief system, a definition which resolves the seemingly conflicting specifications as to the extent of the change involved. Travisano (1970) suggests "that complete disruption signals conversion, while anything less signals alternation (sic)" (p.598). He seemingly excludes conversion as outlined by James (1960) where "religious ideas, previously peripheral in [his] consciousness now take central place and ... religious aims form the centre of '" energy".

**Conversion in a nutshell**

In short it is the change in *central* elements which makes a change conversion, and the *content* of those elements which makes it a religious

conversion. The suddenness of conversion, its direction (be it spiritually regenerative as James (1902) emphasised or a 'reverse conversion' as Freud (1927) documented) and the behavioural changes attendant on conversion are descriptive adjuncts to the conceptual core.

The concept of conversion has relevance to the *rite de passage* model addressed in this study, in that it is suggested that the likelihood of an individual's recruitment and conversion is powerfully influenced by the degree of consonance between beliefs endorsed at point of first contact with a group, and the orientation of the group's belief system. Despite the unconventional nature of some beliefs central to NRM belief systems, they are not necessarily dissonant beliefs for a person making contact with the movement, as Balch and Taylor (1977) have established. Lofland and Stark (1965) were expecting too much in presuming the existence of a fully structured religious Problem Solving Perspective in pre-converts. While it is unlikely that a preconvert would have a detailed overlap in specific details of a NRM's belief system, and knowledge of and competence in their explanatory application, some consonance of orientation is likely to exist. New affiliates are likely to have a history of religious involvement (some specifically in modern NRMs) to endorse generally religious postulates, but reject specific orthodox faiths. This consonance of orientation is likely to be an influential feature of differential openness to recruitment, if the 'relative meaningfulness of the diagnosis' is a feature of NRM appeal as Zygmunt (1972) suggests.

As I have attempted to show, a person may experience conversion even if no new elements are added to his/her belief system. What is viewed as conversion in our culture, may be more akin to Nock's (1933) conception of the adhesion which was characteristic of religious involvement in pre-Christian times, that is the syncretistic addition of new beliefs and involvements to an already engage' religious life. For example, in becoming an adherent of an eastern NRM, one may acquire new applications of beliefs which were already endorsed, visibly new affiliative patterns, garb or name, while retaining certain beliefs from the religion into which one was born. Whether former beliefs are retained with equivalent intensity to the beliefs consonant with new affiliative patterns, is an empirical question.

## 7.5 Religious Problem-Solving Perspective or Spiritual Orientation?

Lofland and Stark (1965) establish the concept of a religious Problem Solving Perspective [PSP] which they contrast with more secular political or psychiatric perspectives. A perspective is seen as having its own 'rhetoric' and as serving to delineate the origin of a problem and the type of solution possible. Richardson and Stewart (1977) suggest that Lofland and Stark posited too few perspectives which were not adequately developed conceptually. They derived two additional perspectives: the physiological and the 'muddle through' or conventional perspective from Lofland & Stark's initial formulation. It is the existence of competing explanatory perspectives which suggested to Lofland and Stark why so few take the 'deviant route' of NRM affiliation to resolve enduring life problems and concerns (1977:86).

Lofland and Stark (1965) suggest that their subjects endorsed basic religious tenets, but present insufficient evidence to suggest that they were already au fait with their explanatory application. The subjects' pre-existing religious orientation perhaps delimited the range of perspectives to which an individual was likely to convert.

## 7.6 Problem-Solving Perspectives: The Linking of Belief Elements, and their Explanatory Application

There are a number of points of criticism which suggest possible modifications of Lofland & Stark's model. Since they assume that a person already has a religious PSP it is hard to see what conversion might consist in. Unlike classic accounts of conversion which include the case of an individual for whom religious beliefs were previously peripheral to his/her life, who now has them as central to belief and action, Lofland & Stark (1965) assume an individual has no need of instruction as to how general religious beliefs can be brought to bear as a specific PSP with everyday relevance. They exclude from consideration what this study suggests is perhaps the most frequent instance of conversion, where an individual who endorses basic religious tenets is 'converted' whereby those tenets become central to his/her belief system and take on the explanatory and consolatory function of a PSP. Neither do they detail the nature of the concept 'perspective' to which they frequently refer. Greil (1977:115) uses 'perspective' to denote "that facet of an individual's worldview that can be brought to bear on any aspect of the social world that is of topical concern to the individual..." It

seems evident that a perspective entails some structuring of the content elements. The explanatory generality of the NRM belief systems derive from a limited number of general postulates, so the belief systems can be said to have economy. Converse (1964) defines economy of belief systems as; "the degree to which there are adequate overarching dimensions on which large arrays of events may be simply understood" which "is a critical part of synthetic description" (p.214).

However, studies regarding the nature of NRM belief systems suggest that they are robust to refutation due to their lack of interrelatedness. Snow and Machalek (1983:20) suggest that along with a "lack of empirical relevance", one of the features which "protects the overall integrity of the system" of belief of the Nichiren Shoshu of America [NSA] is "the lack of internal relatedness of the belief elements". Converse (1964) would term this a lack of logical 'constraint'. He suggests that some degree of such functional interdependence is required for a configuration of ideas or attitudes to be termed a belief system. He notes that in a static case, constraint involves the success one would have in predicting from initial knowledge that an individual holds a given attitude or belief that s/he holds certain further ideas and attitudes. In the dynamic case it refers to "the probability that a change in the perceived status (truth, desirability, and so forth) of one idea-element would *psychologically* require...some compensating change(s) in the status of idea elements elsewhere in the configuration." (p.208) He notes that such constraint need not be logical, but may be psychological, and due to the conviction inspired by the personality of the originator of the beliefs, and cites as examples of this, systems of

thought such as Marxism and the belief configurations of the Shakers. An emphasis on logical constraint may be the reason why Snow and Machalek (1983a) suggest there is no interrelatedness of the belief items in the NSA. Converse (1964) remarks on the absence of any strict logical constraints, suggesting that:

> What is important is that the elites familiar with the total shapes of these beliefs have experienced them as logically constrained clusters of ideas. (p.21)

The 'glue to bind together' many more specific attitudes and beliefs, he suggests, may take the form of a 'quasi-logical argument' on the basis of "some super-ordinate value or posture toward man and society, involving premises about the nature of social justice, social change, 'natural law'... "(p.21). These super-ordinate values are of prime centrality to the belief system as a whole. So what the researchers may see as a 'lack of relatedness' of beliefs does not necessarily hold true for the converts. It does imply however, that even if a person endorses basic tenets of a belief system, s/he will not necessarily understand their relation to each other, nor immediately comprehend their descriptive scope and explanatory relevance.

The significance of this for the model under consideration is, that by suggesting that pre-converts already endorse religious postulates, it is likely that some demonstration of their potential application to everyday life is still required for total conversion. It is suggested that Lofland and Stark (1965) are expecting too much of their pre-converts. All that might be expected as a predisposing feature of NRM involvement is a general consonance of orientation of beliefs. Understanding the specific details

of the NRM's explanatory heuristics is likely to result from sustained contact and conversion.

There are theoretical and empirical reasons to suggest a number of modifications of Lofland and Stark's (1965) model, regarding the predisposing features it specifies. They make much use of the concept of a PSP but do not define it. They suggest a PSP congruent with the movement approached exists for an individual prior to movement involvement, but establish only that subjects had a broadly consonant cognitive orientation, endorsing central religious notions. They merely specify the existence of enduring and acutely-felt tensions, without providing data, and do not explore why they might endure (e.g. an absence of a primary supportive network, relevant personality features). The notion of a seeker is problematic in that the relevance of the self-reflexive awareness of one's status as seeker is not apparent.

**7.7 Seekership: More Than a Consonant Worldview?**

Lofland and Stark define seekership as: "a floundering among religious alternatives; an openness to a variety of religious views, frequently esoteric, combined with a failure to embrace the specific ideology and fellowship of some set of believers." (p.870). As such, they suggest it provides the "minimal points of ideological congruence to make these people available for [UC] conversion" (p.870). The definition of a person as a religious seeker as "a person searching for some explanatory system of meaning to interpret and resolve his[her] discontent" (p.868) does not necessarily entail such 'active agent' strategies as those outlined by

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Straus (1976, 1979) in order to effect contact with religious groups. The theoretical and empirical relevance of Lofland and Stark's suggestion that for conversion a person must "come to define himself as a religious seeker" is elusive. It is unlikely that one must be self-reflexive about one's status for it to be a precipitant of NRM contact. Indeed the avowal of seekership seems to relate to "the extent to which the seekership role is socially sanctioned; encouraged or discouraged" (Barker, 1981:87). Barker suggests that seekership and "the public discussion of questions of ultimate concern" was only de rigeur in California where "someone asking for directions in Fisherman's Wharf is more likely to be seeking the way to Nirvana than to Union Square" (p.87). In support of the notion that local norms might influence how conspicuous seekership is sanctioned, Hardin and Kehrer (1978) note that active seekership is not prominent in Germany. So Straus' work may be somewhat culturally specific. The major indices of seekership outlined by Lofland and Stark (1965) and Lofland (1966) include:

- Experimentation with religious alternatives, i.e. past affiliations or contact.
- Interest in literature concerning the 'strange, the mystical, the spiritual' (Lofland, 1966:45)

These indices reveal the importance of behavioural and cognitive components of a definition of seekership: past involvement In NRMs and current openness to the worldview of the movements.

The strengths of Lofland and Stark's model appear to lie in the way it captures the importance of disruption preceding movement contact, and the directing function of a consonant cognitive orientation in promoting movement contact. It thus addresses the

motivational/arousal and directional/belief issues inherent in explanation of differential openness to movement involvement.

If it can be asserted that religious beliefs may at times function as a religious PSP, some account must be given of what distinguishes new religious belief systems, how they differ from secular explanatory perspectives, and from orthodox religious accounts. After a brief consideration of the defining features of religion viewed from psychological accounts, an exegesis will be attempted to show how new religious belief systems differ in their form, application, and appeal.

## 8. DEFINING A SPIRITUAL WORLDVIEW

*It is normal to prefer divination to indecision*
Robin Lane Fox (1986)

### 8.1 The Sine Qua Non of a Spiritual Worldview

William James (1960) defined religion as:

> The feelings, acts and experiences of individual [wo]men in their solitude, as far as they apprehend themselves to stand in relation to whatever they consider divine. (p.50)

In noting at the turn of the century that "there are systems of thought which the world calls religious, and yet do not positively assume a God" (p.50), James (1960) anticipated a difficulty in evidence in modern psychological research, that of taking 'divine' to refer uniquely to the

personalised god of Western orthodox faiths. By taking religion to be synonymous with western theistic tradition, research neglects those not endorsing "the manifest church" (Dittes, 1969) or as Clayton and Gladden refer to it, religion with a capital R" (cited in Caird and Law, 1983:153). Religion defined in this way excludes from consideration many "spiritually intense but institutionally alienated" people (Catton, 1957) and people endorsing beliefs eastern in orientation may erroneously be categorised as "religious nones" (Vernon, 1968). As Dittes (1969) notes, being religious

> may refer to assent to publicly formalised doctrines or...may refer to more generalized, diffused expectations or set as to whether the fundamental environment is basically hostile or benign.

While religion may entail assenting to certain beliefs and attitudes, and may centre on activities elucidating, as Kishimoto (1961) suggests, "the ultimate meaning of life and...the ultimate solution of its problems", it is not merely a system of beliefs and attitudes. The devotion and love which characterise the believer's relation to the divine (Pruyser, 1977) has its equivalent on the horizontal plane in the community of believers. For some, this community may be more important than the belief system. However, gregariousness characterizes a number of communal activities centred on shared beliefs. A religious community shares a worldview and what differentiates a religious belief system from all others is (in part) the nature of the causal forces believed to be operative.

While the social sciences study religion as though God had nothing to do with it, and 'his' existence would doubtless only contribute to the error

variance, the belief in sacred forces being potentially or actually operative in one's life is the sine qua non of a religious world view (Levin & Zegans, 1974; Anthony et al., 1979; Balch & Taylor, 1977; Richardson & Stewart, 1977; Stark & Bainbridge, 1979, 1980a; Lofland & Skonovd, 1981; Stark, 1981).

Before detailing the differences between religious and non-religious worldviews and among belief systems differently religious from each other, the extent and nature of the change a person's belief system must undergo during conversion will be critically examined. This has implications for the nature and detail of cognitive predispositions to movement involvement which might distinguish joiners from non-joiners. It is suggested that many people might endorse, as possibly true, basic tenets of religious belief systems. However, a greater intensity of belief is expected in those approaching NRMs, and additionally, it is expected that such people will also have beliefs consonant with the orientation of the movement they approach.

## 8.2 Believers, Unbelievers: What's the Difference?

*The statues of the gods seemed to whisper philosophy*

Robin Lane Fox (1986)

Despite the notion implicit in the co-ercive persuasion account of NRM involvement, that anyone can be drawn into new religious movements, the differences between a believer and an unbeliever, or between a person with a western spiritual orientation and an eastern one, are not

trivial. To move from being an unbeliever to a believer is a significant change, unlikely to be undertaken lightly or to be of uniform probability for everyone. The believer and the unbeliever do not share certain general spiritual assumptions and differ on mere details, as (say) two differently religious people might, but, as Donovan (1979) suggests, "are divided in their view of what further facts there are" (p.8l). The person with a religious worldview lives with the possibility that in addition to ordinary occurrences "there may also be the activity and manifestations of God". The verification of a belief in the sacred does not derive from a discrete set of uniquely sacred events but from an interpretation placed on natural events, from a certain 'quality of experience' (Pruyser, 1977). As Donovan (1979:77) notes,

> the sense of reality of God which arises in the course of the believer's experience of the world (within his[her] religious world-view and accompanying belief system) is not simply an accompanying feeling but becomes part of the evidence itself, and is open to interpretation by the very belief system that evokes it.

Understandably, there are serious problems regarding the ontology of such belief, its falsifiability, and the lack of independence of the evidence which supports the interpretive belief system. Support for the spiritual nature of these forces derives from an interpretation. This means that these events are only spiritual if one accepts the interpretation and can only support the veridicality of that interpretation if already interpreted. This is a logically vicious circle, and places the proof for the postulates beyond empirical investigation. This is a dividing line between believers and unbelievers. Some of us stay with Marx, Nietzsche and Freud. Others make a leap and suggest, as

Lucien Goldman does, that 'he' truly is a 'hidden God', and that we can only see the effects of 'his' working. Donovan's quotation has further relevance here, in that it suggests that a 'religious' person may believe in sacred forces, which are not discrete from, but operate through natural forces. Religious causation does not necessarily entail a separate and super-empirical genre of occurrence, as Lofland and Stark's model suggests, though it will be shown that in fact many belief systems do.

The difference between political and religious genres is more than a matter of detail; it is almost a difference in kind. It has been argued that conversion is not necessarily the addition of new beliefs to a belief system, but peripheral beliefs made central, tacit made explicit, unconscious conscious, or the firmly held now ubiquitously applied.

This is not at odds with historical and contemporary definitions of conversion, just an unexpected emphasis. It brings the possibility that many people have the latent possibility of becoming believers in some superordinate explanatory system. The literature suggests that even seemingly abrupt conversions have a long prehistory. Perhaps everyone could be converted in the long term, but it would require an inordinate amount of institutional person-hours when others tumble ripe. Beliefs of a spiritual nature may be tacitly held by many people, without being of central importance, at times perhaps irrelevant to or displaced by beliefs more salient to current endeavour. Change of belief in the face of crisis is commonly accepted, e.g. deathbed conversions, the 'religion of the trenches' (Sargant, 1957), or the plausible example where a scientist whose mother died suddenly voices a belief in reincarnation. This may be a newly acquired belief, or a peripheral belief, suddenly of central

concern to her in the face of the finality of separation from someone dear.

Having lightly sketched the difference between religious believers and non-believers, how believers might be differently religious from each other is considered.

## 9. DIFFERING SPIRITUAL CONCEPTIONS: EAST AND WEST

The following discussion of broad parameters of difference between Eastern and Western religious orientations is necessarily simplistic and inaccurate as it divides a plethora of world religions into two groups. To subsume under the rubric Eastern Hindu, Jain, Taoist, and Buddhist traditions, and under Western Pentecostal, Baptist and Jewish traditions, for some may not be justifiable from any perspective. However, the psychological focus of this study concerns the compensatory function of religion, and addresses how spiritual parameters make sense of inequalities, suffering and mortality, attempts to explain life's vicissitudes and to provide a sense of being protected and guided in overcoming and adapting to them. Salient to this account are points of difference regarding the way two broadly defined traditions address suffering (its origins and resolution), ethical existence, and eschatology. Differences in belief and practice important to the historian or religious believer are necessarily blurred.

### Anticipating the Spiritual Orientation Scale: the SOS

The account anticipates the form of the Spiritual Orientation Scale [SOS]. This scale is developed as part of this study to empirically assess beliefs

characteristic of a person with no prolonged active involvement with a NRM they have recently approached. The SOS was developed with prospective empirical assessment of a general spiritual orientation with these two broad groupings in mind. Three clearly demarcated factors emerged: Eastern, Western and General religious orientations. For conceptual consistency, the outline of east-west differences is therefore only as sophisticated as the instrument which operationalises these concepts.

Religious belief systems surpass political and psychiatric systems in the nature and scope of the explanation they provide, addressing daily and ultimate concerns (Stark, 1981). Further, in providing explanation and consolation, religion meets both cognitive and emotional requirements, and has been termed a "generalised compensator" (Stark and Bainbridge, 1980a). The flourishing of NRMs is testimony to the fact that for some there is relevance to modern existence of an all-encompassing belief system, based on an economy of premises, interpreted and applied by a living 'enlightened' leader. Notions which are termed 'general religious tenets' for the purpose of this study address such issues as the finality of death, the nature of suffering, and how as finite humans we are to come to terms with them. These issues are an inseparable part of 'the human condition'.

**Religion not as a dull habit but as a fever**
There has been much research on the extrinsic or intrinsic nature of religious affiliation in the West. It has been suggested that the institutionalized churches of that tradition place more emphasis on the

rational features of belief rather than the devotional features of faith and a mystical relationship with the sacred (Clarke, 1964). NRMs provide something of a contrast. *Cultare* means 'to worship' in Latin and, as systems of belief and devotion, NRMs may be characterized as "pattern-setters" where, James (1960) suggests, religion exists "not as a dull habit, but a fever rather".

The East-West division has implications for the social acceptability of NRMs. As a Western charismatic offshoot, Pentecostalism is now widely accepted by the orthodoxy, and is not considered unconventional, while NRMs of Eastern origin retain their marginal status. I will spend some time outlining the parameters of new religious movements of an eastern nature, since it is not readily apparent why these belief systems might be legitimately considered as a source of appeal of the movements. Apart from the 'exotic' nature of these beliefs to a person educated in a western spiritual tradition, they hinge on quite different philosophical assumptions which have implications for the effects and potential manner of remediation of life mistakes. Since a major hypothesis of this study is that these innovative (some would say deviant) belief systems offer a message that may provide for a believer both explanation of and consolation for a painful life situation, the tenets of these systems of beliefs will be outlined with their potential appeal paramount.

Depending on the Eastern or Western orientation of the religion, and the particular history of any group developing within those two broad groupings, details of belief and practice differ. Broadly speaking, a Western religion postulates the existence of a deity to whom we are accountable after death. Being omniscient and omnipotent such a deity

is not bound by space or time, or by the natural laws of the material universe. A believer within this tradition therefore endorses the potential operation of super-empirical forces upon her or his life history, and sees that history as having a purpose, perhaps as being part of God's plan. For such a believer the natural world is only a part of existence. There is another system; a system of demand and response, supplication and atonement. From this perspective one can minimise one's suffering by living according to the word of God, praying for guidance, and repenting for one's sins.

Eastern conceptions of spirituality are less likely to posit a single personification of a supreme deity. Within non-dualist traditions a god or a buddha-nature is postulated to exist within each person, and there is an emphasis on the immanence of the divine, a "direct experience of the sacred", or a "personal experience of transcendence" (Stone, 1978:123). Needleman (1970:16), cited in Robbins et al, 1978:105) suggests that a weakness in modern western religion lies "in the absence in them of practical technique, method and discipline". In contrast, the conception of the sacred as an immanent power located within each individual which characterizes the somewhat mystically-oriented groups (Robbins et al, 1978) exists in concert with practical techniques for experiencing it (e.g. meditation and chanting). The techniques are integral to the belief systems, and their efficacy in providing a shared understanding of and solution to problems is constantly affirmed by witnessing and shared practice. For example, the central tenet of the Nichiren Shoshu of America is that the key to personal and social transformation is through the repetitive chanting of a mantra to a small

sacred scroll. The *mantra* is translated by most core members as "*Devotion to the mystical universal law of cause and effect through sound*" (Snow and Phillips, 1980:432), and the chanting of it is the key to unlock the power of the sacred scroll. Meetings where chanting is performed also include 'witnessing' where members testify to the beneficial transforming effects of such chanting, and personal experiences.

Further, in monist doctrines, there is no belief in super-empirical forces: the spiritual operates through the natural - the sublime inhabits the everyday for those who have stilled their desires and potentiated their awareness sufficiently to see, hear, touch, smell and taste it. The concept of *advaita* or non-duality pertains, where there is believed to be an ultimate unity or 'ground of all being' which "dissolves polarities and imparts an ultimately illusory or epiphenomenal quality (*maya*) to the material world" (Robbins et al., 1978: 102). Exceptions to this epiphenomenal character of the material world exist, as not every tradition (for example, Patanjali's Yoga) conflates transience with a non-causal, metaphysical status. The doctrine of advaita implies that one must recognize the "illusory nature of human contingency" (agency) which renders possible "detachment from the ups and downs of ordinary social experience". In other words, one can accept responsibility, but cannot aspire to control. If one can 'drop the ego' the illusory sense of separateness from an essential unity of the universe goes too.

So, the general postulates of these belief systems have highly practical and salutary application. These belief systems embrace notions of cause and effect but add the important adjunct of the function of awareness as enabling us to achieve liberation and transcendence of the cycle of suffering and rebirth, in the long term, and to avoid the repetition of self-damaging actions and thoughts in the short term. From this perspective it is via awareness that one can come to live within the natural flux with minimal suffering. Mistakes have a karmic residue; one is responsible, but terms such as blame, guilt, or sin have little or no relevance. Sin may mean retarded spiritual growth, but there is no deity's judgement to fear, merely the inevitable consequences of a given action. Stone (1978:130) suggests "karmic interpretations of fate assign responsibility without blame or guilt". An extended version of his observation is:

> Karmic psychohistory is congruent with Freudian notions of complexes based on past acts and decisions. And as in psychoanalysis, Karmic interpretations of fate assign responsibility without blame or guilt (1978:130).

Hence Karma is a deterministic law involving beliefs as to the outcome expected from certain actions, and inevitably following from them. It is not an ethically prescriptive law which lends itself to justifying religious attitudes. That these systems of thought assume determinism is evident from the observation by Robbins el at., (1978: 102) that monistic ideologies use the vocabulary of cognition and perception (viz realization, enlightenment) in contrast to the vocabulary of volition associated with dualist movements (for example, accepting Christ as Saviour, the 'will' of God). Also, there is an absence of fixed moral codes

in NRMs from the East (the exception being a principled abstinence from eating meat in some cases). In general, moral norms emerge which are viewed as "useful in promoting spiritual awakening but not possessing the status of metaphysical absolutes" (Robbins el at., 1978: 103).

It is suggested that such a spiritual worldview would have powerful ramifications in the way that suffering and the perennial forms of human error are viewed. There is no ethical basis for prolonged guilt and brooding over past indiscretions, as these would run counter to awareness of the moment necessary to prevent repetitions of mistaken actions out of harmony with present circumstances. Suffering would not be seen as something produced by sin, but by error, and avoidable in the future. Neither would suffering be seen as meaningless, but as events or thoughts with portent, if one has the wisdom to decipher their implications. The doctrine of advaita, or non-duality, might have repercussions for how involved and committed one might feel with life events. In other words, there is responsibility in the sense in which Kobasa et al, (1982) used the notion control, integration and union with all things in the sense which Kobasa et al, (1982) used commitment, and an acceptance of the inevitability of change, and the events which herald it having something to teach those attentive to their import, akin to Kobasa's notion of challenge. In short, an eastern worldview may be seen as promoting a cognitive coping style which has the potential to transform one's experience of stress. The veridicality of the new perceptions of those events is perhaps not as important as the consolation and guidance provided by the principled interpretation of events made possible.

While Eastern and Western traditions both address the human condition, they have obviously different assumptions from each other, and from a thorough-going scientific account of the life in a material universe. It is possible that the recent emergence of the popularity of eastern conceptions of the spiritual is not merely an expression of a fascination with the foreign and novel, but is due in part to its consonance on certain axioms (like determinism, and monism) with a philosophical and scientific account of events and its absence of moral absolutes. Perhaps as Needleman (1975) suggests modern wo/man is caught between two dreams, dreams of science and religion. Perhaps, too, there is currently a revival of what Goldmann (1964) termed "the tragic mind", which he outlines, capturing elements pertinent to NRMs and the following they attract:

> The nature of the tragic mind in seventeenth-century France can be characterised by two factors: the complete and exact understanding of the new world created by rationalistic individualism, together with all the invaluable and scientifically valid acquisitions which this offered to the human intellect; and, at the same time, the complete refusal to accept this world as the only one in which man could live, move and have his being (p.32).

## 9.1 Living Gods: The Significance of the Guru

*It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the Living God*

Hebrews 10:31

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A prominent aspect of Eastern NRMs perhaps not directly related to the content of the beliefs, but to the articulation of them, is the important role played by the guru or 'enlightened' leader. Perhaps the guru has richer influence on the appeal of the movement via personal charisma, and his/her being a figure of identification, than through his or her contribution to the belief system. However, gurus seem to be great simplifiers and story-tellers, and the importance of this emissary contribution is worthy of consideration before considering their charisma and identificatory appeal. S/he is responsible for the articulation of beliefs in a number of senses: after the manner of an oral tradition, in explicating conceptual linkages and relating belief to practical applications.

For modern NRMs (such as the former Rajneesh Foundation, the Divine Light Mission, the Nichiren Shoshu, the Hare Krishna, and the Unification Church) an important belief is in the 'enlightenment' of the master which is accompanied by extreme devotion to him. Stoner and Parke (1979) make what they term "excessive devotion" one of the defining features of a cult, which they term

> a minority religious group regarded as spurious or unorthodox [in which there is] great or excessive devotion to some person, idea or thing, (cited in Goldberg, 1983: 170).

The status of enlightenment is accompanied by apocryphal notions of the leader's powers, to which s/he may allude in her/his lectures, and in an abiding faith in the efficacy and uniqueness of the techniques s/he suggests (e.g. the meditation techniques of Rajneesh, and the four

techniques of the Guru Maharaji which together constitute the Knowledge).

The importance of a living guru for the belief system and devotional practices of a NRM has received little explicit attention. Robbins et al., (1978) note that he has exemplary rather than merely emissary status. Enlightenment can be achieved in monist charismatic movements "through veneration and emulation of leaders who are regarded as exemplars of advanced consciousness" (p.105).

Sometimes the 'enlightenment' of the leader is tantamount to divinity. Difference from his (or her) followers may be established by his/her timing of having achieved enlightenment at a very early age (as Guru Maharaji claims) or without the guidance of a master (as Bhagwan Rajneesh claimed). The guru or master is often viewed as a source of energy (Kempton, 1976:36, cited in Robbins et at, 1978:105). As Robbins et al., (1978) note:

> Such masters are generally perceived by the devotees as personifications of the enlightened 'loving' or liberated values revered by their followers" (p.105 original emphasis, citing in support: Anthony & Robbins, 1974; Zaehner, 1974, Foss & Larkin, 1978).

As Pruyser (1968) notes, god is "always a love object to the devout person" (cited in Maloney, 1977:70). In fact attraction to and involvement with a NRM may often be characterized by the follower as "falling in love", surrendering or being drawn to the guru (Wach, 1962).

The total approval and acceptance offered by the guru is a powerful affiliative mechanism. Halperin (1982) notes:

> To give total approval without any type of qualification is to deny the existence of the observing ego on the part of either participant within the dialogue. Total approval can only occur within contexts which implicitly promote or explicitly celebrate merger and fusion...It promotes regression by promising a return to the very early symbiotic level of the mother's unqualified approval and love.
> (cited in Halperin, 1983:225)

Given that the guru is 'enlightened', and from the perspective of his/her devotees in direct contact with the sacred, then a personal relationship with him or a sense of being in direct relationship with him (as in the ritual *satsang*) is a relationship to the sacred.

Beliefs as to his special status may render commitment more differentiated and remove other belief systems from consideration as possible alternatives; producing a kind of 'brand loyalty'. Despite the fact that most NRM belief systems share a belief in the operation of sacred forces, the details of their operation, and the specific interpretive heuristics vary greatly from movement to movement. As Snow and Machalek (1983a) note from their participant observation of the NSA, the opposition to the use of metaphor (their guru could not merely be termed a charismatic leader) "allows converts to assign incomparable value to their worldview" (p.275).

Shearmur (1980) notes that institutional and affective arrangements of sects may influence the 'handling of ideas' and so have epistemological

consequences. He gives the example of sects having 'rules of conduct' which influence the growth of knowledge. The opposition to metaphor Snow and Machalek (1983a) note may remove all other belief systems from the status of competition.

Aspects of the guru's relationship to his followers are reminiscent of the mechanisms which Kanter (1968) suggests promote the obedience and moral conviction of 'institutionalized awe'. The requisite 'distance and mystery' can be achieved in the following ways (the conceptual points are Kanter's, the examples mine):

• An authority hierarchy (which may overlap with spiritual differentiation) e.g. an 'enlightened master', with followers who aspire to that status

• Physical separation of the leader from followers. Gurus tend to be separate from their followers in living arrangements, and seen only at ritual occasions called *darshans*. Furthermore, their followers are frequently based in another country and in contact by media only.

• Special leader prerogatives (for example, the 100 or so Rolls Royces owned by Rajneesh, or having sexual access to all of the women, and men, as Jim Jones had, even while he prohibited sexual relations between couples)

• Having a basis for decisions other than rationality e.g. inspiration, intuition or magic.

The guru has great significance for the belief system via his/her lectures and expositions which link the elements, showing how they may function as a PSP. In the literature of the movement and in public and taped addresses the guru translates into practical techniques (often

giving anecdotal examples) the manner of explaining and resolving felt difficulties. The range of these difficulties spans daily concerns (such as sexual *mores*) to more ultimate concerns such as the reasons for suffering and the finality of death. Explanation is achieved utilizing the general postulates of the movement's belief system.

**How belief systems can be immune to disconfirming evidence**

Because of the untraditional or exotic nature of the beliefs from which these PSPs derive, the necessity of the believer being encapsulated from a hostile and critical society has been emphasized in the past. The believer was thought to require encapsulation from both 'Come off it Saul' responses (Berger and Luckman, 1967) and from disconfirming evidence for his or her beliefs. However, concerning the belief system of the Nichiren Shoshu, Snow and Machalek (1983) note:

> its formidable interpretive scheme is not highly vulnerable to contradiction and challenge. Not only does it protect believers from negative evidence, but it defines virtually all evidence and experiences as confirmation of the system (p.19).

In support of this they cite Lofland (1966) who suggests of the Unification Church "all experience, all counter-arguments would only produce confirmation" (Snow & Machalek, 1983a:18). Snow & Machalek (1983a) conclude that the movement belief system is robust, in so far as "unfalsifiable claims are used to support falsifiable claims". In other terms: "an empirically non-relevant belief (is used) to protect an empirically relevant belief' (Bornhek & Curtis, 1975:127, cited in Snow & Machalek, 1983a:21). Such robust systems, they suggest, do not require

extensive legitimation or protection from the disbelief of the wider community.

These 'empirically non-relevant beliefs' refer to the central tenets of a religious belief system, some of which, this study suggests from developing the SOS scale, include the beliefs that:

• There exist sacred forces

• Death is not the end

• A life without spirituality is one without meaning

• A life devoted solely to the pleasures of the material world is incapable of sustaining true happiness

• A person with no spiritual beliefs at all leads a partial existence

• Religious belief is at least as valid a way of 'knowing' and experiencing the world as any other

To allow these central tenets to span Eastern and Western devotional systems, the form of continued existence after death has been left unspecified to retain the tenet's pertinence whether reincarnation or a soul judged before God is the follow up to death. Similarly, the nature of the sacred forces and their mode of operation are unspecified, e.g. whether they form a super-empirical realm or operate through natural events.

It is suggested that someone who did not endorse these beliefs as even possibly true would be unlikely to be open to a religious interpretation of his/her life events, and unlikely to make contact with a NRM despite having the opportunity to do so from social channels or the media. A

failure to endorse such beliefs may be one factor associated with departure from NRM contact at the earliest opportunity. These are merely general spiritual tenets: some further consonance of cognitive orientation may be required to explain why a person is drawn to eastern or western systems of belief.

## 9.2 Do Affiliates have Pre-existing Spiritual Orientations?

Of the direct tests of Lofland and Stark's model two of the three studies investigated orthodox religions. Needleman (1975) and Robbins et al., (1978) suggest that western orthodox religions are not strong in terms of their practical problem-solving application.

Rather than accepting the idea that ideological congruence is an important predisposition to movement involvement, Snow and Phillips (1980) suggest that "conversion to NSA frequently effects a significant change in problem-solving perspectives" (p.436). They do not make explicit their criteria in deciding whether a person qualified for inclusion in the religious PSP category. Their data base was randomly selected testimonies from the movement's newspaper. They acknowledge the atypicality of the data in that they "pertain to the more highly committed and active members", but do not give any indication of the representativeness of the case examples they cite. They merely suggest that they are 'not exceptional'. They suggest that these findings cast doubt on whether pre-participation ideological congruence is a necessary condition for conversion (p.436).

However, it is not merely the examination and representativeness of the case studies cited which calls these findings into question, but whether the very nature of the data can be assumed to be free of bias. It is, in a sense, a form of witnessing. It is retrospective and likely to be couched in the situated vocabulary of the movement, or (as Beckford (1978) suggested of Jehovah's Witnesses conversion accounts he studied) formulated in terms acceptable to the movement. Biographical reconstruction is a feature of conversion, as Berger and Luckman (1967), Snow and Machalek (1983), Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olsen (1980) and Snow and Phillips (1980) themselves note. Hence the accentuation of 'then...now' differences is to be expected. Further, as noted above, it cannot be excluded as a possibility that the accounts published were selected on the basis of the scope of their appeal and the 'radical' change attendant on conversion. They are highly political documents, not the relatively unbiased first-hand accounts the exigencies of social science require.

Barker (1981) found that 80% of the British members of the Unification Church already believed in God and that "just under half of the British members of the workshop who joined, but less than a quarter ... who did not join, said they had been actively seeking the truth" (p.76). When asked why they joined, nearly 66% of the British members answered in theological terms. Those who left the workshop and discontinued involvement with the group were most likely to be agnostic, atheist and non-Christian. Galanter (1980) also found that those leaving earliest from such preliminary workshops had least "creedal assent" as assessed by a scale he developed which concerned specific beliefs of that group.

Concerning previous religious involvement, Galanter et at, (1979) note a strong religious orientation in the background data of their respondents. Sixty-seven percent regarded themselves as at least moderately committed to their families' religion before the age of 15. Thirty-four percent had, at some later date, become at least moderately committed to "one of the eastern religious sects such as the Divine Light Mission, Zen, Muktananda, and a smaller proportion (19%) to fundamentalist Christian sects. However, fully 90% reported at least some history of at least some prior commitment to these sects (p.166)". This contrasts with the fact that only 47% reported at least some prior political commitment. Galanter and colleagues assessed only the commitment to parental religion, rather than direct assessment of the degree of belief in spiritual conceptions and the eastern or western orientation of those conceptions. Their broad focus was narrowed to the assessment of specific details of creedal assent to the tenets of that group in Galanter's (1980) later study.

Heirich (1977) found that religious orientation was twice as significant a predictor of involvement in Pentecostalism as all other factors combined. Balch and Taylor (1977) found that pre-existing congruence of individual beliefs with those of the group led people to make a conversion requiring the sacrifice of lifestyle and possessions even in the absence of pre-existing affective bonds or intensive interaction with group members prior to commitment.

While Lofland (1978:20) suggests that "many people not religious at all have joined" the Unification Church since the 1960's, it is important to

query how this religiosity (and its absence) was assessed. From the literature it seems that those making contact with NRMs endorse beliefs which may be classified as religious in the widest sense, yet they may not actively attend church or even claim a particular denomination. Barker (1981) notes a disillusionment with established churches in the convert group, yet 87% of the Unification Church acknowledged having "been aware of a presence or power" prior to joining. She notes that those attending preliminary workshops "refused to mention any denomination" (p.80) when asked which faith they held.

More of the workshop group than the control group came from households where the family had mixed denominations. So it seems that potential converts may have a general religious orientation rather than exclusive endorsement of any orthodox faith. Needleman (1975; cited in Robbins et al, 1978:105) as noted above, pointed to a lack in Western religions of practical techniques and applicability of the beliefs to modern concerns, which may be part of the reason for the disaffection with formal denominations noted by Barker (1981). Seggar and Kunz (1972) found that few of the people in their Mormon sample saw organized religion as relating to solutions of problems in any way. Few of the subjects saw their problems as sacred in origin. However, this may be because Seggar and Kunz's operational definition of 'sacred' involved the devil and/or evil spirits, and the notion of 'God's will'. This excludes a broader conception of spiritual which I have attempted to outline above. In attempting to assess whether his Christian subjects had a religious problem-solving perspective, Austin (1977) asked them whether they felt God had influenced their lives prior to conversion, only 2/6

responded affirmatively. Snow and Phillips (1980) suggested that less than 15% of the NSA converts fit into the religious PSP category prior to encountering the NSA. More than 3/4 of the sample "saw both the source and the solution to problems as residing in forces other than mystical, supernatural and occult" (p.436).

**Psychology has neglected belief in the subtle operation of sacred forces**
There has been a distinct failure to consider belief in the more subtle operation of sacred forces in explaining or solving problems which characterizes a more eastern type of belief system, and modern Christian accounts. It is unlikely that even for orthodox religions a religious PSP can be reduced to: "The devil and his evil minions cause my problems and God solves them". In psychological research, the subtleties of *karma* and *maya* are nowhere to be found. Snow et al's (1980) remark about motivational analyses paying too scant attention to movement ideologies, while not in principle alien to a psychological consideration of movements appears to have become so in practice. Lofland and Stark (1965) merely observe that affiliates endorse general religious postulates. Snow and Phillips (1980) suggest that conversion effects a change in PSP. It does seem unlikely that a fully-fledged interpretive system exists prior to any tutelage by the movement. It is likely that specific beliefs, their interrelation, and potential application would be learned during sustained contact.

**The heart of spiritual belief systems**

To summarize briefly, it is suggested that NRM belief systems do have the potential to function as PSPs.

- They have wide explanatory scope due to the 'economy' of their organization

- The central features of which are not amenable to empirical falsification.

- They are 'constrained' in a quasi-logical manner, deriving in part from the guru's function in interpreting the general principles, modelling their explanatory relevance to everyday and ultimate concerns, and incorporating those beliefs into practical techniques and workshops.

Disaffected with western orthodox institutions (as Barker's 1981 data showed) and not belonging to any organised spiritual group, these people are seekers, open to the appeal of new religious movements. If they endorse the possible validity of meditation, yoga, karma, and reincarnation and find comfort in such notions when strife occurs, then they may be open to the appeal of NRMs of an eastern orientation.

It is suggested that such consonance in spiritual orientation between the individual and the NRM has a determining influence on movement involvement within the wider causal model specified above.

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# Psychological Predispositions

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*To see a world in a grain of sand*

*and a heaven in a wildflower,*

*to hold infinity in the palm of your hand*

*and eternity in an hour…*

William Blake

## 10. EGO PERMEABILITY

In this section I discuss absorption, authoritarianism, family relationships, differential susceptibility to charismatic leaders, and the notions of constraint, impulsivity and ego-strength. I conclude with a statement of the overarching hypotheses deriving from the introduction of the *Rites de Passage* Model.

### 10.1 Absorption

So far we have sketched the profile of a seeker in terms of consonant beliefs, distressing prior life events, and inadequate social resources. We have left untouched possible distinguishing enduring psychological traits. What role does mystical experience play in conversion to NRMs? Are some individuals more predisposed to such experiences than

others? Buckley & Galanter (1979) found that mystical experiences were of central importance for many of the members of the Divine Light Mission. They used a combination of in-depth interviews and questionnaires to collect their data. The mystical experiences reported spanned many sensory modalities: 83% of their subjects claimed to have had unusual aural experiences, 90% unusual visual experiences, 25% unusual kinaesthetic experiences and 16% sexual experiences, while 51% claimed to have had a distorted experience of time. These experiences were reported as occurring at the time of ritual commitment to the group, called 'receiving Knowledge'. Buckley & Galanter (1979) note that "a certain amount of prestige within the Divine Light Mission accrues to those who receive Knowledge - and it is possible that some of those who answered positively were responding to this group attitude" (p.286).

Like a number of the mystical moments detailed by James (1960), Buckley and Galanter (1979) note that in the case examples:

> Mystical experiences occurred at a critical conflict-ridden time of their lives when they were in the midst of what can best be described as an identity crisis. Their religious conversion can be viewed as a regression in the service of the ego that resolved their intra-psychic social conflicts (p.286).

Ralph Hood (1973) developed a mystical experiences questionnaire by modifying some of the mystical moments documented by William James and then asking subjects to rate whether moments such as these had occurred to them. However, the nature of the experience thus assessed

is quite transparent, and someone wishing to ascribe a mystical ability to him/herself could readily fake.

A method is required of assessing a mystical awareness which might intrude on the everyday, which has perhaps escaped conscious awareness. Pruyser (1977) portrays religious awareness as represented by a 'quality of feeling'. Feeling intrudes into portrayals of experiences when metaphor and simile are used, when like is compared to or represented by unlike. That is, in the poetic flaunting of the reality principle. Feeling intrudes into perception when the normal conditions of the knower being separate from the thing known (Anderson, 1962), and sense-appropriate information impinging on our awareness, are modified or seem to us to breakdown. Buckley and Galanter (1979) acknowledge the importance of a concept pertinent here described by Ross (1975) - that affect is a powerful form of knowing, characteristic of the early phases of childhood, which may be reinvoked in certain regressive states. Buckley & Galanter (1979) suggest that this may be an explanation for certain phenomena of mystical states. There are states, sometimes poetic, sometimes confusional, where there is a diffusion of ego boundaries, for example in human intimacy, and crepuscular moments of awareness of our place in the order of natural things, and awareness of the continuity of time before and after our existence, and the continuity of life forms. Huxley (1945) details accounts of such experiences through the ages in *The Perennial Philosophy* and Laski (1980) marks their existence in *Ordinary Ecstasy*. Huxley (1945) cites the writings of the poet Rumi, and St. Theresa of Avila which abound with an explosive sense of union, of openness to what is for them 'divine'. The

nature worship of Goethe and Wordsworth capture an absorptive perceptual style, Proust reveals recollection which is powerful enough to supplant present perception, Rolland the reduced sense of separateness of the 'oceanic feeling'. This is perhaps more of the hallmark of religions of the 'fever' rather than the institutionalised kind. People seem to differ in their capacity to lose themselves to such feeling-imbued sensation. How might this readiness, preparedness be assessed?

There is a psychological trait, possibly conducive to spiritual involvement (especially of an eastern nature) which may be termed an 'absorptive perceptual style'. This refers to a person's tendency to experience a reduced sense of separateness from the objects of perception, which I have noted are said to characterise meditative and mystical states. It also refers to a reduction in the separateness of sensory modalities characteristic of synaesthesic experience, where a melody can evoke a play of colours, and a fragrance can evoke a surge of vivid memories. Characteristic of this perceptual style is a reduced sense of the 'as if', e.g. when one is so 'lost' in the viewing of a film that one shelters from a (celluloid) hail of bullets. This openness to direct and recollected perceptual influence (and the intermingling of the two) is akin to suggestibility, but it does not entail a submission to authority.

Tellegen and Atkinson (1974) developed an absorption scale, incorporating items from an earlier 'trust' scale. It is the first dimension resembling a personality trait which has been found to correlate (if only moderately) with measures of hypnotic suggestibility. This moderate correlation is not surprising in view of McConkey, Sheehan and White's

(1979) evidence regarding the extent of relationship between Wilson and Barber's CIS and the Harvard GSHS:A. They found a positive correlation of .28, but data indicated that the two tests are independent in their underlying dimensions; they load on different factors. Tellegen's findings of a .27 correlation in one sample and .43 in a second sample show a somewhat stronger relationship, though factor analysis on the differential loadings of hypnotic susceptibility did not reveal an absorption factor.

The absorption measure focuses on more purely cognitive suggestibility, although the low but consistent loadings of the autonomy-scepticism variable on this factor suggest that it is not completely related to persuasibility. It seems it may not tap an openness to interpersonal influence, but a wider openness to the influence of current and recollected sensory experience, and in fact Tellegen (1982) suggests that "one would expect high-absorption persons to have an affinity for mystical experience" and that "high scorers on the Absorption subscale of the MPQ are emotionally responsive to perceptions, can summon and be absorbed in vivid recollection and experience episodes of expansive extra-sensory mystical awareness and altered states".

## 10.2 Authoritarianism

The Absorption scale does not seem to be a measure of interpersonal suggestibility, but an openness to a sense of fusion with the non-interpersonal world and to unusual sensory experience. So some further assessment of susceptibility to the influence of authority was required. Adorno (1970) describes authoritarian submission as a "very general

attitude that would be evoked in relation to a variety of authority figures: parents, older people, leaders, supernatural powers etc." (p.23l cited in Kreml, 1977:29). Such a trait is suggested

> one way of resolving the child's ambivalent feeling towards authority figures. The hostility and rebelliousness all children have within them is unduly restrained, more than likely because of a fear of the authority itself, and the child allegedly overcompensates for this fear with an overweaning respect for the authority of the figure (Bay, 1968:232 cited in Kreml, 1977:29).

This restraint of hostility and overcompensation through overgeneralized submission does not occur in every parent-child relationship. Richardson (1979) notes that Wallis (1974) suggests that maintaining authority emerges as one of the three problems cult-like groups have to face (as opposed to sect-like groups). A cult is, Wallis says (1974:304); "epistemologically individualistic" whereby the locus of authority is located within the person rather than in some outside source. Given the unconventional nature of eastern NRMs it is unlikely that they will evidence a generalised submission to traditional authority. Even recent balanced versions of the F-scale (Ray, 1979) concern a very traditional conception of authority rather than a charismatic form of authority. Some suggest the latter is a defining feature of NRMs (Stoner & Parke, 1979; Galanter, 1989). The apparent contradiction between suggesting that NRM affiliates are less traditional, and might reject personal authority, in the light of their evident attraction to a group formed around a leader, who requires a deep and abiding attitude of openness to his guidance, is not a true paradox. A person who in general rebels against traditional mores may nonetheless unquestioningly obey

and believe in someone who can answer pertinently their questions and dilemmas, and provide for their unmet needs and longings. So, it is suggested that affiliates of eastern NRMs will not show a high level of submission to authority as assessed by traditional psychological measures, though followers of NRMs of a western nature may still find their views consonant with those of the dominant culture and evidence more submission in this regard. Fromm (1941) suggests that the essential element of authoritarian religion is the surrender to a power transcending wo/man, whereby s/he loses personal integrity but gains a feeling of being protected by the power of which s/he becomes a part. Eastern NRMs are more akin to his notion of humanistic religion, centring on [wo/man and [her]his strength, and the experience of a solidarity of all things, where no knowledge is of any value unless it grows out of ourselves, (he cites Zen as an example), and where conceptions of God are akin to 'Spinoza's God', where [wo/man must see [her]his own limitations and [her]his dependency on the whole of the universe. This perhaps addresses the timely popularity of NRMs, in that for some, dominion and control over the forces of nature is no longer a point of celebration given pollution and the squandering of non-renewable resources, and when dominion over others has brought fascist regimes and death camps. Awareness of the interrelatedness of parts of the universe and different forms of material existence is as much a fact of science as of religion. Affiliates do have an educated white-collar, thoughtful profile (Richardson, 1985) in addition to the troubled histories we have been tracing so far. It is important to query. to whose conception of authority are we measuring the affiliates' tendency to submit? With what justification do we use our conceptions

as the measure of the relative adjustment of the members of these groups?

Richardson (1985) exemplifies this point when he traces the movement of his own assumptions underpinning his research. He notes that Simmonds (1978) found that members of the Jesus Movement were examples of a dependency-prone personality type, in that they were lower on defensiveness, self-confidence, self-control, achievement, dominance, endurance and affiliation. Simmonds (1978) referred to this pattern as maladaptive and suggested that participation was a form of addiction similar to drug dependency. At a second glance, says Richardson (1985), Richardson and Simmonds (1977) found it obvious that the majority were functioning well within the context of the organization. This observation leads us to consider seriously the problems associated with using instruments developed in one context (such as those developed in the individualistic competitive American culture exemplified by University students) in a vastly different context (such as communal, more collectively-oriented religious groups stressing basic values of love, caring, submission etc.) (Richardson, 1985:211).

As psychologists we look for conformity, compliance, potentially destructive obedience: concepts like humility, common enough in religious parlance, are foreign. In the face of complex decisions some people look for guidance from someone whom they feel knows better, surrounded by people, it seems, who feel better in that context than they did 'outside'. Richardson (1985:215) cites Kuner's (1981) finding that members "seem to live with less worries and under less psychic

stress". The works of Ross (1983, 1985) reveal that the psychometric profiles of 42 Hare Krishna devotees are within the normal range, with a slight decline in mental health after one and a half years in the movement, and an increase in mental health after three years involvement. The follow up research (of 25 devotees) indicated that after a further four years of involvement all responses (to the MMPI) were within the normal range, and of seven changes in personality profile, all but one (increased anxiety) were in a positive direction. It seems there is evidence for a slight increase in mental health attendant on involvement with the Hare Krishna Movement. How adaptive is involvement with a charismatic group seems to depend, at times, on the stability of the psychology of the leader (Deutsch, 1983).

## 10.3 Problematic Family Relationships: Early Childhood And Adolescence

Deutsch (1983) outlines common symptoms among those drawn to an eastern style NRM including feeling 'out of step' with peers and sibling expectations. He notes there were strong and unresolved sibling rivalries, with affiliates of the movement having experienced themselves as less favoured, attended to or competent than their siblings, and, if they had older siblings, they usually felt neglected or mistreated by them. Out of fourteen subjects, there was only one who had not experienced both parents as unsatisfactory, as being distant, domineering and harshly critical.

Interestingly enough Ullman (1982) suggests on the basis of in-depth interview data with a broad range of converts to NRMs and orthodox

religions, that converts to NRMs have experienced increased emotional upheaval relative to control groups and orthodox religious groups throughout their childhood and in the period preceding conversion. "While some proponents of the psychodynamic approach emphasise the adaptive consequences [of conversion]" she notes, "all trace its origin to childhood conflicts stirred anew prior to conversion" (p.183). Her results suggest "that emotional dynamics are better predictors of conversion than the cognitive constructs examined" (p.191). Her study supports the major hypotheses raised by the psychodynamic approach to conversion. Namely that conversion is a defensive reaction to an unavailable or rejecting father (p.191). She cites Freud's (1927) short paper where he describes the process of conversion as a defensive reaction to an upsurge of Oedipal hatred in which aggressive impulses towards the actual father are defended against by submission to the omnipotent father figure in the form of God.

Ullman (1982) found several interesting differences between the convert and nonconvert groups in terms of family relationships. Seventy-seven percent of the converts indicated an extremely problematic relationship with their father (cf. 23% of the nonconverts) with father absence being the most frequently cited category (28.2% of the convert sample). The difference between the two groups in terms of their perception of their mother was not significant, and only achieved significance when all categories reflecting a problematic relationship to their mother were summed. The converts characterised their childhood as more unhappy than the non-convert group, and they recalled a greater number of specific traumatic events. The data provides suggestive support that this

especially characterised the converts to NRMs (which she terms cult groups, such as the Hare Krishna group, and the Bah' ai) within her convert sample which also contained converts to traditional groups. When the 'cult' groups were excluded from the analysis there were no differences between convert and non-convert samples in terms of childhood trauma, suggesting that the data from the cult groups were responsible for the effect.

The adolescences of the convert sample were described as more unhappy, though there was no significant difference in terms of the specific traumatic events recalled. Eighty percent of the convert sample reported emotional turmoil during the period immediately preceding conversion and a similar percentage indicated relief from anxiety, anger and depression as the predominant response to involvement in religion. The profile Ullman outlines is of an unavailable, hostile or rejecting father in one's childhood which may predispose one to convert to a religious group in an attempt to gain the approval, protection and guidance of an authority figure. This seems all very well for western spiritual groups, but seemingly conflicts with the non-theistic nature of eastern religions. However, a NRM is a group focussing on a belief system formulated and interpreted by a living enlightened leader, and devotion to that leader is an important element of belonging to the group. It is to more detailed consideration of the role of the leader in NRMs which we now return.

**10.4 Differential Susceptibility To Charismatic Leaders**

While the 1927 article by Freud that Ullman (1982) cites as support for her psychoanalytic hypothesis is directly pertinent to her study, and a concise rendering of a motivation for conversion, psychoanalytic theory has more to offer regarding' the nature of religious experience and the appeal of charismatic leaders and regarding possible motivations of believers than she had time to delineate in her concise article. Psychoanalytic accounts of religion potentially render coherent a wide array of stimulating articles with varying empirical data bases from experimental to clinical. For this reason it is perhaps worthwhile to consider the psychoanalytic account of religion in some depth.

In The Future of an Illusion Freud (1927) presents a reductivist analysis of religion. He postulates that the deity is the result of a projection of early parental relations. It is motivated by a wish to obtain protection from the 'superior and crushing forces of nature'. By believing in a deity who is omniscient and omnipotent, the universe for the believer becomes a system of demand and response rather than one of bare mechanistic causality where suffering, life and death have no meaning. Belief in a deity affords some sense of divine providence - someone's will must be done. This anchors moral responsibility and authorises a code of ethics. Meaning is restored to the vagaries of cause and effect and a palatable view of death emerges, as 'sinking into an etruscan tomb', as Freud poetically notes. He also relates (1930) the mystical religious sense of oneness, of harmony with the world (citing Romain Rolland's concept of an 'oceanic feeling') to the phase of primary narcissism - a golden age where the child is totally dependent on a caretaker, and

blissfully unaware that the ministrations of cleaning, tactile comfort and nourishment come from a separate being who may arrive late or not at all. The caretaker is, of course, in fact independent from the child, but the narcissism of this phase is captured by the fact that the child is postulated to be unaware of this split between this caretaker and itself. Weston La Barre (1980) dates the developmental origin of the religious impulse to the first cry of abandonment, when the split between subject and object, knower and known must be acknowledged, when reality (what is the case) predominates over the wished-for state of affairs. Hallucinated fulfilment no longer satisfies, the infant must learn about the world, discriminate objects, perfect co-ordination in obtaining them, learn the language of asking, learn to demand and woo. As, for Freud, childhood 'love' is insatiable, the loss of this golden age is never truly compensated for in anyone. The sense of ontological aloneness leaves us yearning for (at least) 'another half' to which popular slang and Aristophanes' myth in Plato's *Symposium* attests.

Yet from a Freudian perspective, few of us emerge into adulthood with the belief that our parents are omniscient and omnipotent, and our sense of fusion with them is replaced by identification with the lost love objects which, according to Freud, is essential to the setting of the superego via the introjection of the moral beliefs of both parents. The role of identification in the setting up or modifying the ego is a highly controversial point. There are many accounts of the ego. Ego psychologists such as Hartmann, Kris and Lowenstein (1946) and Hartmann (1951, 1964) portray the ego as a set of processes e.g. perceptual and motor skills, and a capacity for discernment and

synthesis of the plethora of phenomena impinging from reality. Lacan (1977) specifies the mirror stage as the exclusive process of the ego's ontogeny, and therefore sees the ego not as an entity but the residue of identifications. Maze (1983, 1987), in contrast, would refute the notion that anything can be constituted solely on the basis of the relations into which 'it' enters, and suggests there must be independently specifiable properties which determine the nature of the ego. He suggests it must have a dynamic basis (and retains the pre-1925 Freudian position viewing the ego as a subset of instinctual drives), as, he argues, more than structural residues of identification are required to oppose the powerful id impulses. Only an ego with an economic basis (that is consisting of drives) can modify action (at the behest of our moral beliefs, the superego) to avoid culturally unacceptable expressions of unregenerate id impulses. The proscriptions and prescriptions of family and culture determine the contingencies of reward and punishment attendant on any attempted direct expression of a drive, and subsequently determine in part (in concert with differences in temperament and the like) personal values, toleration of delay in gratification, impulsivity, our pleasure/pain regulatory style: in short, these influences determine our degree of personal control or prohibitions and coping techniques. How identification relates to controversial concepts like 'ego-strength', resilience in the face of stress, emotional and substance dependency, are questions well beyond the humble experimental confines of this thesis. Experimental self-report data does not permit the testing of psychoanalytic hypotheses.

However, a full background account is not required for the summary attempt this study makes to assess the perceived adequacy of early child-parent relations, and the possible consequences of differential adequacy for the impact of stressful life events, the acquisition and maintenance of satisfying interpersonal bonds and love relationships, the response to a breakdown of those relationships, and a differential openness to charismatic influence.

Cushman (1986) suggests (using Kohut's (1971, 1977) theoretical framework and terms) that those individuals who are differentially susceptible to charismatic others have sustained 'low level narcissistic wounds' which stem from an absence of a 'phase appropriate merger' with an 'idealised omnipotent other'. Thus they reveal an absence of certain psychic structures, which would have developed when this phase appropriate merger came to an end, as the 'idealised cathexes were withdrawn from the idealised love object' and set up within the subject's psychic apparatus. Cushman is in accord with Kohut, who suggests that, if there is a failure to merge, or a traumatic breakdown of that merger, the subject will lack the idealised psychic structures which are one way of maintaining self esteem, and Kohut says, the individual will be left:

> yearning to find a substitute for the missing (or insufficiently developed) psychic structure, such persons are forever seeking with addiction-like intensity, and often through sexual means (the clinical picture may be that of a perversion) to establish a relationship to people who serve as stand-ins for the omnipotent idealised self-object (Kohut, 1977:400).

Kohut suggests that identifying with admired and loved people in our environment contributes to our sense of self, or self-esteem, and that trauma in these early relations leaves development incomplete (though he does not specify the nature of the psychic structure) and the person 'seeking'. However, Kohut's account must be critically evaluated as an attempt to explain the ontogeny of a 'seeker'. He does not clearly define what he means by 'self'. Is it the ego, or the totality of the drives, beliefs and values of the organism? Lothane (1983) notes: the noun 'self' is not in Freud. Thus, he continues, when Freud (1915)

> writes about a behavior (he called it an instinctual vicissitude) directed towards oneself, which he termed "*Die Wendung gegen die eigen Person*," literally "turning towards one's own person" we find Riviere translating it as "turning around upon the subject," whereas Strachey renders it "turning round upon the subject's own self (italics added). Replacing "person" or "subject" by "self' paves the way for introducing reification (p.2IO).

Freud's usage of the concept 'self' was synonymous with one's own person, the totality of the drives, beliefs and values of the organism. Lothane's (1983) detailed and competent critique notes Kohut's changing usage of the concept self, his reification and the problematic status of a psychic structure which Lothane terms "another high level abstraction and a metaphor" (p.211). He suggests that Kohut's (1977) definition of self is a misreading of Kant which results in the self being portrayed as an unknowable reality. In summary, Lothane says that in attempting to formulate a new causal theory of self-love, Kohut

> invented a hypostasis, an entity, which he called the structure self. This fictional structure embodies an anatomical simile. The dynamic

conflict model... has been given up in favour of a quasi-neurological defect model. The deficit or defect in the structure can be corrected by an addition of a missing ingredient, love, which is renamed empathy (p.2IO).

Positing of the self as an entity does not render problematic Kohut's position, for in fact, if one takes a determinist, materialist stance with regard to a theory of mind, to have causal effect it must have material properties. However, his leaving unclear the posited contribution of identification to that psychic structure 'self' is problematic. Kohut accords causal role to the deficit in development of the self. He suggests that it leaves the person seeking reparation, or restoration as he calls it. According to Lothane (1983) Kohut's position suggests that

through empathy or empathic nurturing, obtained from a selfobject, the self, stunted by defects due to a lack of such nurturing in early childhood, achieves a state of restoration: the self has 'a need for a self-object to complete its development' (p.212).

Given that Kohut has given up the dynamic conflict model for a structural model, he is in a difficult position theoretically in so far as it is impossible to state a priori what 'complete development' might consist in. It is always possible to specify sub-goals or further goals, but there is no way of determining when 'complete development' has been reached other than a de facto absence of searching. Further, the account has overtones of teleology, as the lack or the 'need for a self-object' is burdened with the status of a 'drive to' do something, be it depend on or merge with, a self-object. This contravenes Freud's (1915) deterministic injunction that a drive can only be defined by its bodily source, that only those not further reducible are worthy of the name, and that the object

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by which a drive attains satisfaction is the most flexible attribute, and certainly is not a defining attribute of a drive. The weakness of Kohut's account in positing a structure which is tantamount to a 'drive to depend' is a weakness shared by Doi's fascinating account of *The Anatomy of Dependency* (1971) in Japanese culture. Doi gives a theoretical account of issues similar to those which concern Kohut, suggesting that there is a form of love, called *amae* where no shame or obligation, can be felt due to one's dependence on another, because it is as if that other were not separate from oneself. The literal origin of the term *amae* is "cleaving to the breast with no shame". He comes to define *amae* as a 'drive to depend'. The self-object of Kohut's account, may have the same status as the object of (what Doi terms) one's amae. The self-object derives its status from a mistaken unconscious belief that the other is not separate from oneself: this belief has the hallmark of a regression to the state of primary narcissism, or the 'golden age' mentioned above, where it was not yet realised due to the formation of the pleasure ego, that that which succoured and tended us, was in fact not part of us. The pleasure attendant on a seeming return to this state is apparent: there can therefore be no shame, obligation or abandonment. It is not enough to say that there are theoretical problems with psychoanalytic accounts which attempt to have mechanisms like identification perform motivational tasks, because the phenomena they describe are real enough. Some account must be given of them. Some individuals do seem to be seekers, drawn to charismatic movements and their leaders.

In *Group Psychology* Freud (1921) suggests that identification with a leader takes the place of the superego, and is like "rediscovering one's parents" who were initially responsible for the introjected moral beliefs now replaced by the person of the leader. He suggests this identification is the product of transference and recruits powerful motives to please the leader, which may result in the leader being accorded the trust and authority previously accorded to the parents. Sennett (1980) in his scholarly analysis of authority shows how pervasive is this influence in various types of industrial power hierarchies, historical and contemporary. As we are all prone to identify with others (this being perhaps the well-spring of many pro-social feelings and action like altruism) and most of us have heroes: it is arguable that we are none of us immune to charismatic appeal. However, as it is unlikely that a random array of people would all drink arsenic-laced grape drink in the manner of those who died at Jonestown, then the basis of charisma, and differential susceptibility to it warrants further assessment.

**10.5 Charisma**

Weber's (1922) analysis of charisma entails the occurrence of a social crisis involving a weakening of traditional values, an emergence of group conflicts and a sharpening of class differences. The traditional order is then challenged by the emergence of a "charismatic authority". Rebhan (1983) cites Hummell who has combined the work of Weber and Freud to define charisma psychosocially.

Charisma exists as the experience of the follower when there is

1. A moment of distress or object loss

2. Complete personal devotion to a leader and a projection of love

3. The experiencing of the leader's qualities as extraordinary or supernatural where there is a sense of the uncanny produced by the unconscious nature of the perception (p.189).

The importance of combining Weber and Freud is evident in the role attributed to societal circumstances as well as individual psychohistory. The possibility of a charismatic movement is said to lie in the existence of people who "have found themselves footloose and unable to identify with and therefore make a firm commitment to the dominant values and ethos of their society" and who are regarded as marginal by those who have made that commitment (Goldberg, 1983:170). This is an issue directly pertinent to the *rite de passage* interpretation of involvement with NRMs. Hoffer (1951) echoes this point when he notes that

> the leader cannot create the conditions which make the rise of a movement possible...There has to be an eagerness to follow and obey, and an intense dissatisfaction with things as they are, before the movement and leader can make their appearance (p.103)

Weston La Barre (1980) characterises the nature of charisma as a personal state of dissatisfaction or longing and the capacity of the potential leader to correctly ascertain that state and give voice to it in terms acceptable to the person. He says "Charisma, which seems to be a 'supernatural rightness' stemming from the charismatic individual, is merely the emotional welcomeness of his message, deja' vu in the prepotent unconscious wishes of each communicant..." (p.29). The 'uncanny' sense followers frequently avow of a leader's 'seeing into their hearts', of 'speaking directly to them' derives from the fact that the

perceptive leader is expressing longings repressed in the potential follower. La Barre notes

> The compelling force comes not from the great man as he voices new supernatural truth: he speaks to the powerful anti-commonsensical fantasy already present in the unconscious wish of each communicant...The voice of the vatic has an 'uncanny' consistency with each one's private wish (p.52).

That a charismatic leader is accorded special powers or a special enlightened status is not surprising. Having a leader 'know' one's unexpressed (and possibly unavowed) desires is likely to make him/her seem omniscient, with powers beyond the natural. In acknowledging unexpressed wishes he transgresses the boundaries of personhood by seeming to 'read one's mind'. Kohut (1977) suggests that some charismatic authorities have "a keen grasp of even the subtlest reactions in other people which are related to their own narcissistic requirements".

The sense of one's thoughts being transparent has an obvious infantile prototype in the cases where parents are able to understand non-verbal gestures and expressions of their children and this may result in the children believing they can read every thought. This may mean that some of the power parents had over the dependent child may be accorded to the leader who evidences similar powers, and may satisfy the longing for the sense of protection and security of that developmental epoch. By this indirect reasoning, it may be seen that a belief in the special powers of a guru or charismatic figure, stemming from his/her insight, may satisfy narcissistic dependency needs in a way

that is conducive to supernatural, uncanny interpretations. Deutsch (1983) suggests that the easy acceptance of unusual ideas he found in the followers of a progressively less stable guru, was due to a childlike transference. He suggests that a mystical experience of union is a compensation for loss, the elation coming from a fantasied merger with a more powerful object. The desire for merger, he attributes to "early traumatic disappointments in one or both parents" which the affiliate attempts to remedy "by seeking out in adult life new idealized objects with which to merge" (p.I2I). It is open to question whether the critical feelings avowed by affiliates towards their parents were as vehemently felt before any contact has been made with the guru or leader. Deutsch (1983) says that a resolution of conflict came about by the abolition of distance between the omnipotent 'parent' and the devotee through an experience of merger. Given our emphasis here on precursors vs sequelae of NRM involvement, he makes a further important point; "The turning to the radically new parent often appeared also to contain an angry rejection of the original parent for their ostensible inadequacies" (p.121). In this way, the security gained, and the new appraisal possible may lead to the finer articulation of dimly-felt points of neglect and inadequacy, which Zygmunt (1972) termed the movement's "motive-defining function".

**A tentative profile of a seeker**

We have then a tentative profile of a seeker. A seeker is one whose dependency needs were not adequately met so that dependency on the parents' love and guidance was tempered by identification with them, who did not emerge from the early years of bonding with an

independent sense of his/her own capacities to make his/her way in the physical and social world, who, when a crisis time occurs has either not formed close social bonds, or finds those s/he does have to be inadequate to the level of need aroused, and who is thus open to, vulnerable to charismatic appeal.

The loosening of ego boundaries attendant on a mystical sense of union with the objects of perception may be an expression of the same tendency in the less interpersonal domain. Without this predisposition on the part of the follower, I suggest that the phenomenon of charisma could not occur. Goldberg (1983) notes the importance of unconscious longings when he suggests, "[t]hese leaders could not attract a large following if they were not encountering youth who were actively seeking lapses from reality" (p.165).

Deutsch (1983) again brings an important and fresh dimension to what has, until now, been the mapping of a highly asymmetric dependency on and identification with the leader on the part of the follower. He notes that the merger, in this case study instance, was not one-sided. As the Guru deteriorated in mental stability, he said, "I held out my hand to them in a blessing, but I'd take on their bad experiences...Many times I'd take on the attributes of another person" (pl24).

A full and telling comparison between the psychology of the leader and that of the followers is discussed in Deutsch (1983) and Kohut (1977).  I have also included in Chapter 8 of this book a paper called *Returning by an unused path*, which haunted the footnotes of my work here.  It is a

theoretical account of the way that charisma arises, in-you-out-there. It details why charisma remained something of a mystery to Freud. It was initially presented to the Sydney University psychoanalytic group in 1992. I leave it in its original form so that it is in keeping with the time of the original writing making up this book.

## 10.6 Constraint, Impulsivity and Ego Strength

It has been suggested that for those drawn to charismatic movements, there may have been early troubled relations with parents. According to Cushman (1986) and Kohut (1977) this has influenced the development of a person's sense of self as a result of narcissistic wounds. Given that Kohut characterises them as seeking, with an addiction-like intensity, it seems possible that such people would either not value impulse control, or simply not be capable of it Judah (1974, cited in Foss and Larkin, 1979) suggests that many of the values of the counter-culture are carried through into the belief systems and lifestyles of NRMs. Kilbourne and Richardson (1984) suggest that the differences between NRMs and psychotherapy may be overdrawn simplifications.

## Cosmic therapists

Certainly, whether due to the eclectic interplay of beliefs, or the movement of seekers from one domain to another, the leaders or gurus of certain movements may be characterised as 'cosmic therapists' as they receive total trust and surrender from their followers and are viewed as quintessentially loving and non-judgemental. Further, with certain of these groups, intellectualisation, constraint and emotional control are not positively valued. Quite the reverse for example in

rebirthing groups, the ventilation of strong emotions is accepted as real growth, which is viewed as having an experiential rather than an intellectual basis. It is deemed preferable to allow expression to these strong feelings and to 'watch' oneself enact them rather than suppress them. Hence people may feel more honest and open, less frightened of revealing themselves to others, and less timid about their own potential responses (Judah, 1974, cited in Foss and Larkin, 1979). Alison (1965) found that Christian religious devotees allowed more threatening material to emerge in a Rorschach test, but seemed able to tolerate it, so it may be that devotees have a flexible and tolerant appraisal of impulses rather than a lack of ego strength. If this characterisation pertains across a number of NRMs this might be reflected in a more experimental approach to one's lifestyle characterising those drawn to and involved in therapy and such NRMs.

## Impatient for paradise

Given that NRMs are pattern setters, it is likely that individuals drawn to them may be more impulsive, more willing to 'want change now'. A 'present-orientation' and an openness to the impulse of the moment is consonant with the charismatic nature and emphasis of eastern NRMs which promotes an openness to enlightenment and bliss consciousness now, rather than virtuous renunciation now for the sake of an ideal after-life. This emphasis is the kernel of the new status of eastern NRMs, their hybridisation with aspects of the human potential movement. Traditional eastern religions usually have ascetic elements and an emphasis on karma (the inevitable causal effect of any action on one's present life, and future lives) which temper any self-indulgence arising

from an emphasis on living for the moment. However, given that the evidence suggests eastern NRMs are such hybrids, there is basis for expecting those drawn to these movements to be less constrained than adherents of charismatic western NRMs, who would in turn be less constrained than the general population. It is likely that those willing to reassess themselves and their lifestyles by becoming involved in therapy are likely to fall midway between those drawn to eastern NRMs and followers of western NRMs.

A measure was sought which assessed the degree of ego-strength, or the degree of frustration tolerance which characterised an individual. The Ego Strength Scale by Baron (1953, cited in Bloch, 1965) is one which predicts response to psychotherapy, but the items seemed rather out-of-date for the relatively sophisticated affiliates of NRMs who are rather sceptical of paper and pencil tests. Block (1965) refers to an Ego Control scale which is one of two developed to measure the first two factor dimensions of the MMPI on non-pathological populations. He suggests that the second factor of the MMPI can be identified as relating to the way individuals characteristically monitor their impulses. "At one end of the dimension is a scale specifically measuring over-control (EC-4), and at the other end a scale that relates to impulse expression and social expansiveness" (p. 52). This required the administration of a large test battery, so something more time-efficient was sought. Jane Loevinger's (1976) work on ego development, while compelling, was thought to be somewhat culturally specific and her test requires a particularly high level verbal facility which might disadvantage certain subjects.

A measure of constraint which seems to provide an appropriate index for the concept being discussed here is the Constraint scale of Tellegen's (1982) Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire. Constraint is a higher order factor, which provides a weighted sum of a number of subscales.  A subject's score is obtained in the form of a regression estimate combining primary scale scores. Tellegen suggests "this dimension may reflect variations in overall pleasure-pain regulatory style: the self-restrictive and cautious among the high constraint scorers and the more self-indulgent and impulsive among the lows" (p.3.). He also notes that whether one is a high or low constraint person may have implications for one's experience of stressful life events. He says that

> even if objectively similar experiences would tend to be more stressful for a high than a low constraint person, the cumulative consequences of the latter's flirtations with disaster could compensate for this difference(p.4).

An Eastern spiritual orientation entails an awareness of the "here and now" and an attempt to attain enlightenment in this life rather than postponement until a final day of reckoning. For this reason Maze [personal communication] suggested that those drawn to such a tradition might have less impulse control. Further, given that not everyone with movement contacts in their social networks becomes involved, it is possible that those who do have more of a tendency to act on the impulse of the moment, and to try new options. The Constraint subscale of Tellegen's MPQ is of relevance as it measures impulse control and cautiousness. Greater impulsiveness does not account for the differential openness to less traditional options. The combined role

of an eastern spiritual orientation and a less traditional outlook may be determining influences here. Individuals with such tendencies may be more activated by the experience of life stress, and may be more inclined to attempt remedial action. They have been brought to a turning point by motivating life events which require coping ability beyond their own capabilities and in excess of the support afforded them by their social resources. While there has been considerable interest shown in the literature regarding personality attributes which play a mediating role on the impact of stress (Kobasa, 1979, 1981, 1982) interest in such attributes is restricted here to those which render people differentially susceptible to movement appeal. A major directing influence on affiliation is the nature of the beliefs an individual holds about the sources of dissatisfaction and suffering, and the nature and efficacy of potential solutions. If an individual is untraditional, endorses beliefs and values of a spiritual nature but different from those held by the general population, has a mystical tendency and is impulsive, then, when the opportunity arises to attend a new group, it is suggested that s/he is more likely to become involved than someone from the general population without such a profile.

**The life situation of the person**

Searching for scales which measure personality dimensions does not necessarily entail the assumption that the situational context is not a powerful component of involvement in NRMs. The person-situation debate which began with Hartshorne and May in 1928, and was more recently taken up by Mischel in the 1970's debars a researcher from taking a de-contextualised trait approach to personality. However, the

value-added model which forms the blueprint for this study takes very seriously the specific life situation of an individual. The psychological attributes assessed in this study are assumed to have a determining role only if specified, relevant features of the causal field pertain. These features are highly situational: they assume an isolated person who has had an objectively high frequency of particular categories of life events.

## 11. HYPOTHESES

The following are general hypotheses which make up the *Rites de Passage* model. The value-added nature of the model means that disruption is viewed as necessary but not sufficient for movement affiliation to occur, and is likely also to have been a feature of the recent life circumstances of those drawn to a social agency of self-change like therapy. Differences between these groups at the initial stages of the model are not expected. If they do occur, they would suggest that there is difference in the nature and degree of disruption experienced by those drawn to NRMs, and it would be expected that since religion is viewed as a generalised compensator of broader scope than therapy, that it would be the religious groups who had experienced more disruption, and experienced it more intensely. Differences are expected between the eastern groups and the control groups, and between the eastern groups and the western group throughout, (bar parental relations and general spiritual orientation). Differences are expected between the therapy group and the eastern groups where parental relations, personality differences like constraint and absorption are concerned, and certainly where beliefs of an eastern spiritual nature are concerned. These are the variables which are presumed by the value-

added model to have a directing function indicating the manner in which the motivating life circumstances and personal response to them will be ameliorated and resolved. The only directing function accorded to the motivating life circumstances is the prediction that the loneliest people will be the eastern and therapy groups who have become involved in a social option.

Before listing the hypotheses, it is perhaps appropriate to contextualise them by reminding the reader of the *Rites de Passage* [RdP] model.

## 11.1 The Rites of Passage Model

This model predicts that the following conditions must apply for eastern spiritual affiliation to occur:

1. Unconventional people

2. who have recently endured disruptive and aversive life events, especially those concerning social-exits,

3. which *they appraise* as having had intense and aversive psychological impact,

4. endured in the absence *of adequate acquaintances and friends*,

5. for those who have a history (subjectively viewed) of *sub-optimal experience of their parents*, in childhood and adolescence,

6. and diminished wellbeing and increased distress in the recent past,

7. who have a tendency to *oppose traditional conceptions of authority,*

8. and are somewhat impulsive and unconstrained,

9. who have an absorptive, mystical perceptual style

10. and are generally spiritually intense

11. with an orientation towards eastern conceptions of the sacred will be drawn towards NRMs of an eastern nature.

*The nature of disruption:* The model differs from that of Lofland and Stark (1965) in that it suggests that the *nature* of the disruption experienced is important, in that recent loss of social support is expected, especially the recent loss of an intimate relationship. Thus, the absence or neutralisation of extra-cult ties specified by Lofland and Stark (1965) is now portrayed as loneliness and recent loss, and as an absence of a sense of community participation perhaps due to unconventional beliefs and recent rupture in economic and employment circumstances.

*The nature of emotional responses:* The emotional and psychological response to life events is assumed to reveal their being "acutely felt" according to Lofland & Stark (1965) and the current model endorses that predisposing feature of involvement. Special attention is paid in this model to the nature of the person's emotional response.

*Emotions mark a life at a turning point:* Since life events are seen as commencing a rite of passage whereby the person embarks on a new life course, responses indicative of disruption and adjustment are particularly emphasised. These are the indicators taken to suggest that the person cannot go on as s/he had before. If social agencies are contacted as a result of life circumstances which require adaption in excess of a person's coping ability and social resources, then the emotional responses of anxiety, anger and helplessness are particularly

expected. More attention is paid in this model to the form of the person's emotional response, since it is presumed that spiritual guidance is sought in a time of stress and dissatisfaction; for some, a time of despair.

*Dissatisfaction with the family of origin leaves people open to charisma:* The model also considers mental health as an important index of a person's neediness and relative suffering, which was not considered in Lofland and Stark's (1965) model. Consideration of family history is also a new addition, seen as important since Ullman (1982) suggests that recent life stress evokes past conflicts which is here seen as potentially further undermining a person's confidence in their coping skills. Since the groups involved in this study all have charismatic leaders, family history is considered as one possible factor leaving a person open to having a single trustworthy other to provide a model of coping and interpretive skills, and as a source of acceptance and love. Those most open to this appeal are thought to be those whose early life environment was viewed as least adequate.

*Authority:* The model also considers attitude to conventional moral authority as a way of distinguishing those drawn to eastern, non-conventional charismatic leaders, and those drawn to leaders promoting a belief system more consonant with traditional authority.

*Personality:* The model also considers additional personality features which were not part of Lofland & Stark's original model. These are attributes which are likely to characterise someone who is willing to take

unconventional action in the face of strife, like a lack of constraint, and approach a meditational group of spiritual orientation, like the predisposing feature of an absorptive perceptual style.

*Consonance of Belief Orientation*: It is not presumed that those drawn to NRMs already have a spiritual problem-solving perspective [PSP]. It is merely assumed that they will endorse beliefs which can potentially function as a cognitive coping style which promotes resilience in the face of disruption. If these people already had a religious PSP there would be little reason to be drawn to the group for leadership and instruction, and as companionship can be sought from any social option, their loneliness would not be sufficient reason. It is suggested that these individuals certainly have a consonant spiritual orientation, and that this plays a crucial role in rendering differentially appealing a particular movement, and, within the wider specifications of the model in influencing the likelihood of movement affiliation.

## Hypotheses

I will now outline the hypotheses in the light of the model. For those who really find measurement issues, graphs and tables uninteresting, please feel free to go straight to the discussion section. The results section is for the specialist reader.

The hypotheses are as follows:
1. If the eastern NRMs are truly non-normative religious groups, it is predicted that they will be less conventional than any of the other groups. The therapy group is expected to be less conventional than

the control groups, having perhaps been involved in more questioning of values and lifestyle. The western NRM is expected to be most conventional of all, as their spiritual innovation leaves their broader values consonant with those of the wider Australian culture.

2.  The eastern NRMs are predicted to have experienced the most disruption in the recent past. It is not a necessary prediction of the model that they have experienced significantly more distressful life events than the therapy group, but that they have experienced more stress than the control groups and the western NRM.

3.  The eastern NRMs are predicted to have experienced more psychological impact from the disruptive life events which have occurred than the control groups and the western group. They are not expected to differ from the therapy group.

4.  The psychological nature of the impact which will most distinguish the eastern NRMs from the control groups and western NRM is in terms of adjustment required and disruption felt in response to life events.

5.  If the movement towards a self-help agency is evidence for a failure or inadequacy of personal coping skills on the part of those drawn to the eastern NRMs and the Therapy group, it is predicted that these groups will experience more anxiety, anger, upset, helplessness and depression in response to life events than the control groups or the western NRM.

6.  If those drawn to eastern NRMs have accepted the notions of *karma* and *advaita* then they will accept more personal responsibility for all life events than will any other group. The

therapy group is expected to take more responsibility than the control groups, who are not expected to differ from the western group.

7. If the eastern NRMs believe that they are responsible for life events, it is not necessarily the case that they will exclude the influence of others from the occurrence of events in their lives. It is therefore predicted that they will see others as more responsible for life events than the control groups and the western group. Since it is likely that those drawn to therapy have experienced problematic interchanges with others, and will be alert to the influence of interpersonal relations in their lives, The eastern NRMs are not expected to differ from the therapy group in this regard.

8. Given that eastern NRMs promote a philosophy which concerns the causally interconnected nature of all events, and since it is expected in this study that those drawn to these groups already have a consonance of worldview in terms of the general parameters, it is predicted that those drawn to eastern movements will attribute less to chance than any other group. The western NRM is also likely to attribute little to chance, perhaps seeing it all as part of God's plan.

9. It is predicted that those drawn to eastern movements will be less socially integrated and lonelier than the control groups and the western groups. The therapy group is expected to share their plight in these regards.

10. It is predicted that given the expectations that the eastern groups will experience more disruption in the recent past, it is expected

that this will be reflected in greater neurotic distress and less wellbeing than any of the other groups.

11. It is predicted that those drawn to eastern NRMs will have had the most unsatisfactory early relations with their parents, and that they will appraise them more negatively than the western NRM and the control groups. The western NRM is expected to have poorer early parental relations than the control groups. The therapy group is also expected to have had poorer parental relations than the control groups.

12. The unconventional nature of the eastern NRMs, and their predicted poor parental relations inform the hypothesis that they will also show little regard for conventional moral authority, less than the therapy group, the control groups, and certainly less than the western group which is expected to be most submissive to conventional authority of all the groups.

13. Given the fact that the eastern affiliates and the therapy group have taken action in contacting a social agency, and given the eastern 'here and now' focus of the NRMs it is expected that the eastern NRMs will be less constrained that the therapy group, who, being a gestalt group, are expected to be less constrained than the control groups. The western NRM is expected to be most constrained of all the groups.

14. Since the eastern groups focus on meditation and yoga, it is predicted that those drawn to these groups will have more of a tendency to experience a sense of fusion with the objects of perception and recollection than any of the other groups. It is

predicted that the western NRM will have no such propensity and will be least characterised by this attribute than any other group.

15. It is predicted that those drawn to NRMs of either orientation will be more spiritually intense and show more assent to the central spiritual tenets assumed to charcterise any religion or spirituality, regardless of orientation.

16. It is predicted that those drawn to eastern NRMs will already have a spiritual orientation consonant with that of the movement they approach. For this reason, it is predicted that those drawn to eastern NRMs will have the greatest assent to the eastern items of the SOS out of all the groups. The therapy group is expected to show some credence for eastern spiritual items; more than the control groups. The western group is expected to have very little belief in such notions, less than any other group.

17. The consonance of movement and individual worldview is also expected to apply for the western items of the SOS. The western NRM is expected to have the highest credence of all, and as members, to be quite united in their faith. The eastern groups are expected to have least credence in these items, if, as Needleman (1975) suggests, they are disaffected with western spirituality. Because of the religious group under whose aegis the therapy group is conducted, it is expected that this group will show more credence in the western items than the control groups.

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# The Spiritual Orientation Scale – the SOS

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All the pinks in the world don't add up to red

*William James*

## 12. DEVELOPING A BELIEF SCALE USING CONJOINT MEASUREMENT: COOMBS UNFOLDING TECHNIQUE

Psychological measurement assumes the existence of quantitative variables of a psychological kind. The conditions that must apply for a variable to truly be quantitative do not pertain in every situation where measurement is none-the-less presumed to have been achieved. Michell (1990) notes:

> The only way to decide whether or not the variables studied in any particular science are quantitative is to put that hypothesis to the test. *This essential step is missing in the development of modern psychology* (original emphasis, p.10)

One of the reasons for the omission of this step is a climate of belief which has encompassed a representational theory of measurement. Stevens (1946) illustrates this view when he suggests, "Scales are

possible in the first place only because there is a certain isomorphism between what we can do with aspects of objects and the properties of numerical series" (p.677). He suggests that we use a series as a "model to represent aspects of the empirical world"(p.677). Michell puts a convincing argument forward revealing that "Stevens' "measurement" scales are really instances of numerical coding, the purpose of coding being to allow inferences to be made by numerical means" (p.27). Measurement is not the arbitrary (though conventional) assignation of number to a stimulus existing in a given quantity, as Bostock (1979) asserts: "in measurement numbers are not assigned to values of a quantitative variable, rather ratios of these values *are* numbers... "(cited in Michell, 1990, pp.91-92). Hence, Michell asserts, "the numerical statements reporting measurement are thoroughly empirical, observational reports" (p. 92), and the theory of numbers "is just the theory of continuous quantities at a level of abstraction which ignores other features of them..." (Michell, 1990:101). How does one reconcile such a position which presumes quantity to be a discoverable attribute, a property or attribute of a stimulus, with what is commonly accepted as measurement in psychology? Not readily. Nominal scales where numerals are only labels or type numbers cannot be dignified by the term measurement, and even the use of the word 'scale' in such an instance is misplaced.

With ordinal scales arising from rank-ordering of stimuli with regard to a given attribute, strictly speaking, means and standard deviations cannot be used accurately, as the successive intervals may be unequal in size. As Stevens (1946) points out, one cannot determine the midpoint of a class

interval by linear interpolation because the linearity of the ordinal scale is precisely what is open to question. He does add the rider however, that this type of scale characterises most of those used widely and effectively by psychologists. Only with interval scales are the assumptions entailed in measurement fulfilled.

These assumptions are made explicit in Coombs Unfolding Technique (CUT), and it offers a procedure by which they may be tested. It is a deterministic theory of preferential choice, a uni-dimensional example of additive conjoint measurement. Its assumptions regarding the uni-dimensional nature of the stimuli and the quantitative nature of the variable are open to falsification. As with interlocking techniques, the pattern of subjects' responses yields a joint ordering of people and stimuli (as does a Guttman scalogram) with the difference that the responses are interpreted in terms of proximity rather than order. The joint ordering of stimuli and people are mapped onto a latent space in such a way that the distances between the points reflect the psychological proximity of the stimuli to the beliefs, preferences and ideals of the people. "The technique presumes the existence of quantitative variables of a psychological kind" (Michell, 1990).

Explication of the technique may be clearer and more enjoyable if an example is used. Imagine that a researcher is hopeful enough to assume that a person's spiritual concern with the nature of adversity and suffering exists as a quantifiable variable. A number of statements are generated which pertain to the nature of suffering. The statements are selected so that they seem to lie along a single relevant quantitative

dimension, and the researcher asks religious experts and a renowned logician to verify that fact, as best they can, though the empirical data will be the final arbitrators of that. A person is asked to indicate her point of maximum preference on this dimension. It is assumed that she will prefer statement x to statement y if she perceives her point of maximum preference to be nearer x than y.

The theory assumes that she has only one point of preference on that dimension, and that the gradient of her preference falls away symmetrically on either side of the maximum preference point. It is assumed that the further away a stimulus statement is from her point of maximum preference, the smaller will be her degree of preference for that stimulus. Further, the theory assumes that all subjects agree about the location of the stimuli along the relevant dimension, that is, that there is inter-subjective congruence, and that the items' uni-dimensionality is not merely a reflection of the idiosyncrasies of value and belief on the part of the researcher or a community subgroup.

Michell (1990) suggests that five propositions summarize the theory:

1. There is a single stimulus variable relevant to the preference judgements

2. Each subject has a point of maximum preference on that variable

3. A person's degree of preference for any stimulus x decreases as the distance between x and the person's point of maximum preference increases

4. All subjects agree about the location of the stimuli along the relevant dimension, that is, each individual must perceive the underlying dimension in the same manner, and the distance information in an

individual ordering of the stimuli in terms of preference must be about the same latent space.

Many current applications of measurement scaling beg propositions 1 and 2. Having briefly outlined the propositions which are central to the theory, it will be fruitful to consider the practicalities of the methodology. Not surprisingly the theory does not always provide a scaling solution. For the theory to be successfully applied, the stimuli used must actually be uni-dimensional, i.e. there must be only a single variable relevant to the subject's judgements. This necessitates much foundational research into the conceptual content of the items and related issues which may influence the interpretation of a given item, and to the wording of each item. Because of the possibility that what the researcher perceives to be a cluster of items varying along a single stimulus dimension, may not be perceived in this way by different groups within the community, a number of pilot studies are required giving empirical feedback regarding required modifications.

## 12.1 A Descriptive Outline of the Technique

To consider once more the example of an item exploring the degree to which misfortune and suffering may be seen as spiritual tasks. The subject is asked to rank order the statements; from that which *most characterises* to that which *least characterises* her beliefs:

**SUFFERING**

A. Adverse events and suffering are *definitely not* spiritual tasks.

B. Adverse events and suffering are *highly unlikely* to be spiritual tasks.

C. Adverse events and suffering *can be seen as* spiritual tasks and it is *possibly* true.

D. Adverse events and suffering *can be seen as* spiritual tasks and it is *probably* true.

E. Adverse events and suffering *definitely are* spiritual tasks.

By way of illustrative example, a person may rank order the above statements taking C to be closest to her point of maximum preference, D next, then B, A, and E giving the individual preference ordering CDBAE.

One does not know in advance the ordering or locations of these stimuli, or whether in fact they lie along a single dimension. One discovers something of them (e.g. order, relative proximity) from the collation of individual preference orderings. This gives a J ordering; a 'joint' ordering of the individual orderings and it is in this way that the individual's preference ordering provides information about an underlying latent dimension. Once the **J** ordering is known and if the **I** orderings can be represented on a common dimension, each individual is represented on it by an ideal point. A person is represented at a point between two stimuli, and the rank order of the distances of the stimuli from that point can be determined. Coombs suggests that an individual's preference order may be obtained by "folding" the line representing the variable at the person's ideal point, interleaving the two wings of the line, so one is left with a single line, and a preference order (see Figure 2, below). The **I** scales correspond to the **J** scale folded about the point representing the individual, and the **I** scales must be unfolded to discover the common J scale. Hence the name "unfolding".
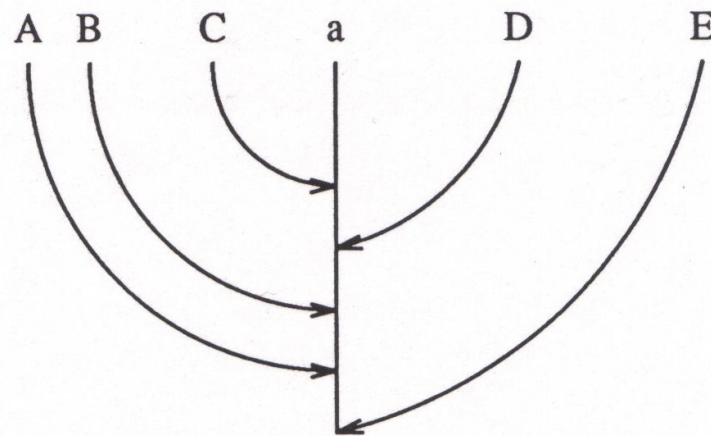
**Figure 2.** An I scale preference ordering CDBAE

The technique is conceptually simple but its application may be complex because certain crucial I scales may not occur among the observations that the observer wishes to unfold (requiring the collapsing of certain items because they were not discriminated) or some I scales may be inconsistent with one another. So, the occurrence of all permissible I scales (note: not all *possible* I scales) and the absence of inconsistency are vital conditions for the accomplishment of unfolding.

What then, is meant by *permissible* as opposed to *possible* I scales, and by what criterion do we judge two orderings to be *inconsistent?* If we have five stimuli which are rank ordered by subjects, there are 5! possible orderings, (5x4x3x2x1=120), however, only 16 different particular combinations will occur if the order of the stimuli is along a single dimension. That is $1/2n(n-l)+1$ will occur in this case as $1/2n(n-l)$ is the number of inter-stimulus midpoints, and there are $1/2n(n-1)+1$ intervals separated by the midpoints. As each interval is associated with a preference order, no more than these can occur. This requirement is

isomorphic with the single cancellation or independence condition of the Additive Conjoint Measurement Theory.

The theory also predicts that those orderings which do occur will have a special structure, which will be called a *tree.* Each new preference order differs from the preceding one by the inversion of a single pair of stimuli, and this pair is just that whose midpoint was last crossed. The final preference order is a complete reversal of the first. With the tree diagram there are 16 distinct paths, hence there are 16 possible ordered metric J scales which may be generated from the preference I scales. If the preference orderings fall anywhere on the tree (i.e. they are transitive) they are not deemed *inconsistent.* Once the data has been collected from a sample, the preference orders can be scored. These are then tallied on the *tree* or preference order structure (see Figure 3). Not all orderings are expected to occur with equal frequency. Rather, if the theory is correct, and the stimuli well chosen and well worded such that they fall on one dimension, then there should be a *dominant* pathway through the tree. The dominant pathway consists of the *permissible* orderings. For any subjective ordering that does not lie on the dominant path, it is always possible to effect one or more inversions of the order to put it on the path. Subjects' preference orders which do not lie on the dominant path are treated as being the result of 'judgemental errors'.

The error variable is calculated by summing the number of inversions it takes to render a preference ordering transitive (i.e. place it on the tree) and to place the response on the dominant pathway through the tree,

divided by the number of choices a subject had to make in arriving at that preference ordering.
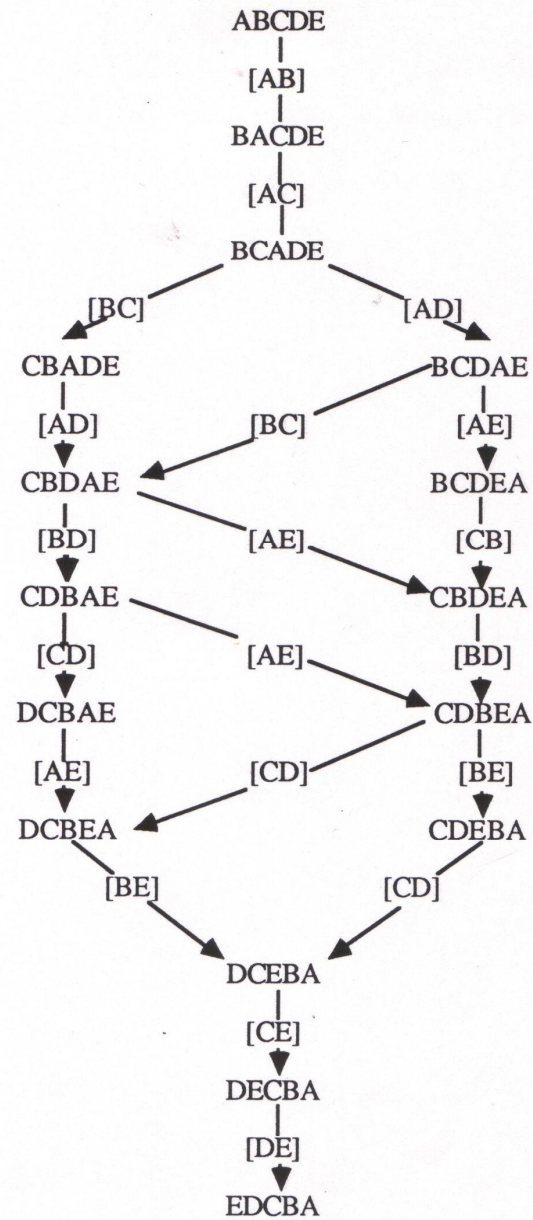


**Figure 3.** The 'Tree' or Preference Order Structure: Ordering of the Midpoints.

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Apart from the quantitative error information afforded by this term, consistencies in the nature of the inversions required are useful in pilot tests to indicate problematic stimuli which are poorly worded, or which introduce more than one relevant attribute to preference judgements. Tallying the items involved in inversions signals changes required to facilitate the achievement of uni-dimensionality. Once a pathway through the tree has been mapped, and if the error term is acceptable (i.e. a percentage < 5%, anything greater is evidence against inter-subjective congruence), metric information about the stimulus intervals can be discovered from the order of the midpoints. The order of the preference orders down this path represents their order along the underlying dimension. This imposes an order on the inter-stimulus midpoints (see Figure 3; midpoints in [brackets]). Once the ordering of midpoints has been obtained, the quantitative nature of the variable may be tested.

> The theory of Conjoint Measurement (Luce and Tukey, 1964) provides a method for detecting a quantitative structure in a variable via ordinal relations upon that variable. This method is applicable in the kind of situation where a quantitative variable, P, is a non-interactive function of two other variables A and X. In unfolding theory, the inter-stimulus midpoints are non-interactive additive functions of the stimulus values, hence the midpoint ordering obtained from the **I** scales must be amenable to Conjoint Measurement (Michell, 1986).

The ordering on the midpoints implies a partial ordering upon the inter-stimulus intervals. Only certain **I** scales give this information. Since the first two and last two midpoints are in predetermined order derived

from the qualitative J scale, the first three and last three I scales are always known, and provide no new information. The order of the other I scales gives the order in which the midpoints have been crossed on the J scale, because each time a midpoint is crossed, a pair of adjacent stimuli on the I scale is reversed. Since only the middle preference orderings yield metric information, it is desirable to have the majority of subjects' preference orderings lying within this range, i.e. approximately normally distributed (Sherman, 1986). Deriving metric information from midpoint ordering entails considering all possible different quadruples of stimuli that can be obtained from the stimuli on the qualitative J scale. Then the midpoint of the two middle stimuli is compared with the midpoint of the two outer stimuli and an order relation is imposed. From this ordering the inter-stimulus interval ordering may be inferred. To use Sherman's (1986) example: with a qualitative J scale ABC D E, let us consider the stimulus quadruple ABCE. Suppose the midpoint ordering obtained was that BC<AE (where BC is the midpoint between stimuli B & C, and AE is the midpoint between A & E) this automatically implies the inter-stimulus interval ordering of CE>AB. In converting an ordered metric scale to an interval scale we obtain a quantitative J scale. Goode (1957, cited in Coombs, 1964) formulated an algorithm for this purpose which enables numbers to be assigned to the stimuli on an ordered J scale so as to satisfy the given metric relations implied by the midpoint ordering. One assigns the lowest positive integer (i.e. 1) to the smallest inter-stimulus interval, the next smallest is assigned 2 and so on until many intervals are composite and, being made up of stimulus intervals for which the value is known, their value can be calculated directly. In this way, the location (and numeric value) of the individual items on the uni-

dimensional scale can be discovered, and so too the numeric value of each preference ordering. This latter value becomes an individual's score for this item. This score reflects empirically discovered relations between stimuli and an individual's ideal point of maximum preference. Usually, the midpoint ordering must satisfy a hierarchy of cancellation conditions implied by conjoint measurement, but this is only possible where at least six stimuli per item exist. With five stimuli, as in this study, only the single cancellation condition can be tested. The other cancellation conditions therefore will not be discussed, and the interested reader is referred to Michell (1990) for a full account. Having given a cursory account of the assumptions, and methodology of a little-used but exacting measurement technique, some consideration of its treatment in the research literature is perhaps required, prior to detailing of the practical exigencies of this study.

Very few studies have actually *used* the technique, though studies exist which test the validity of the theory and its usefulness in attitude measurement. Michell's (1973) testing of the theory found that the assumption of inter-subjective congruence was violated, although Coomb's theory of preference judgements was confirmed. Using items relating to attitudes towards the church, Hall (1967) found that only 60% of his subjects could be unfolded onto a J scale and only by applying two-dimensional solutions could a greater percentage of his subjects' preference orderings be unfolded (approximately 93%). He postulated that his subjects might have been undergoing value transition. Sherman (1986) investigated the effects upon individuals' preference judgements when the set of scaled stimuli is changed to discover whether common

sets of stimuli are ranked or scaled differently according to the contexts in which they occur. CUT predicts that regardless of context, common stimuli should yield identical orderings (within the limits of unreliability). Sherman (1986) found that the ordering occurred along a single dimension (thus providing support for inter-subjective congruence) and that the ordering remained invariant in spite of context. However, controlling for unreliability, she found a clear change in the structure of the two quantitative J scales (derived using two different six item subsets of an eight item stimulus group) with two different comparison techniques (rank ordering of the stimuli which imposes transitivity, and a more sensitive measure, pair-comparison technique, which does not). This change in structure was apparent in 3/4 of the indices; the less sensitive rank order technique being the one instance where numerical relations did not vary. It is worth quoting Sherman's (1986) conclusions at length:

> The evidence for contextual effects is quite strong. Unfolding theory treats the attitude statements (stimuli) as being represented by a point on a common dimension, the J scale. This means that the location of a stimulus on this dimension is regarded as a property of the stimulus; a fixed attribute of the stimulus. However, the contextual effects found in this study suggest that this is not the case. Rather it seems that the location of a particular stimulus along this dimension is relative to the other stimuli along this dimension i.e. stimuli are perceived in relation to each other and inter-stimulus distances will be relative to each and every attitude statement in that set. Therefore, for anyone attitude statement embedded within two different sets of stimuli, subjects would most likely

perceive this statement as having a different location on the underlying dimension in each case. (pp. 117-118)

So some kind of relational effect *was* found. Perhaps language has too many connotations and resonances that vary from subject to subject to ever function in a manner strictly comparable to number, hence the use of logical equations to strip an argument sufficiently of distracting content to unequivocally demonstrate a point. However, the ordering of the stimuli along the dimension remained invariant, demonstrating an inter-subjective congruence that is independent of context. Sherman (1986) comments on the invariance of order, despite differing contexts: "this indicates that some fixed property of each of the stimuli is still evident and determines somewhat the ordinal relations between the stimuli." The relative status of stimuli only affects the metric information derived from preference judgements, not the ordinal.

## 13. THE PRACTICALITIES OF THE PRESENT STUDY

The study used only 5 stimuli per item. While a pair comparison technique (where every item was ranked individually with every other item in exhaustive combination) would have enabled the testing of the transitivity of people's preferences, this study used the rank-order technique. Subjects were asked to rate stimuli from that which "most characterised" their belief, to that which "least characterised" it. To some extent this imposes transitivity on their preference orderings. Given that there is no *a priori* reason why transitivity should obtain leaving this variable open to empirical testing would have been desirable. However, in field research, subject compliance was a

higher priority, and as the Spiritual Orientation Survey [SOS] is itself time-consuming, and was only a part of a battery of tests which took, on average, three hours to complete, the more time-efficient rank order method was chosen and stimuli restricted in number to five per item. This study set out to use rather than test the theoretical bases of CUT, and so the pragmatic compromises were appropriate.

**13.1 Foundational Research**

The work that lead to the construction of the SOS was fostered by a absence in the existing literature of a scale which assessed general spiritual orientations with the required admixture of conceptual precision and accessibility of items to those uninitiated in detailed differences in practice and belief in religions with an Eastern or Western orientation. Further, given the causal role accorded spiritual orientation in the value-added model of differential recruitment being tested, it is important to isolate those beliefs which are the hallmark of *any* spiritual worldview: the *sine qua non* of a religious outlook. Vocabulary was an important research consideration, as it had to be consonant with usages in a variety of new religious movements, yet accessible to the general public (who participated in the control group). It had to be simple yet accurate for use with those approaching a given movement for the first time.

Having elected to develop a totally new scale is not to suggest that previous researchers had failed to address spiritual orientation psychometrically. For numerous reasons, however, existing scales were deemed inappropriate. Scales developed by Dale Caird and Henry Law

(1983) were useful resources regarding unconventional beliefs. The SOS accommodates not only traditional religious writings, the writings of contemporary scholars on Eastern and Western traditions, but also the directly relevant writings of the new religious innovators themselves e.g. Rajneesh (1984), Muktananda (1983), and Kirimura (1984) whose messages are often modified to suit Western sensibility, and broadly relevant academic research on the topic (Stone, 1978; Snow and Machalek, 1984; Downton, 1980). Some of the philosophical mutations of the thought of New Religious Movements derive from beliefs having been embraced by followers of the human potential movement.

So the vocabularies of faith, therapy and the occult are accommodated to capture the living faith of the believers which is an eclectic amalgam of self-help ideologies and religious faith. The East West questionnaire by Gilgen, Cho and Stensrud (1980; compare Gilgen and Cho, 1979) was not deemed appropriate as a unique measure for this study as it assesses the Eastern or Western orientation of an individual via experiential preferences. It does not address in sufficient detail the explanatory and consolatory principles of those worldviews which make them candidates as religious problem-solving perspectives.

Glock and Stark (1965) focussed on patterns of commitment in terms of theological and ritual involvement in religions from the Western Theistic tradition. Their scale provided a resource for items for the SOS in that disagreement with their traditional religious beliefs might capture a movement *away* from traditional Western religion.

**13.2 Pilot Study One: The Item Pool and Religious Adepts**

From the theoretical literature of a number of NRMs, and relevant philosophical and academic psychological literature a list of 169 beliefs was constructed. These items are available online at the following link: http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/2546/24/Reference&Appendix.pdf

A Likert scale was developed by placing an 11-point scale beneath each belief, with the endpoints zero and 10 labelled 'completely true' to 'not at all true'. This scale was administered to twelve experts involved in four new religious movements. Each expert was asked to respond to each statement in terms of how true or untrue such a statement would be from the point of view of their group's belief system, attempting to displace as far as possible, the idiosyncrasies of their own views. This was attempted by having them score the beliefs regarding *how true* and *how central* each of the beliefs was to the spiritual worldview of their group. Items with an homogeneity of variance and extreme mean scores were retained. These items were then sorted into conceptual piles, for example grouping those that referred to awareness, reincarnation, the nature of suffering and so on. These resource items were used to generate five conceptually related items, and an attempt was made to have them lie on a continuum with one belief indicating a strong credence regarding a spiritual concept, and the furthest from that indicating an extremely sceptical view of the spiritual concept. The mean levels of agreement of the spiritual experts from the pilot study facilitated the ordering of these items from believers' to sceptics' position.

## 13.3 Pilot Study Two

The conceptual heterogeneity of the items retained from the first pilot study meant that further refinement was required to attempt to phrase them in a way amenable to testing, and to develop an unfold scale which conformed to the specifications outlined above.

There were a further two pilot studies carried out with the scale; there were five statements per item, and 37 items. For the second pilot study (which had a sample size of 57 subjects, selected at random from the general population), a frequency tally of the items involved in the errors, or lateral inversions required to render the orderings transitive, or required to fit the dominant pathway through the 'tree', was kept to reveal those items where difficulties occurred, (see Appendix 2).

## 13.4 Pilot Study Three

The statements of each belief item which were involved in a large number of lateral inversions, and those items which had an unacceptably high error rate (error> .05) were amended for a third pilot study (N = 65) by changing the wording of those items indicated by the indices of lateral inversions and overall error rate as being problematic and compromising the linearity of the item ordering.

Some items had acceptably low error rates in the second pilot study, and were retained without further alteration. Others gained more acceptable error rates in the third pilot study: see Table 2 for a comparison of error rates across the two pilot studies.

**TABLE** 2. THE SOS: Comparative Results from Pilot Studies 2 and 3

| Item | Error Pilot 2 | Error Pilot 3 |
|---|---|---|
| Status of religion | .051 | .050 |
| Altered States | .032 | - |
| Prayer | .042 | - |
| Sin | .080 | .490 |
| Material Pleasure | .046 | - |
| Death | .076 | .020 |
| Karma | .050 | .020 |
| Efficacy of Chanting | .032 | - |
| The Church | .053 | .020 |
| Reincarnation | - | .010 |
| Miracles | .117 | .037 |
| Enlightenment | .063 | .033 |
| Spiritual Orthodoxy | .053 | .071 |
| Salvation | .056 | .020 |
| Ego | .061 | .029 |
| Suffering | .068 | .043 |
| Importance of Spirituality | .074 | .029 |
| Purpose in Life | .057 | .047 |
| Meditation | .033 | - |
| God | .037 | - |
| Knowledge/ Experience | .047 | .062 |
| Universe | .108 | .019 |
| Renunciation | .109 | .029 |
| Importance of Explanation | .070 | .020 |
| Ambiguity | .043 | .035 |
| Awareness | .053 | .018 |
| Social Change | .075 | .018 |
| Astral Travel | .038 | .018 |
| Spiritual Guidance | .039 | .031 |
| Transcendental Communication | .020 | - |
| Limitations of Science | .066 | .069 |
| Psychic Powers | .019 | - |
| Meaning | .043 | .027 |
| Yoga | .021 | - |
| Explanation | .038 | .027 |
| Auras | .038 | .006 |
| Spiritual Realm | - | .024 |

Note **for Table** 2: Total Error = the sum of lateral inversions to achieve transitivity of orderings + lateral inversions required to fit the dominant path through the tree diagram, divided by the number of subjects times the number of choices.

Selecting versions of the items with the lowest error rates formed the third and final version of the unfold scale. The items had very low error rates, [see Table 3]. The third form of the scale had an acceptable error rate for all items and was used in the major study.

The items which make up this scale can be found at the following link: http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/2546/24/Reference&Appendix.pdf

**TABLE** 3. THE S0S: Error rates per item: The original item pool

| Item | Lateral Inversions | N | Error |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Religious belief | 33 | 164 | .02 |
| Altered States | 26 | 165 | .02 |
| Prayer | 67 | 163 | .04 |
| Sin | 62 | 161 | .04 |
| Death | 8 | 160 | .005 |
| Karma | 10 | 159 | .006 |
| Efficacy of Chanting | 14 | 162 | .009 |
| The Church | 5 | 162 | .003 |
| Reincarnation | 3 | 159 | .002 |
| Miracles | 61 | 163 | .04 |
| Enlightenment | 14 | 163 | .008 |
| Spiritual Orthodoxy | 37 | 162 | .02 |
| Salvation | 16 | 165 | .01 |
| Ego | 16 | 165 | .01 |
| Suffering | 4 | 165 | .002 |
| Importance of Spirituality | 40 | 164 | .02 |
| Purpose in Life | 42 | 165 | .03 |
| Meditation | 44 | 165 | .03 |
| God | 15 | 165 | .009 |
| Knowing | 26 | 163 | .02 |
| Spiritual Realm (dualism) | 9 | 159 | .006 |
| Universal Unity | 14 | 162 | .003 |
| Renunciation | 22 | 165 | .01 |
| Importance of Explanation | 6 | 159 | .004 |
| Ambiguity | 19 | 165 | .01 |
| Awareness | 10 | 165 | .006 |
| Social Change | 11 | 165 | .007 |
| Astral Travel | 14 | 165 | .008 |
| Spiritual Guidance | 64 | 162 | .04 |
| Transcendental Communication | 10 | 165 | .006 |
| Limitations of Science | 77 | 165 | .05 |
| Psychic Powers | 17 | 162 | .01 |
| Meaning | 22 | 163 | .01 |
| Yoga | 8 | 163 | .01 |
| Explanation | 28 | 163 | .02 |
| Communication with the dead | 12 | 160 | .008 |
| Material World | 46 | 164 | .008 |

## 13.5 Factor Analysis: The SOS

Despite the fact that all of these items conformed to the requirements of Coombs Unfolding Technique and had acceptably low error rates, a factor analysis could not be done with all of the items together, as an ill-conditioned factor matrix occurred. A set of equations are said to be ill-conditioned if the solutions are very sensitive to small changes in the coefficients of the equations. Mathematically there is a clear distinction between singular and non-singular matrices. Unfortunately if the elements of a matrix are not known exactly, we may not know whether a matrix should be regarded as singular or not. Ill-conditioning means that it is difficult to tell which of three possibilities applies to one set of equations. That is it is not known whether a given set of equations has: no solution, a single solution or an infinity of solutions. In fact, even if the equations do have a single solution, ill-conditioning will mean that small uncertainties in the coefficients will have large uncertainties in the answers. This reflects that we are near the case where either no solution or an infinity of solutions exists. There is a connection between the terms *ill-conditioned* and *nearly-singular.* Rather than attempting the profitless task of solving a badly conditioned set accurately, it was decided to return to a theoretical consideration of where the items came from, and to reformulate the problem in a reasonably well-conditioned set of matrices. Those items that were theoretically deemed central to *any* religious worldview were thought to relate in a complex and non-linear manner to items which were viewed as eastern and western in orientation. In an heuristic spirit, they were excluded altogether from the analysis. The ill-conditioned matrix disappeared.

When *any one* of these items was replaced in the matrix the ill-conditioned warning reappeared. A factor analysis done with those items remaining when the general religious items were removed produced two clear factors. These together accounted for 53% of the variance using a varimax rotation. There were an additional three factors, but they had eigen values of 1.2, 1.1, 1.0 and accounted for 4.3%, 4.0% and 3.8% of the variance. Therefore they were ignored. An Oblimin analysis revealed that the two factors are essentially uncorrelated (r=.09), so a factor analysis was run specifying two factors. The Varimax Rotation procedure produced the clearest solution and it converged in three iterations. The loading of the items on the two factors (called and eastern and a western factor due to the pattern of item loading) is specified below. The numbers specified in Tables 4 and 5 conform to the numbers plotted in Figure 4.

TABLE 4. Eastern Items: Factor Loadings

| Item No. | Item Name | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Yoga | -.76 | .38 |
| 2 | Psychic Powers | -.61 | -.25 |
| 3 | Karma | .81 | -.13 |
| 4 | Reincarnation | .82 | -.20 |
| 5 | Astral travel | .60 | .21 |
| 6 | Ego | -.55 | .17 |
| 7 | Altered States | -.39 | .02 |
| 8 | Meditation | -.78 | .15 |
| 9 | Guru communication | .80 | -.03 |
| 10 | Universe | .48 | .63 |
| 11 | Enlightenment | .58 | .22 |
| 12 | Awareness | .66 | .06 |
| 13 | Suffering | .61 | .21 |
| 14 | Spiritual Guidance | -.32 | -.24 |
| 15 | Meditation & chanting | .81 | -.03 |

TABLE 5. Western Items: Factor Loadings

| Item No. | Item Name | Factor 1 | Factor 2 |
|----------|-----------|----------|----------|
| 1 | Miracles | .09 | .70 |
| 2 | Prayer | .18 | .78 |
| 3 | Spirituality | -.05 | .75 |
| 4 | God | -.11 | .21 |
| 5 | Purpose in Life | -.09 | -.74 |
| 6 | Sin | -.32 | .69 |
| 7 | Science | .12 | .51 |
| 8 | Christian Church | -.38 | .75 |
| 9 | Salvation | .03 | -.61 |
| 10 | Social Change | -.07 | -.35 |
| 11 | Spiritual Reality | .28 | .59 |
| 12 | Communication with the dead | .66 | .06 |

This provided more clearly demarcated, cleaner loadings, than the Maximum Likelihood solution. All of the items except for item number 10 from Table 4, portrayed in Figure 4, loaded as theoretically expected. It is quite an achievement with factor analysis to have all but one of the items revealing the expected loadings on an eastern factor and a western factor. These 2 clear factors with Varimax rotation are graphed in Figure 4.

**WESTERN SPIRITUAL**

❶ Miracles
❷ Prayer
❸ Spirituality
❹ God
❺ Purpose in life
❻ Sin
❼ Science
❽ Christian Church
❾ Salvation
❿ Social Change
⓫ Spiritual Reality
⓬ Communication with the Dead

**EASTERN SPIRITUAL**

① Yoga
② Psychic Powers
③ Karma
④ Reincarnation
⑤ Astral Travel
⑥ Ego
⑦ Altered States
⑧ Meditation
⑨ Guru Communication
⑩ Universe
⑪ Enlightenment
⑫ Awareness
⑬ Suffering
⑭ Spiritual Guidance
⑮ Meditation and Chanting

**Figure 4.** Factor Loadings: Eastern and Western Scales of the SOS

The items of a general spiritual nature which could not be included in the same factor analysis (as their addition produced an ill-conditioned factor matrix) were factor analysed separately, and a separate scale was developed, (see Table 6).

TABLE 6. General Items: Loadings on a Single Factor

| Item No. | Item Name | Factor 1 |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Knowing | .24 |
| 2 | Meaning | .81 |
| 3 | Material World | .67 |
| 4 | Importance of Spirituality | -.72 |
| 5 | Finality of death | .79 |
| 6 | Religious Belief | -.71 |

The general spiritual scale derived from these items was derived from a combination of theoretical decisions, and decisions made on the basis of factor loadings. In brief: initially it was thought that a religious orientation might be coupled with a need to find an explanation for events and a discomfort with ambiguity. The items which were grouped as explanatory items were grouped with the factor analysis of the central spiritual tenets. Three factors emerged in 13 iterations with the Maximum Likelihood Analysis, which in together counted for 50.9% of the variance. Varimax converged in five iterations and produced the results shown in Table 7.

TABLE 7. Factor Analysis of the General Religious and Explanatory Items

| Item Name | Factor 1 | Factor 2 | Factor 3 |
|---|---|---|---|
| Knowing | .11 | .26 | .20 |
| Meaning | .57 | .11 | .57 |
| Death | .51 | .06 | .68 |
| Importance of Spirituality | -.99 | -.06 | -.11 |
| Importance of Explanation | .05 | .96 | .27 |
| Explanatory skill | .07 | .01 | .00 |
| Ambiguity | -.05 | -.05 | .23 |

The items which referred to the importance of spirituality for life to have a meaning, and the finality of death both load on factors 1 and 2. The item regarding the importance of spirituality loaded only on factor 1. The validity of religious belief as a way of knowing, and the importance of spirituality both loaded on factor 2. A Maximum Likelihood factor analysis was run where it was specified for only one factor to be extracted. This factor only accounted for 26.4% of the variance, and the explanatory items loaded poorly, as Table 8 shows.

Table 8: General Spiritual and Explanatory Items: A single factor solution

| Item Name | Factor 1 |
|---|---|
| Knowing | .23 |
| Meaning | .82 |
| Material World | .67 |
| Importance of Spirituality | -.72 |
| Death | .78 |
| Importance of Explanation | .02 |
| Explanatory skill | .12 |
| Ambiguity | .08 |

For this reason, the explanatory items were excluded and the general spiritual items retained.

**13.6 Convergent Validity of the SOS**

An attempt was made to establish the convergent validity of the SOS scale by comparing the results of the 50S scale for the present sample with the results for the East-West Questionnaire by Gilgen and Cho (1979). However, perhaps because of homogeneity of sample (first year Psychology students) and a sample size which was rather too small for the number of items in the scale (N=70), it was not possible to replicate

their factor structure, as five factors rather than the expected two emerged. Data will not be reported for this scale.

**13.7 Empirical Validity of the SOS**

The empirical validity of the test requires comparison with test scores against an external criterion variable pertinent to what the test purports to measure. Within this study, this external variable is provided only by the western groups who definitely *are* recognized members of a new religious movement, and the control groups, which, it has been ascertained and will be reported, are definitely *not* members of a new religious movement. Since the scale demonstrating the importance of spiritual orientation to group affiliation cannot be validated against the affiliate groups who are not yet proven members of the groups to which they are drawn, the important predictions regard the low level of eastern belief predicted of the western NRM and the control groups. In this way the discriminating power of the SOS will be put to the test.

The western NRM is expected to show an extremely high level of assent to the western subscale of the SOS and an extremely low level of assent to the eastern subscale of the SOS. The control groups, distinguished by their having *no* such membership or affiliation, are not expected to score highly on either.

**13.8 Reliability of the SOS**

The reliability of the individual scales in terms of the Cronbach Alpha statistic is high, as Table 9 (below) shows.

**TABLE** 9. The SOS: Reliability

| Subscale of the SOS | Cronbach's Alpha |
|---|---|
| Eastern | .92 |
| Western | .88 |
| General Spiritual items | .98 |

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# Methodology

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Trust me... there is order here, very faint, very human.

*Michael Ondaatje*

**14. THE RITES OF PASSAGE MODEL**

This model predicts that the following conditions must apply for eastern spiritual affiliation to occur. Those drawn to a NRM of an eastern nature will be:

I. Unconventional people

2. who have recently endured disruptive and aversive life events, especially those concerning social-exits,

3. which they appraise as having had intense and aversive psychological impact,

4. endured in the absence of adequate acquaintances and friends,

5. for those who have a history (subjectively viewed) of sub-optimal experience of their parents, in childhood and adolescence,

6. and diminished wellbeing and increased distress in the recent past,

7. who have a tendency to oppose traditional conceptions of authority

8. and are somewhat impulsive and unconstrained,

9. who have an absorptive, mystical perceptual style

10. and are generally spiritually intense

11. with an orientation towards eastern conceptions of the sacred

## 15. DESIGN

The study is a comparative, prospective study contacting three of the five experimental groups prior to movement membership. Affiliates to eastern New Religious Movements are the focus of the study. They are viewed as in part self-help agencies. Accordingly they are viewed in the comparative context of a secular self-help agency - a therapy group- as well as in comparison to those who have not contacted such agencies (the student control group, and the general population control group). A western NRM was included, to permit exploratory consideration of the differences in recent life circumstances and the recent psychological response to them, personality, perceptual style and beliefs. Since prospective contact for this group was not possible, it permits consideration of the effect of membership in a movement which acquires its *new* religious status via doctrinal innovation rather than importation from another culture. This group does not unproblematically permit the illumination of differences between members and affiliates of NRMs, as the spiritual orientation of the group (and hence the origin of its "deviant" status, and perhaps the degree of its deviance) also varies as well as the status difference between affiliates and members. Since part of the *new* religious status of western movements is likely to be sustained by a strategic distancing of their beliefs and practices from the 'cultic milieu', it is expected that the western NRM will provide an extreme contrast to the eastern groups on most measures. Those measures which are expected to prove the exceptions to this are the measures which address the perception of the parents in childhood and adolescence, and the intensity of assent to

spiritual items deemed central to *any* spiritual worldview regardless of denomination or spiritual orientation.

The differences expected to be most salient, and whose salience and significance are crucial to the predictions of the model are, in the early parts of the value-added model, those between the eastern groups and the control groups, and the eastern groups and the western groups. For the most part, there are few differences expected between the eastern groups and the therapy groups for the early measures, as the *rite de passage* model assumes that they experience disruption and loneliness to a similar extent. It is this similarity of their existential situation (presumed to tax their personal coping resources and the benefit derived from their social contacts) which is viewed as part of the motivation for involvement in a self-help option and specifically a *social* self-help option. If religious involvement does meet these kinds of needs and 'make good' these felt lacks, then it is expected that the western NRM will be in a position of relative privilege on certain of the measures, such as having a sense of community, less stress, and a higher level of wellbeing. Of course, religious involvement may have nothing to do with these needs, in which case the model will be falsified, and disruptive life circumstances and loneliness will *not* characterise the affiliates' lifestyle in the last twelve months.

Or, the affiliates might have a troubled life situation, might be lonely and hold spiritual beliefs, (believing that religious involvement is the answer to their current predicament), and there may be no improvement in life circumstances and perception of them by graduate affiliates. There may

be no relative insulation from trouble, or privilege in terms of having a healthy social community on the part of the members of the western NRMs. In this case it is not the model which is wrong, but the affiliates who hold mistaken beliefs. It can still be unproblematically alleged that these life circumstances and the beliefs as to an appropriate course of action to ameliorate them are important precursors of movement involvement. A belief in an inland sea in the heart of Australia has lead to historic treks. The veridicality of beliefs is not essential to their role in directing an individual's motivation towards a given behavioural outcome.

Later on in the model, when the importance of a spiritual worldview in the form of an absorptive perceptual style and a high degree of assent to items of a spiritual nature which reveal a predilection for eastern conceptions of the spiritual is expected of those drawn to these movements, differences between the eastern groups and the therapy group will be expected, and the hypotheses will reflect this. This funnelling effect, whereby differences are expected on later measures between groups similar in terms of earlier measures, is a reflection of the value-added form of the model. Certain events and experiences of those events are viewed as *necessary* for some course of action to occur, but not *sufficient* in themselves to produce the outcome of spiritual affiliation. For example, a high incidence of life events which have a relatively high degree of psychological impact, which are experienced in isolation may be necessary for movement contact to occur, but not sufficient to determine which kind of movement is approached.

Differences may occur between the therapy group and the eastern groups on earlier measures like disruption, stress and loneliness, but they are not crucial to the validation of the model. If differences between the therapy group and the eastern groups are not found on the later measures like absorption, a lack of constraint, and endorsement of eastern spiritual beliefs, however, this will thoroughly disconfirm the predictions of the model.

The broad scope of the model requires a large range of measures, on a wide variety of groups. This resulted in rather small sample sizes within each group, though a large number of subjects participated in the whole study. Despite the relatively small sample sizes of this study, its strengths lie in:

• *The Comparative Nature of the Study:*

Three modern eastern spiritual groups were contacted and compared to a western movement which is a charismatic offshoot of the protestant orthodoxy. In addition, three control groups were contacted, of which one was a therapy group. Both Eastern and Western groups fulfil the criteria (specified in the introduction) of *New* Religious Movements insofar as they are non-normative in spiritual focus (due to importation or doctrinal innovation) and centre on (a) living spiritual leader(s).

• *The Use of Control Groups:*

Two groups were contacted: a student control sample and a sample of people from the general population. A therapy group was also contacted which provides a point of comparison with a group of people who were sufficiently motivated to contact a social resource group, which

nonetheless was not a new religious group. This group is in some sense an 'active' control group.

• *The Psychometric Rigour of Scales and Comparability of Data in Form and Time Frame across Groups:*

Psychometrically comparable data in detail and time frame were gathered from all groups to avoid the need to compare detailed psychometric data with pre-existing survey data which is often gathered at another time and place with a different aim.

The completeness of the data varies across different measures, since data were being collected from a very early stage in the study, and as new insights occurred, new scales were added to the test battery. This means that comparisons are incomplete for some measures, as certain instruments were not in use from the beginning. The richness of the comparisons made possible by the inclusion of these measures is offered as justification for the mosaic which results. Where specific results are being discussed, it will be made abundantly clear which groups are involved in the comparisons.

• *The Prospective Nature of the Study:*

The study had the firm goal of contacting subjects prior to any prolonged involvement (which might be tantamount to membership) in the group with which they are aligned. An Eastern NRM group consisted of 'graduate' members of the Community of Living Waters, who had been involved in a three month residential programme. This group was included to permit comparisons of participant characteristics before and after the movement's programme. For both of the other Eastern NRMs, data were gathered at point of first contact with *that* particular

movement, in order to separate precursors from the *sequelae* of movement involvement. This was not possible in the case of the Western group, so data for this group is representative of people who have been members for periods ranging from one to thirteen years. A clarifying distinction is made between *members:* people who call themselves members and are considered as such by the leaders of the group, and *affiliates:* people who have recently made contact with a movement but who do not call themselves members and who do not have a history of involvement with that particular movement.

## 16. THE SAMPLE

### 16.1 The Researcher

The researcher comes from a Scottish protestant/atheist family. Her formal religious affiliation became desultory around age thirteen. She has no spiritual or religious affiliations, is non-theistic in her beliefs, and takes a thoroughgoing determinist, materialist interest in the philosophy of religions, and considerable interest in the phenomenology of new religious movements.

### 16.2 The Groups

A number of groups were contacted as potential experimental groups. There was much contact with the Rajneesh movement initially, but they were formally disbanded in the year the experimental work began, and became diffuse as an organisation and difficult to contact. The Nichiren Shoshu of Australia was also contacted, and almost a year spent in familiarisation with the group's theory, organisation, leaders and members. When the time came for the test batteries to be distributed, it

was made apparent that access to subjects was not possible without the researcher's formal membership of the group. The researcher could not proceed with data collection for this group, though much understanding was gained from participant observation regarding what members hoped to receive from membership, the witnessing process at weekly meetings detailing how the belief system and practice had materially helped in the daily life of the members, and the close sense of community provided by group involvement.

**There are eight groups of subjects:**

• A general population control group *[Control-g]*

• A student control group *[Control-s]*

• A western Pentecostal group *[NRM-w]*

A therapy group or 'active control group' *[Therapy]*

• A Rebirthing group (graduate) *[NRM-E clwg* J

A Rebirthing group (novice) *[NRM–E clw]*

• A Siddha Yoga group *[NRM–E satya]*

• A Theosophist group *[NRM–E shanJ*

The demographic and descriptive characteristics of the sample with regard to such attributes as age, sex, history of involvement in the family religion, religious history regarding extra-familial involvement in eastern and western groups, drug involvement will be discussed in detail below, as there is an entire preliminary section in the results which details age, sex ratios of the groups, religious history, marital status and so on.

Briefly, the subjects are predominantly female (73%), Caucasian and middle class. The average age is 30 years (with a range of 17 to 65 years). Sixty-one percent of the sample was single, 22% married and 17% separated.

Since it has been suggested that affiliation is promoted by an alignment between an individual's needs and the movement's perceived promises of satisfying them, there is reason to describe the belief systems of some of the groups, and the structure of the groups in terms of courses and leadership offered. No attempt will be made to critically evaluate the beliefs. Bar the unavoidable selectivity of the researcher, here a limited attempt is made to allow the movements to represent themselves. These beliefs will lend plausibility to the accuracy of subjects' responses to the SOS and will provide the reader with personal insight into the consonance of individual beliefs and movement ideology which this study will reveal.

1. **The General Population Control Group** *[Control-g]*

The general population sample approached was matched to the NRM affiliates with regard to age and socio-economic status. This was achieved by selecting suburbs which were of moderate to high prestige ratings (using data from Cunningham, 1980). Two techniques ensured a representative, matched sample. The telephone book was opened at random pages, and search begun at a random place until the first of the specified suburbs occurred on a given page. The number was called and the respondent asked to participate in a study regarding social resources, beliefs and life events. If they were in the appropriate age range, had a reasonable command of English, and agreed to participate,

a battery of questionnaires was posted to them. In addition to this technique, so that those without telephones would not be systematically excluded, the researcher went to one of the specified suburbs, and using random number tables, selected houses, and turnings into new streets, and directly requested participation of the respondents. There was roughly 50% of the general control sample selected by each of these means. There was an extremely high willingness to participate, as feedback as to results gained was offered. Seventy-two percent of those approached participated in the personal approach and 62% by the telephone technique. Further criteria of involvement were negatively specified: subjects must have had *no* history of involvement with therapy, counselling or new religious movements in the last twelve months.

2. **The Student Control Group** *[Control-s]* The student control group is comprised of a sample of first year psychology students from the University of Sydney, Australia. Criteria of involvement were once again negatively specified: subjects must have had *no* history of involvement with therapy, counselling or new religious movements in the last twelve months. They received course credit and feedback as to their results for participation in the research.

3. **The Western Group** *[NRM-W]* The Western Pentecostal group was organised around a young minister and his wife. The group takes a charismatic approach to religion, involving witnessing, and singing. It was not possible to gather data at point of first contact with this movement, as the minister believed the test battery to be rather too confronting and felt it might lead people to examine excessively their reasons for involvement. His views were respected.

4. **The Therapy Group** *[Therapy]* This is an eclectic gestalt group which focuses on the 'here and now' and organismic processes. It is run by a Methodist church group, but did not select participants on the basis of religion. This is in a sense an 'active' control, in that those involved have sought help beyond their own social networks and coping resources by becoming involved in a therapy group. This group had a 'mutely' spiritual focus as it was conducted under the auspices of an orthodox church group. This group will facilitate the drawing of fine comparisons, as for whatever reason, affiliates of this group were not drawn to NRMs in their state of need. The course was of 10 weeks duration, and participants were contacted and completed the battery of questionnaires before their course began.

5. **A Graduate Rebirthing Group** *[NRM-E-clwg]* at The Community of Living Waters. This group was contacted on the final day of a three-month intensive rebirthing course, (which is described in some detail below), and were asked to complete the battery of questionnaires independently and return them by post to the researcher.

6. **A Novice Rebirthing Group** *[NRM-E-clw]* at The Community of Living Waters This group had never been involved in a rebirthing group before and were about to commence a three month residential course. They indicated that they had heard about the group from group advertisements in 'new age' magazines, or had heard from friends, or had encountered the leaders on one of their many tours in Australia and New Zealand where they offer day and weekend intensive courses. The rebirthing community has a syncretistic collection of beliefs, relying on the works of Jung and Reich. The belief system and the practice it informs attempt to get people to gain access to an awareness of, and to

emotionally "work through", difficulties and emotional complexes, releasing emotions via bodywork and dance, dynamic and quiet meditations, dreamwork and rebirthing sessions. It is a residential group run by two eclectic leaders, a man and a woman, involved in Jungian psychology and shamanism. The group's belief system addresses, in a manner akin to Transactional Analysis, the 'child within', and in the light of Jung's writings, the 'shadow' part of the personality. The co-founders, and leaders, John Jansen and Ahrara Bhakti, have worked together since 1984. John was a Catholic priest, and is now concerned with Jungian views of spirituality. Ahrara is a trained psychotherapist who studied at the Esalen Institute, and has studied shamanism.

It is perhaps appropriate to use an account of rebirthing written by a participant, in the group's newsletter to convey the experience afforded by the group.

*For those of us who have forgotten, rebirthing offers a way back - a method for accessing instincts and emotions, for accessing the heart and soul of oneself..There is a difference between reconnecting with a lost instinctual and emotional life and never having gone beyond it. For many of us, rebirthing brings not just the possibility of a retrieval of a lost path but of the opening to realms of consciousness beyond the ego - of opening to the divine. The more so the more there are emotional blocks to traditional religious paths, such as Christianity....The urge to fulfil one's potential - that is what brings one to rebirthing. To fight back the forest of the unconscious, to see the primitive levels of oneself ..to get beneath the* persona *to where the primordial energies soar up to the divine - that is rebirthing,* (Maxine, 1988).

The centre offers a three month residential diploma and an advanced 'postgraduate' diploma of 3-months duration. It also offers an introductory weekend, a 5-day intensive programme and month-long programmes. This study approached two sets of people and asked them to participate in the study: those who had just completed a three-month programme *[NRME-clwg]* and those who were just commencing one *[NRME-clw]*. The importance of getting an exhaustive sample rather than a subset of volunteers was stressed, and an 80% participation rate was achieved.

7. **The Yoga Group**: *[NRME-satya]* at the Satyananda Ashram This group has a male leader around whom exists a permanent ashram. The focus of the ashram is Yoga, in the Siddha tradition. The group's philosophy focuses on the attainment of liberation from the cycle of birth and death *(samsara)* via devotion to a guru who is believed to have special perceptual powers and to be able to awaken special forces within the individual. The Siddha Yoga group offers a variety of self-help courses informed by spiritual beliefs and practices. The director of the Satyananda Ashram at the time of data collection of this study was Swami Akhanada Saraswati who is subordinate to his guru, Satyananda. Swami Satyananda had been guru for over 12 years. He founded the International Yoga Foundation in 1963 and modernised tantra. Swami Saraswati does not claim enlightenment but does claim some of the highest perceptual powers gained by activating the *chakras* [nodal points of energy], for example an ability to listen in to the ethereal plane and to receive direct transmission from Satyananda. Siddha Yoga is essentially a tantric movement linked to Kashmir Shaivism. A siddha is a holy man who practises yoga and who has acquired various *Siddhis,* or

powers, and attained a state of spiritual perfection entailing a realization that he is one with the ultimate reality. This state can only be reached through the grace of a guru, who alone can awaken the *kundalini* force. This is believed to be a latent force or divine energy which is coiled up as a serpent at the base of the spine which can move up through the *chakras* (nodal points of energy). Siddha Yoga is a monistic *sadhana.* Sadhana refers to a system of spiritual discipline based on unconditional devotion to a guru. It is monist, because, like tantric yoga, while it is designed to awaken the universal consciousness within and by this awakening achieving *moksha* (liberation from the wheel of *samsara* rebirth and suffering), it does not propose that the world is illusion, (as Patanjali yoga does) but that it is a manifestation of ultimate reality. Monism here implies that there is only one ultimate reality, that to see things in duality or multiplicity is a delusion. The aim of such devotion and practice is self-realisation, an awareness of one's true identity, and the further realisation that *all* is one with the Ultimate Reality. What prevents us from realising this is our 'false ego'. Muktananda (1983) says, "Ego has possessed us and made us forget our natural yoga" (p.16). In Siddha yoga, the final source of authority is not found in a sacred text or holy book, but rests with the guru, who is the centre of sacredness and the only path to salvation.

There are a number of foundational beliefs which inform the practice of meditation: the use of a *mantra* (sacred words or sounds), the practice of yogic breathing *(pranayama)* and the devotion to the guru. It is believed that at the very core of the universe there is sound or vibration. One may articulate a *mantra* through spoken words but its essential

function is to permit contact with the inner source or one's true nature with which contact is believed to be essential. A mantra can be defined as sacred words or sounds imbued with power that is able to transform the user of it. The actual syllables of the words of a mantra have come to be thought of as containing power. "Mantra is itself the form of God: between his name and his nature there is no difference" (Muktananda, 1983:25). There is also postulated a life force known as *prana* pervading the universe. On inhalation *(pranayama)* it is taken into the body and in the tantric cosmology the inhalation *(sam)* is *shiva* which is characterised as the male principle and is passive and benign. The exhalation *(sa)* is *shakti,* the female principle which is active and energetic. In this way, breathing is believed to partake of the tantric myth of Shiva-Shakti; one's thoughts and breath are stilled in order to transmute the body into the divine. Our age is characterised within this tradition as The Kali Age, where the world is governed by anger, hatred lust and greed. It is the fourth and last age of creation. In Tantric metaphysics, absolute reality is a state of Absolute Unity wherein all polarities are integrated and united. Creation represents the shattering of the primordial unity and the separation of the two principles (Shiva and Shakti). In consequence [wo/man experiences a state of duality, of illusion and suffering, and bondage that is frequently our lived experience of the world.

With appropriate spiritual practices it is believed that there can be a reunion of the two principles within the subject's own body. The more one is attuned to one's spiritual body via the activation of the *chakras* the more one is attuned to receive direct transmission from the guru.

8. **The Theosophist group** *[NRME-shan]* Ananda Tara Shan is the "mother founder" and head of the church of the Sacred Heart of Maitreya which was founded in Melbourne, Australia, in 1987. She claims that the souls who originally established the Theosophical Society are the same as those seated in her movement, the Shan of the Rising Light. She claims she was informed in 1980 that she is the reincarnation of Madame Blavatsky. Born in Denmark, she claims to have "always been clairaudient and clairvoyant and when I started to meditate in 1973, I immediately saw guides and teachers from the inner levels" (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987). She had been told by 'the masters' to "apply theosophy practically in helping to purify humanity and the earth itself'. In her own words:

> Where previously the masters had given the chosen founders the divine principles: the law of karma, the law of reincarnation and evolution, we have had to bring in a meditation system and a healing system which would enable followers to grow more quickly, to purify their inner bodies and balance them totally. (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987).

Her eclectic eastern and western focus is captured in her belief that the risen Christ will reincarnate in 500 years and will become the Buddha of the Earth, suggesting: "He no longer wants people to see him as the suffering Christ but as the living risen Christ in every living Being's heart" (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987). She believes that he will create a new world religion of which hers is the forerunner.

This group has a series of churches, centres for healing and yoga, to help the devotees to develop their understanding and training to fulfil their

mission and dedicate their lives in the service of Lord Maitreya (the Buddha to come). The Yoga centre has lectures, meetings, workshops, meditational practices, and is a meeting place and information centre for those wishing to learn theosophy, and Shan Dharma philosophy. It is termed a 'Healing Sanctuary'. In their own words:

> This seeks to achieve permanent change on all levels of consciousness ...[working on those who] suffer from chaos and confusion, bringing them peace, stability, harmony, joy of living and the understanding of their purpose in life... .Illusions and misapprehensions created over many lives are cleared. Enmity changes to friendship, pain to knowledge, sadness and feelings of isolation and depression to happiness, purposefulness and a feeling of oneness with all that lives, all that breathes, (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987).

There are two retreats visited by this group in Darjeeling and Luxor. A third retreat was planned to be established in New Zealand or Australia. The promise of this system of Yoga, Dharma and Theosophy is that:

> "Every wo/man who enters this system will find [her] his joy". In addition, "You discover that the gods of India of ancient Greece and Rome exist....A specific number living amongst man on earth appear before certain aspirants and disciples when these need reassurance, the guidance and the comfort to commence, continue or complete their task of perfecting themselves as human beings...". (Ananda Tara Shan, 1987).

**17. APPARATUS: An Overview**

Since there are a large number of measures pertinent to the model, a brief overview of the individual scales and subscales will be presented in the order in which they will appear in the results section. This overview will be followed by a detailed account of the measures from which the individual subscales are derived, where the psychometric adequacy of the measures, their scoring systems and modifications made to them to suit them to this study will be discussed. A link provides access to all original scales (except Prof. Tellegen's MPQ, which can be obtained by contacting the scale publishers). The reader will need to look under the Appendix Number specified in this book and access the following link: http://ses.library.usyd.edu.au/bitstream/2123/2546/24/Reference&Appendix.pdf

**18. DESCRIPTIVE MEASURES**

**18.1 Spiritual Background**

This questionnaire was designed to assess the nature of the respondent's family religion (see Appendix 3 readily found at the link) in terms of its eastern or western orientation, whether each parent had a different spiritual affiliation, and until what age the subject had been involved. Questions had five categories of possible response regarding the intensity of their involvement in their family religion, in western religions (other than that of the family), and eastern spiritual groups.

The options offered spanned:

Not at all – Slightly – Moderately - Quite Seriously - Intensely

The questionnaire also had free-response questions regarding: the degree to which the subject has experienced sadness at the end of personal relationships, whether s/he finds it difficult to critically evaluate differing authorities' stances on an issue, his/her desire for one person to provide guidance and acceptance, and whether s/he felt s/he had found such a person. A simple yes/no response was required for experience with drugs for their altering effect on experience, a free response question regarding time involved with drugs, and a five category option (as above) regarding the intensity of that involvement.

## 18.2 Involvement in Self-Improvement

This simple checklist was used to ensure that no miscategorisation of control subject's occurred. It entailed a list of possible involvements with health agencies (physical and psychological) such as doctors, counsellors, therapists, weight watcher programmes, exercise clubs, religious groups, and meditation and yoga groups. This was attached to the front of the Recent Life Events Inventory, (see Appendix 4 at the link).

## 19. THE PSYCHOMETRIC SCALES

Where existing scales appropriate for the research endeavour did not exist, they were created for this study. Some existing scales were modified with the authors' permission, or recognized abbreviated forms were used. It is thought useful to provide a brief list of the relevant assessment domains and the scales used before giving a detailed account of the individual measures, which are then discussed in psychometric detail.

## A) ASSESSING DISRUPTION

### 19.1 The Recent Life Events Inventory

The recent life events scale by Henderson *et al* (1981) was used to assess recent disruption in lifestyle, (see Appendix 5). Five additional items (which were separately scored) were added by the author (these are marked * in Appendix 5). These referred to recent worries about coping style and personality. This scale provides indices of the incidence and impact of recent life events, and permits assessment of the degree to which particular types of psychological impact characterise certain individuals or groups. One impact item was added by the author (marked * in Appendix 5).

### 19.2 The Stress Subscale of the MPQ

The relevant subscale of Tellegen's Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire [MPQ] was used to assess habitual experience of stress. The entire MPQ and scoring schedule may be found by contacting the publishers.

### 19.3 Recent Interpersonal Discord Subscale of the ISSI

The relevant subscale of Henderson *et al's* (1981) Interview Schedule for Social Interaction [ISSI] was used to assess recent discord. The abbreviated self-report form of the ISSI used in this study may be found in Appendix 7.


## B) ASSESSING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

### 19.4 The Interview Schedule for Social Interaction: [ISSI]

Henderson *et al's* (1981) Interview Schedule for Social Interaction [ISSI] was modified with the permission of the authors, and an abbreviated version was developed; on the basis of item analyses of the original

authors and rendered appropriate for self-report responses. A pilot study was run with a sample of 54 subjects from the general population, and three interviewers, using the full form in interview style, the abbreviated form in interview style, and the abbreviated form as a self-report measure.

The data from the self-report form and the abbreviated form were found to be similarly complete, and, for the restricted purposes of this study, were viewed as adequate. The abbreviated ISSI provided indices of the availability and adequacy of acquaintances and close friends.

## C) ASSESSING MENTAL HEALTH

### 19.5 Marc Galanter's General Wellbeing Scale

Marc Galanter's scale developed with a sample of the Unification Church was used with the author's permission. This scale may be found in Appendix 8.

### 19.6 Auke Tellegen's Wellbeing Subscale from the MPQ

The relevant subscale of Tellegen's MPQ was used to assess subjects' usual level of wellbeing.

### 19.7 Marc Galanter's Neurotic Distress Scale

Marc Galanter's scale, developed with a sample of the Unification Church, was used with the author's permission. This scale may be found in Appendix 8.

## D) ASSESSING FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

### 19.8 Parental Appraisal Scales

A series of Likert scales were developed by the author, using Ullman's (1982) conclusions from in-depth interviews with 'cult' devotees. These facilitated the assessment of each subject's appraisal of his/her mother and father in childhood and adolescence. Open-ended questions were provided as a validity check for the numeric responses given. This questionnaire may be found in Appendix 9.

### 19.9 Parental Satisfaction Item

A single Likert scale was used to assess the degree to which each of the subject's parents fulfilled their needs. This item may be found in the same appendix as the parental appraisal scales (marked * in Appendix 9).


## E) ASSESSING SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY

### 19.10 Submission to Authority - Subscale of the Balanced F Scale

The submission to authority subscale of Ray's (l972) new balanced F-scale was used to assess the degree to which subjects endorsed traditional moral authority. This scale may be found in Appendix 10.


### 19.11 The Unlikely Virtues Subscale of the MPQ

The unlikely virtues subscale of Tellegen's MPQ was used to assess the degree to which subjects adhered to fine points of morality, to an extent which is unlikely for the general population.

**F) ASSESSING IMPULSE CONTROL**

**19.12 The Constraint Composite Scale of the MPQ**

The appropriate higher order scale from Tellegen's MPQ: the Constraint Scale was used to assess subject's pleasure/pain regulatory style, to assess whether eastern spiritual groups are 'impatient for paradise'.

**G) ASSESSING A MYSTICAL PERCEPTUAL STYLE**

**19.13 The Absorption Subscale of the MPQ**

The Absorption subscale of Tellegen's MPQ was used to assess the degree to which subjects' experience an emotional sense of fusion with the objects of perception and recollected memories.

**H) ASSESSING SPIRITUAL WORLDVIEW**

**19.14 The Spiritual Orientation Subscale**

The Spiritual Orientation Survey developed by the author was used to assess the intensity and orientation of subjects' beliefs, in terms of General Spiritual Orientation, Eastern Spiritual Orientation and Western Spiritual Orientation (see Appendix II).

**20. SUBSIDIARY APPARATUS: Assessment Scales Utilised**

**I) ASSESSING ASOCIAL TRAITS**

**20.1 The Alienation Subscale of the MPQ**

This subscale assessed the degree to which a person feels the victim of bad luck, and the target of potential harm from others.

**20.2 The Aggression Subscale of the MPQ**

This subscale assesses the degree to which a person takes pleasure in harming others, in participating in and countenancing violence.

**J) ASSESSING SOCIAL COMPETENCY**

**20.3 The Achievement Subscale of the MPQ**

This subscale assesses the extent to which people put work ahead of other endeavours and persist where others might desist.

**20.4 The Social Potency Subscale of the MPQ**

This subscale assesses a person's persuasive and leadership abilities and interests.

**K) ASSESSING HABITUAL MODES OF ENGAGEMENT**

**20.5 The Higher Order Negative Affectivity Scale of the MPQ**

This scale assesses subjective distress and unpleasureable engagement that subsumes a variety of aversive mood states.

**20.6 The Higher Order Positive Affectivity Scale of the MPQ**

This scale assesses the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active, and alert.

**21. APPARATUS: PSYCHOMETRIC SCALES IN DETAIL**

Each scale will now be discussed in terms of the dimension of variables it assesses, its descriptive form, the theoretical reasons for its pertinence to this study (in brief), an outline of any modifications made for this study, and empirical issues associated with its application.

**22. ASSESSING DISRUPTION - Recent Life Event Inventories**

Lofland and Stark (1965) suggest that disruption occurs in 'old obligations and lines of action'. McHugh (1972) suggests that it occurs due to 'normatively meaningless events', a 'disruption in routine' and

'subverted interpersonal relations - the isolation of individuals'. Zygmunt (1972) suggests that a 'weakening of attachments' must occur 'at least to those arrangements' which are to undergo change. The empirical features which may result in such disruption are numerous. Because of that the net was cast wide in order to isolate the particular type of disruption associated with NRM affiliation. Two scales are pertinent here, as they address life events and the social context in which they occur. Whether social ties buffer the effect of stress or provide an independent positive resource in their own right to the person who has many life experiences, are effects which Thoits (1982) noted are confounded in much of the literature. Life events in general, and life events concerning depletion in social ties in particular (termed social exits in Cohen, 1988), are pertinent to this study. The distinction between life events and the assessment of social ties breaks down somewhat for this study.

The most obvious empirical feature of the recent experience of life disruption lies in the assessment of recent life events. There are two related concerns; the recall and report of events personally experienced, and an assessment of the degree of impact which the occurrence of those events has on an individual.

There are numerous methodological difficulties in the sampling of life events. Standard inventories have been criticised because, as finite lists, they may not cover the range of events an individual has experienced and may focus on those which occur within a subgroup of the population. Moreover, they are usually retrospective accounts and the

time between occurrence of the event and recall might result in inaccuracy. The finite nature of the inventories can be overcome by their being lengthy enough to be representative of a broad range of possible experiences and by the inclusion of open-ended questions to allow for details of personal significance to be tapped without compromising the ease of comparability of the main body of data. More difficult to overcome is achieving adequate motivation for adequate recall without having to resort to the open-ended questions and unstructured probes of the interview technique recommended by Dohrenwend and Dohrenwend (1974, cited in Henderson, *et al,* 1981:58) which are impractical on large samples such as that required by the overall study using the *rites de passage* model. Brown and Harris (1978), cited in Henderson, et al*,* 1981:59) also suggest the use of detailed probes in an interview situation, the data from which would be analysed in terms of guidelines (derived from a 'committee' analysis) concerning the impact and experience of life events. Undoubtedly the interview situation and the use of detailed probes have the advantage of maximising motivation for recall, but since sample and test battery size and a single researcher precluded their use in this study, steps were taken to ensure the adequacy of the self-report data which are detailed below.

## 22.1 Assessing the Psychological Impact of Life Events

Even the most thoroughgoing direct test of Lofland and Stark's model, the study by Snow and Phillips (1980), did not address the impact of life events, though it did gauge their nature and frequency. The psychological impact of life events is an important feature regarding their disruptive outcome.

Henderson *et al* (1981) summarize a number of studies relevant to assessing the impact of events on an individual. One approach they detail entails the assumption of an invariant impact of particular events regardless to the individual they befall. Holmes and Rahe (1967) developed arbitrary weights from the life event inventory relative to an anchor point. Events occurring could then be weighted, and the sum of these used as an index of the cumulative impact of life events experienced. However, the development of the magnitude estimation scales [MES] are subject to influences which diminish their validity. The examples given by Henderson *et al* (1981:60-61) are: culture and ethnic status of the population on whom the [MES] are developed, whether the person rating an event has actually experienced it, and the use of convenient rather than random samples to derive the scales. They cite Gerst and Yager (1978) as suggesting that "the *a priori* utility of weighting events based on their perceived impact may be counter-balanced by the error variance introduced by the ... instrument itself" (Henderson *et al* 1981:61). Thoits also suggests that the use of unweighted life events is preferable in this regard.

The work of Lazarus (1966, 1977) revealing intermediary processes between environmental stimuli and organismic reactions indicative of stress, Henderson *et al* (1981) suggest has significance for any procedure which assesses the incidence and the impact of recent life events. Since events have different impact for different individuals, the application of arbitrary magnitude estimation weights to individual life-events reports would result in the loss of "much information relevant to the personal

significance of life events" (p.62). It is for this reason that they develop the weighting for their scale from a large representative sample of people who have recently experienced the events in question. The estimates were made on seven dimensions of impact relating to adjustment required by the experience, and the degree to which it caused distress or adverse emotions (e.g. anger and anxiety). Subjects were instructed to rate each item in terms of how they felt at the time of the occurrence rather than their feelings as to its emotional impact. There are obvious difficulties in directly assessing the success of such an instruction. These impact items were used in the present study (see Appendix 5), and are discussed in detail below.

Since one emphasis of this study is the extent to which past events might retain a differentially strong emotional impact for some individuals, whether the impact indices are answered on the basis of the time of occurrence or the time of recollection is not an important empirical issue. However, the context of recall was an important issue for this study. The effects of delayed recall on the reporting of event impact have been addressed from the aspect of a person recalling recent events from the context of physical or psychological disability. Henderson *et al* (1981:64) note Brown et al's (1973) suggestion that the need to explain a given set of 'symptoms' might result in an over-representation of occurrences and their impact. In the context of this study, this relates to the alleged exaggeration of the difficulties or dissoluteness of preconversion life (Berger and Luckman, 1967) so that the regenerative conversion might be all the more remarkable. Further, it is relevant to the suggestion that the situated vocabulary of a NRM

(Mills, 1940) and its mobilizing effect on the definition of a particular problem (Zurcher & Snow, 1976), might result in inaccuracy of recall.

These tendencies all operate in the direction of increasing recall of instances suggestive of a problematic past. These influences are strongly countered, however, by an influence noted by Zygmunt (1972), namely his suggestion that converts resist the 'reductive' explanation of their involvement which might result in denial of problematic past events, a tendency which Cobb (1974, cited in Henderson *et al,* 1981:64) suggests may well act to reduce recall. Affiliates are likely to resist the implications that they joined a NRM because of problems and loneliness. Nonetheless, the possibility of such confounding influences was one of the reasons for the selection of a prospective study. It was hoped they might be eliminated by prospective assessment of affiliates where the 'symptom' (affiliation) has not yet developed.

## 22.2 Advantages of the Henderson, Byrne, & Duncan-Jones (1981) Recent Life Events Inventory

This inventory is an extension of a list based on the Australian population (Tennant & Andrews, 1976; cited in Henderson *et al,* 1981:66). The construction of the new inventory took into account the major criticisms of recent life experience lists. They enlarged the item content, changed the phrasing of items to include enduring as well as transitory events and included two open-ended items relating to recent sources of disappointment and sources of continuous worry and stress. The eleven categories which the List of Recent Experience covered are: outlined in Table 10.

**TABLE 10.** The Eleven Categories of Event in Henderson et al's Recent Life Events Inventory

| Item Category | Number of Items |
|---|---|
| Illness, injury and accident | 9 |
| Pregnancy and childbirth | 5 |
| Changes in relationships | 15 |
| Separation | 6 |
| Changes in living conditions | 5 |
| Study and Schooling | 6 |
| Work and employment situation | 13 |
| Financial situation | 5 |
| Legal difficulties | 4 |
| Open-ended questions | 2 |

## 22.3 Assessing Impact

One of the advantages of this scale is that the researchers opted for neither totally arbitrary magnitude estimation scales, nor totally subjective. A large representative sample of people rated recent experiences on the seven dimensions of impact alluded to above. They were asked to place a mark on a 10cm scale anchored at each end by statements of maximal and minimal impact. The scoring procedure involved measuring the distance from the endpoint of the subject's rating. Weights were collated *post hoc* from the mean of the seven impact scale. Where possible the score from the original Tennants and Andrew's scale was regressed on the seven scale means. The result is a mean impact score based on recent personal experience.

## 22.4 Reliability of the Recent Life Events Scale

The correlation between the frequencies of recent experiences reported on two occasions was 0.94 (p<.001). The correlation between cumulative distress weights derived from repeated administration was .89 (p<.001). While different kinds of experiences reported at different times may be masked by the overall summary score it was found that 70% of the total number of recent experiences were reported on both occasions.

The manner of deriving the mean weights for this test seems to have good face validity, and the range of difficulties monitored by the test makes it quite appropriate for assessing the frequency, duration or distress attendant on the occurrence of potentially stressful life events.

They provide evidence which shows a decline in the frequency of problems recalled and in the cumulative distress weights with time periods of increasing remoteness from the interview. They use a twelve-month time frame and suggest that the rate of recall of recent experiences over time is quite acceptable, given that the percentage drop from the highest monthly recall rate to the lowest is around 25%. The drop on distress weights is in the order of 8%. This is the time frame used for the present study.

Such acceptable levels of recall they note was achieved by the careful collection of data by interview. The interview technique was adopted for the pilot phase of this study. However, given the large sample required overall and the size of the final test battery it was not possible to use this technique for the main study. Instead, with the permission of Henderson *et at* (1981) a written version of their test was developed by the author

(see Appendix 7), reduced in length by consulting the item loadings in Duncan-Jones' (1981) publication (see Table 11, below).

**22.5 Social Agencies Checklist**

As mentioned above, on the front cover of this inventory were a list of possible activities of a personal and social nature which are potentially related to ways of maintaining mental/physical health, and related to the expanded list problem-solving perspectives outlined by Richardson and Stewart (1977). This was to safeguard against misclassification of control subjects, who might have been involved in NRMs or therapy, and as a means of assessing the degree to which people are simultaneously involved in religious and therapy groups. There were only three subjects involved in overlapping groups for this sample in the last 12 months (the specified time frame).

**22.6 Scoring Procedure of the Recent Life Events Inventory**

The Recent Life Events Scale [RLE) is scored by according one point for every event that is recalled as having occurred in the last 12 months.

There are a number of aspects of such data regarding the incidence of life events which were relevant to the present study.

1. The total number of experiences reported.

2. The mean (average) number of these experiences.

3. The individual's total cumulative distress scores allocated to these experiences.

4. The individual's mean (average) distress score (total cumulative distress divided by frequency) to represent the average distress

experienced due to life experiences encountered by individuals in a sample.

## 22.7 Qualitative Analyses of Life Event Categories

In addition to reporting the total and mean number of life events and since number of events alone has a poor correlation with negative outcomes of life events, separate indices were set up which are based on qualitative analysis of life events, as Cohen (1988) advocated, (see Appendix 12). These are separate categories of event based on the **positive or negative** quality of the events, and their **social or more general** nature. These are analysed in terms of their **incidence**, **overall impact**, and **mean impact per event** which will now be discussed in detail.

While measures of the positive or negative quality of recent life events constitute an important distinction, it is not one which can readily be made *a priori,* as Reich & Zautra (1988) note. Even seemingly closely related notions like pleasantness and desirability are differently rated by subjects, with the former connoting an affective response, while the latter is suggested to tap a more cognitive dimension (Vinokur &

Caplan, 1986; cited in Reich & Zautra 1988: 154). As perceptions of adjustment, control, personal responsibility and the degree to which a person experienced strong emotional responses to an event are involved in the scales used in this study to assess the psychological impact of each event (developed by Henderson *et al,* 1981), these scales of attributes are differentially pertinent to *every* event, and cannot readily form a basis of grouping events. Indeed much overlap was found to occur in

such categorisation in a study carried out by Fontana, Hughes, Marcus and Dowds (1979, in Reich & Zautra 1988:155).

Categorisation was attempted on the basis of the wording of items where little ambiguity existed as to their positive or negative nature: for example, words like 'illness, problem, difficulties' were presumed to elicit predominantly negative life events. They formed the **Negative Life Experiences** list. Specifically excluded from this list were items which related to interpersonal loss, of significant others, as these form a special focus of interest for this study. Interpersonal bonds are viewed as important to the maintenance of a person's identity, and their loss or damage is viewed as a powerful stimulus to a reassessment of life course, within the rites of passage model outlined above. Hence they formed a separate list called the **Negative Social Experiences** list containing items which related to bereavement, separation and to significant changes in residential location, (a change of city, state, or country). Even if there were positive features of such relocation, the loss of community ties and intimates is highly likely to be aversive in most instances, (bar all but the most ingrained nomads).

A **Positive Life Experiences** list was developed which included; the incidence of promotions, holidays, and financial gains. A Positive Social Experiences list referred to the addition of a new friend, child or lover to one's social circle, or a new beginning with a spouse of de facto after trial separation. The most difficult item to categorise was the occurrence of an extra-marital affair for an individual. While such an occurrence concerning one's partner's involvement is like to be viewed as

predominantly aversive, the valence of such personal involvement is extremely hard to assess. Romance minus anxiety and trauma is not an easily calculable equation. It was included in the **Negative Social Experiences** list, as, regardless of the pleasure/pain equation, such an occurrence is assumed to increase life stress (in terms of the items of adjustment and anxiety) and is likely to tax personal coping resources.

A separate list of items relating to dissatisfaction with one's own personality was made up out of the items added by the author. The RLE was modified for the purposes of this study in that six items were added to the recent life events scale (developed by Henderson *et al,* 1981) which referred to concerns about excessive time spent worrying, feeling there are major changes to be made in one's personality, anxiety over how a situation was handled, feeling the odd one out, having a sense of something lacking in life, and having had a problem with no-one to turn to. These were grouped to form the *Discontent with Personality Subscale.* The inclusion of these items contravenes the specifications regarding recent life events schedules which Cohen (1988) and Henderson *et al,* (1981) note are to be restricted to objective life occurrences. However, given that this thesis is concerned with a personal turning point, a point at which a person feels s/he cannot go on living as s/he has before, the information yielded by such items was deemed vital. Since such items do not necessarily directly address life occurrences, and are not free of an evaluative element, they are analysed separately from the other items.

Results from these qualitative indices of incidence of different kinds of life events are each reported in terms of the incidence and impact of a set of life events. An exhaustive list of the RLE categories in the order in which they will be reported in the results section is provided:

1. Total *incidence* of events: all categories summed.

2. Total impact of events: all categories summed.

3. Total *incidence* of Positive Life Experiences.

4. Total impact of Positive Life Experiences.

5. Total *incidence* of Positive Social Experiences.

6. Total impact of Positive Social Experiences.

7. Total *incidence* of Negative Life Experiences.

8. Total impact of Negative Life Experiences.

9. Total *incidence* of Negative Social Experiences.

10. Total impact of Negative Social Experiences.

11. Total *incidence* of Discontent with Personality.

12. Total impact of Discontent with Personality.

13. Total *incidence* of Strain.

14. Total impact of Strain.

As mentioned before, the personality appraisal items added by the author are *not* included in the total incidence or total and mean impact scores, but form a separate index of discontent with oneself.


## 22.8 Emotional Response Style

In addition to the recent life events inventory, there were a series of eleven 10-point Likert items of which eight assessed the psychological impact of life events and provided, when summed, an impact score for each domain of event. The individual impact items developed by

Henderson *et al* (1981) are analysed separately to discover whether those drawn to eastern movements are characterised by a different response pattern to life events.

An addition to the individual impact scales was made by the author: it is an impact scale which addresses the extent to which the memory of an event in the recent past still affects the subject. This is to assess the resonance of emotionality to past events which might form a measure of sustained reactivity to stress.

## 22.9 Impact Assessed By Patterns of Emotional Response

Impact items were reported above in terms of the total and mean impact of particular qualitative categories of life events. In addition results are reported in terms of the degree to which a particular type of emotional response was felt in response to life events (all events were summed), across the groups included in this study. For each of the eight impact and three locus of control items results are analysed in terms of the:

1. Total impact per item: all events summed.

2. Mean (or average) impact per item: all events summed.

These two indices of impact form the basis for reporting in the results section, the patterns of response across groups, for each of the following items of emotional impact:

1. Upset

2. Disruption caused

3. Adjustment required

4. Depression felt

5. Anxiety felt

6. Anger felt

7. Helplessness felt

8. Lingering emotional impact of the memory of the event.

The last item represents an addition to these impact items by the author, addressing the extent to which the memory of an event in the recent past still affects the subject. This was to assess the resonance of emotionality to past events which might form a measure of sustained reactivity to stress. The other measures of impact are those developed by Henderson *et al, (1981).*

## 22.10 Attribution of Responsibility for Life Events

The two indices of total impact and mean impact per event form the basis for reporting results for the remaining three items developed by these authors which address the locus of control attributed to be the dominant causal origin of the life event. These are formulated regarding the:

1. Personal responsibility assumed

2. Responsibility attributed to other people

3. Responsibility attributed to chance.

## 22.11 Assumptions of a Normal Distribution: Statistical Analysis of Recent Life Events Data

Between-group differences in measures of recent life experiences were examined in Henderson *et al's* (1981) study by the Kruskal-Wallis non-parametric one-way analysis of variance as they were not sure that the data satisfied the assumptions required for parametric analysis. Analysis

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decisions in Henderson *et al's* case were based on incomplete socio-demographic data which precluded use of the total sample in all cases.

It is not denied that whether recent life events are normally distributed the population is a moot point. The incidence of life events may vary as a function of age and economic status and their impact may vary as a function of personality and life support features. It is unlikely that the incidence of life events is normally distributed in the population, as incidence is likely to be a function of age and temperament. In this study the general population and the therapy group were matched to the affiliates of the NRMs with regard to age and socioeconomic status. Further, this study is concerned with the impact of life events, and there is evidence to suggest that there is not a direct relation between incidence and impact. Even if incidence were normally distributed, impact may not be. The justification for using an analysis of variance [ANOVA] with *a priori* planned contrasts is that a full and matched sample was used for all of these measures regarding incidence of life events, and that the ANOVA is robust to violations of the assumption of normality. It cannot be assumed that normal distribution does not apply across the sample.

There is much speculation and exploratory research regarding personality variables which influence the impact of life events. A factor which may influence the frequency of such events is an individual's degree of constraint or risk-taking (Tellegen, 1982; Zuckerman, 1979). There is evidence for individual variation in their impact mediated by personality (Rahe, 1974), individual coping styles (Byrne, 1980) and the provision of social bonds (Henderson *et al,* 1981, p.74, cite: Rahe, 1974;

Byrne, 1980; Henderson *et al*, 1980) and a personality feature Kobasa and colleagues term 'hardiness'. There is no evidence regarding special features of the sample of those drawn to NRMs which might influence the distribution of the incidence and the impact of life events.

These studies suggest that more than numerical frequency of life events needs to be considered if the aspect of disruption that concerns us is the extent to which it disrupts old obligations and lines of action. Personality variables are also an important consideration concerning the impact of life events. This study is exploratory in nature with regard to these variables. Since there is no basis by which to predict the skew of life events distribution normality will be assumed.

## 23. ASSESSING ISOLATION AND LONELINESS - The Interview Schedule for Social Interaction [ISSI]

This scale produces four subscales of relevance: the availability of acquaintances and intimates, and the adequacy of acquaintances and intimates. The availability measures accord one point for every person available to the respondent in a particular social category. The adequacy measures accord one point for how well a person is perceived as fulfilling a particular role in the respondent's life, and another is accorded if the respondent feels that that person is 'enough', that they do not wish to have 'anyone else as well' in that capacity.

The excessive length of the ISSI for this study inspired the development of a self-report abbreviated version. Henderson *et al,* (1981) generously

agreed. They had published their item analyses in detail, Duncan-Jones (1981) which permitted a principled elimination of items less pertinent to the aims of this study on the basis of factor loadings. Table 11 below documents the items omitted.

**TABLE 11.** Streamlining ISSI - Availability Items Retained and Omitted using Factor Loadings

| Factor | Omitted | Kept |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Question | Number: Loading | Number: Loading |
| Acquaintance - - | Q1./0.5I Q3/0.55 Q8/0.52 | Q5/0.52 QI0/0.52 |
| Friendship - - - - | Q18/0.28 | Q14/0.89 Q16/0.91 Q21/0.57 Q22/0.27 Q22A/0.41 |
| Attachment - - - - - | Q30A/O.46 | Q26A/0.59 Q29A/0.36 Q31A/0.51 Q32A/0.S8 Q33A/0.53 Q34A/0.53 |
| Reassurance of worth - - | | Q39/0.48 Q42/0.64 Q44/0.41 |
| Reliable Alliance | Q46A/0.59 | Q48/0.41 |

The abbreviated, written form of this questionnaire may be found in Appendix 7. It was felt that the form of the probes was sufficiently highly structured to achieve data comparable to interview standard, and a contact number was supplied for any queries.

**23.1 THE ISSI: Measuring Social Relationships**

In a series of pilot studies with diverse samples over the period of a year, Henderson, Byrne, Duncan-Jones and Scott (1980) developed an interview schedule for social interaction [ISSI] which:

> systematically explores the availability and adequacy of persons in specified categories and the provisions obtained for the individual within this primary group (cited in Henderson *et al, 1981:34).*

This interview is suitable for both healthy respondents in the general population and psychiatrically affected persons. It is called the Interview Schedule for Social Interactions [ISSI]. The schedule progresses in the degree of disclosure required, from questions about superficial social contacts and work relationships, to items regarding the availability and adequacy of relations affording comfort and the sharing of feelings.
Such a structure may aid development of rapport and increase the likelihood of more complete recall.

Prior to developing scores relating to availability and adequacy of social relations in each of the six areas, splitting Weiss' (1973) category of social integration into friendship and acquaintance, Henderson *et al* (1981) did a structural analysis of the data using a multivariate analysis of contingencies and confirmatory factor analysis. They found that the dimensions of availability and perceived adequacy of attachment, friendship and acquaintance could be distinguished empirically and measured reliably. Two other dimensions; 'reliable alliance' and 'reassurance of worth' could not readily be separated from friendship, so they collapsed these with 'acquaintance' and 'friendship' to form a more general dimension of 'social integration'. They suggest that there is a

single dominant factor of satisfaction with social relations, as the dimensions of perceived *adequacy* were highly correlated with each other (relating to attachment, friendship and acquaintance) while those of availability were *empirically* quite distinct.

**23.2 THE ISSI: Scoring System**

They developed a simple scoring system where each dimension was assigned a group of questions based on structural analysis. The responses were dichotomized; zero or one were the possible scores; and the questions allotted each dimension summed (as each item is given an equal weighting). They found there was a dependency of the adequacy of attachment score [ADAT] on the availability of attachment score [AVAT]. The internal consistency of the four main measures as assessed by the Cronbach alpha is high. The co-efficients of the two availability measures (of attachment and integration; AVAT and AVSI respectively) and for the adequacy of attachment [ADAT] are around 0.7, and for the adequacy of social integration, 0.8. The reliability of the four measures on a test-retest of a small random subsample of the cross-sectional survey (with a time-lapse of eighteen days between testing) ranged from a coefficient of 0.71 to 0.76. The stability of scores over time revealed that the stability of availability measures was very high (a coefficient of almost 0.9 at four months, declining to 0.85 at twelve months) while the perceived adequacy of social relations measures changed more rapidly. Like the availability measure, however, they had an element of function fluctuation and a tendency to return to an underlying level. They note that these characteristics are normally attributed to personality traits.

The evidence presented suggests that the scale has a reasonably high reliability and taps dimensions which are stable over time.

### 23.3 The Validity of the Instrument

The scale was tested on 'recent arrivals' to Canberra. These people had fewer sources of social integration available ($p<.0I$) which they found less adequate ($p<.001$) compared to those living in a city for seven months or more. Using the Eysenck Personality Inventory [EPI) they found that availability of social integration correlated with extraversion as expected (Henderson *et al, 1981:50).* Assessing the truthfulness of respondent's reports was achieved by having them nominate an informant. The informants were, naturally, better informed about the *availability* of social relations than their *adequacy* (see Table 12). But on all measures the association between the two sets of data were significant ($p<.0I$).

TABLE 12. Association between Informant's and Respondent's Data

| ISSI subscale | Product moment coefficient | Significance |
|---|---|---|
| AVAT | .42 | .01 |
| ADAT | .39 | .01 |
| AVSI | .59 | .01 |
| ADSI | .26 | .01 |

Using two separate Crowne-Marlow scores (derived from using separately the positively and reversed scored items in the inventory which have been shown to relate differentially to Neuroticism) and the lie score from the Eysenck Personality Inventory, they found there was not a large percentage of variance being accounted for by response style (assessed by multiple regression of all three measures). The items

reflecting the adequacy of attachment and integration were slightly more influenced by response style (AVAT 5.8%, ADAT 8.4%, AVSI 5.7%, ADSI 10.6%).

## 23.4 THE ISSI: A Summary

The instrument seems quite adequate regarding internal consistency and test-retest reliability. The range of items covered and the dual focus of availability and adequacy makes it on target regarding assessment of features of an individual's social networks prior to NRM contact. It assesses the bonding or attachment to persons in the respondent's social environment: the degree to which intimacy is available (in sharing feelings and receiving comfort) and the adequacy of those features, a measure which takes into account differences in individual requirements. The studies relevant to NRM recruitment specify the absence of proximal social relations in the respondent's life prior to NRM contact. Even the most sophisticated do not address the psychological impact of this absence (Barker, 1981; Snow *et al,* 1980). The ISSI permits the assessment of the perceived adequacy of a given degree of accessibility to others, retaining an important distinction between availability and adequacy.

## 23.5 THE ISSI: Statistical Analyses

The ISSI subscales will be analysed separately despite the fact that Henderson *et al* (1981) found the separate measures to be correlated. The reason for this is the focus of the study on the difference between structural features of an individual's life environment and his/her appraisal of it. The correlation of these variables also rules out a

discriminant function analysis being used on the data gathered in this study overall. For this reason, planned contrasts will be used with a one-way analysis of variance, and the degree to which the measures are discovered to correlate in this study will be reported.

## 24. ASSESSING PERSONALITY VARIABLES

### 24.1 The MPQ

The MPQ has II subscales and three higher order factor scales. Those directly relevant to the *Rites de Passage* model are three subscales, traditionalism, stress and absorption, and one higher order scale, constraint. Other subscales are relevant to subsidiary hypotheses and will be discussed where relevant in the results section. Full description of the MPQ subscales may be found below. The MPQ has a true/false format, and one point is accorded for every item that is consonant with the scale, though some are counterbalanced to avoid yea-saying effects. A modified version of the MPQ was used for this study, using Tellegen's abbreviated forms for certain scales.

In a study by Zevon and Tellegen (1982) the MPQ was compared to the Cattell Personality Inventory, and the Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, which revealed substantial inter-correlations between the MPQ and the other inventories. When the higher-order structures were compared a "strikingly convergent-discriminant pattern" (Tellegen, 1982) emerged, which suggests that comparable higher order dimensions underlie the MPQ and other multi-scale instruments. Tellegen (1982) notes

> Although, broadly speaking, these different inventories cover the same domain, the manner in which the [MPQ] scales capture the

meaning of the three higher-order dimensions appears particularly apt. From the [MPQ] findings the first two broad factors, Positive and Negative Affectivity, emerge as complementary temperament or mood-dispositional dimensions. They seem to index the strength of the individual's disposition to experience, respectively, pleasure and pain, reward and punishment, self-enhancement and self-imperilment, and to behave and think in ways that are conducive to these experiences. The large third dimension, Constraint, may reflect variations in overall pleasure-pain regulatory style: self-restrictive and cautious among high Constraint persons, more self-indulgent and impulsive among the lows". (Tellegen, 1982:3).

## 24.2 The Individual Scales of the MPQ

These are presented in the order in which they occur in this study, using Tellegen's descriptions from the 1982 manual.

**1. Traditionalism:** *A high scorer* endorses high moral standards; supports religious values and institutions; condemns selfish disregard of others; deplores permissiveness; endorses strict child-rearing practices; values propriety and a good reputation. *A low scorer:* does not belabour the importance of high morals; considers traditional religion outdated; questions established authority; sees merit in selfishness; values rebelliousness and freedom of expression; does not believe in punitive discipline; is not very prudish.

**2. Stress Reaction:** *A high scorer*: is nervous, feels vulnerable and is sensitive; is prone to worry; is easily upset and irritable; has changing moods; can feel miserable without reason; is troubled by guilt feelings. *A low scorer:* can put fears and worries out of her [his] mind; quickly gets

over upsetting experiences; is not troubled by emotional turmoil or guilt feelings.

**3. Wellbeing:** *A high scorer* has a happy, cheerful disposition; feels good about self; sees a bright future ahead; lives an exciting, active life. *A low scorer:* reports few experiences of joy and excitement; is seldom really happy.

**4. Unlikely Virtues:** Assesses the degree to which a person is willing to disclaim ordinary human frailties. It is an indicator of invalid responding.

**5. Constraint:** (see above).

**6. Absorption:** *A high scorer:* is emotionally responsive to engaging sights and sounds; is readily captured by entrancing stimuli; thinks in images and has synaesthesic and other "cross-modal" experiences; can summon and become absorbed in vivid and compelling recollections and imaginings; experiences episodes of expanded (extra-sensory, mystical) awareness and other altered states. *A low scorer:* is not easily caught up in sensory and imaginative experiences; does not readily relinquish a realistic frame of reference. Finke and MacDonald (1978) trace the lineage of the Absorption measure from the newly constructed Tellegen-Atkinson (1974) which yielded a factor called *absorption* correlating .43 with hypnotizability (Tellegen and Atkinson, 1974). The constituent items, Finke and MacDonald note, were based on the early work of Shor (1960, 1962, cited in Finke and MacDonald, 1978:178), who recognized factors of involvement style, and the interview studies of Hilgard (1965, 1970, cited in Finke and MacDonald, 1978:178) who spoke of 'imaginative involvement' as highly characteristic of a highly hypnotizable individual.

**7. Alienation:** *A high scorer*: is a victim of bad luck; feel mistreated; is a target of false rumours; believes that others wish her (him) harm; feels betrayed and used by "friends". *A low scorer:* does not see self as victim; feels treated fairly; does not feel taken advantage of.

**8. Aggression:** *A high scorer:* will hurt others for own advantage; is physically aggressive; is vindictive; likes to frighten and discomfit others; likes violent scenes. *A low scorer:* will not take advantage of others; is not violent; would rather tum the other cheek than seek revenge; does not enjoy others' misfortunes; does not like to witness physical aggression.

**9. Achievement:** *A high scorer:* works hard; likes long hours; enjoys demanding projects; persists where others give up; puts work and accomplishment before many other things; is a perfectionist. *A low scorer:* does not like to work harder than is strictly necessary; avoids very demanding projects; sees no point in persisting when success is unlikely; is not terribly ambitious or a perfectionist.

**10. Social Potency:** *A high scorer*: is forceful and decisive; is persuasive and likes to influence others; enjoys or would enjoy leadership roles; takes charge of and likes to be noticed at social events. *A low scorer*: prefers others to take charge and make decisions; does not like to persuade others; does not aspire to leadership; does not enjoy being the centre of attention.

**11. Negative Affectivity:** Watson and Clark (1988:1063) note that this scale looks at the general dimension of "Subjective distress and unpleasureable engagement that subsumes a variety of mood states" and suggest that this measure assesses an affective *state* dimension. However, Watson and Clark (1984) suggest that it is not merely a

measure of reactive affectivity, such that individual's who score highly on the negative affectivity scale also tend to react more strongly to stressful situations, but, they suggest it is a "very pervasive disposition that manifests itself in the absence of any overt stress...such individuals are *more likely* to experience a significant level of distress" (p. 466).

They present evidence which suggests that high Negative Affectivity subjects experience these elevated levels of distress because of increased sensitivity to the prolonged effect of minor failures and frustrations. They suggest that "Negative Affectivity will be related to subjective distress even in the absence of a major externally obvious stressor" (p. 466). At high levels of Negative Affectivity the analytic separation between Maladjustment and Ego Resilience break down "because self-esteem and mood are important components of adjustment" (p. 466). The distress, poor self-esteem and negative mood they suggest derive from a tendency to "dwell upon and magnify mistakes, frustrations, disappointments and threats" (p. 466). Negative Affectivity scores indicate how people feel about themselves and their world rather than how they might objectively fare in their dealings with the world. Although Negative Affectivity has several components of negative mood, cognition and low self-esteem, it is nevertheless a unitary dimension. As test-retest measures remain stable for six months after which time there is a drop, it has the capacity to assess more than transient mood state. Even at one to two years test-rest delay, the average reliability is in the middle .60's. Since negative affectivity is related to state anxiety, negative affect under stress and baseline conditions even when the state measures were completed 10 years after

the trait test (Watson and Clark, 1984) there is reason to be confident that these measures "reflect pervasive individual differences in negative mood and self-concept" (p.477).

**12. Positive Affectivity:** Watson, Clark and Tellegen (1988) summarize positive affectivity as the extent to which a person feels enthusiastic, active and alert. High Positive Affectivity is a state of high energy, full concentration, and pleasurable engagement, whereas low Positive Affectivity is characterised by sadness and lethargy. It is related to social activity and satisfaction and the frequency of pleasant events.


## 25. ASSESSING SPIRITUAL ORIENTATION:

### 25.1 The SOS

A Spiritual Orientation Survey was developed by the author. The development of this scale was discussed in detail in Chapter Four of this manuscript. The SOS has three subscales; east, west and general spiritual items. The scoring procedure is complicated, and has been outlined above in detail. When Goode's (1957, cited in Coombs, 1964) algorithm has been applied, the smallest midpoint distance is assigned a numerical value of one, and the next largest a value of two, until all composite intervals may be calculated as they are combinations of already known intervals. The value of each rank ordering is then calculable. For the purposes of this study, these values were scaled to produce a range of zero to ten so that different items with different midpoint orderings would be directly comparable, (see Appendix 13). Within each of the three subscales, a score is accorded for each ordering representing the person's view of the stimuli, which gives a score for

each item, and these scores are summed to give an Eastern, Western and General scale score.

What is most important to grasp so that the graphs make sense is that a *small* score for each scale indicates a high level of assent, so the smaller the score the greater the assent for all of the SOS scales. Degree of assent or agreement with an item is described as intensity of belief within this study.

## 26. STATISTICAL ANALYSES

There are problems with this kind of *ex post facto* design, as the majority of statistics typically used are not validly applied in situations where samples are not randomly selected. The concern of this analysis is not merely *the amount of variance* accounted for by separate features measured (which analyses such as a path analysis, or regression analysis would reveal), but *how* the variables distinguish the groups at different levels of the value-added model.

The Multiple Comparison Analysis developed by Andrews, Morgan and Sonquist (1967), which Heirich (1977) used, was considered. The Multiple Comparisons Analysis (MCA) is like Multiple Regression using dummy variables, but it overcomes the problems of attempting to use multiple regression or discriminant functions analysis on survey data. It can 'cope' with 'weak' scales, such as those at the nominal level. It is a technique for examining the interrelationships between several predictor variables, and an outcome variable within the context of an additive model. Data appropriate for analysis by the MCA should have an

outcome variable in the form of an interval scale, or it can be a dichotomy. It was initially thought that this analysis would be appropriate for a dichotomous outcome variable such as making contact with a spiritual group or not. However, the present model being tested does not have such a clearly dichotomous outcome. Some who have contacted spiritual groups have done so for the first time, others are members. Some have contacted groups of an eastern nature, others groups of a western nature. Therefore, it was concluded that it is not possible with the detailed form of the model used here, to render *outcome* a dichotomous variable, as required by MCA analysis. There are differences which would be blurred by such an analysis which need to be retained. In a study where the model is composed of a complex array of attributes which distinguish the groups differently, on different attributes at different levels of the value-added form, the question arises, the groups cannot be meaningfully ordered in terms of a single outcome variable. Further, the array of comparison groups selected and the psychometric details of the different scales which assess quite different features of personality and life circumstances with an array of scale 'strengths' (ranging from a powerful interval scale in the SOS, to the ordinal Likert scales in assessing family relations, to the dichotomous options of the MPQ and the categorical data regarding prior spiritual involvements). All combine to make such an analysis seem more likely to produce a loss rather than an increase in information. Further, the programme assumes that the data are understandable in terms of a strictly additive model, and is normally insensitive to interaction effects.

It was decided, in the light of these features, to remain with simple statistical analysis which would retain the rich detail of the differences found among the measures. While there are instances where such data might not be readily interpretable, the strict predictions of the *Rites de Passage* model are such that the data can readily falsify its dominant predictions. Further, the form of the model, and the structure of the comparisons drawn between different groups at different levels of the value-added model where the earlier phases are necessary but not sufficient for an affiliative outcome, means that the crucial contrasts between groups are different at different phases of hypothesis testing. For this reason, the use of *a priori* planned contrasts using a one-way ANOVA was selected as the appropriate measure, as this permitted most detailed testing of the hypotheses within the changing frame of reference of the model.

The contrasts are not orthogonal, but this was accepted as a necessary feature of the analysis in the light of the theoretical meaningfulness of the differences tested on the basis of the model's predictions. The use of *a priori* planned comparisons permits the pinpointing of the specific conditions under which an hypothesis does and does not hold. Keppel (1973) traces the following argument. Some maintain that planned comparisons must be independent in the sense that they should provide non-redundant information. At one point in his discussion, Hayes (1963:484) for example refers to the property of independence as a *requirement.* Similarly, Kirk (1968) suggests that we should distinguish between two classes of planned comparisons: redundant and non-redundant. He suggests that we should place the former in the same

category as *post hoc* comparisons. Winer (1962) states that "in practice the comparisons that are constructed are those that have some meaning in terms of experimental variables, whether these comparisons are [redundant] or not makes little or no difference" (p.69). Winer's comments make good sense, as it seems that the critical nature of planned comparisons is their *a priori* nature, not their independence.

With this in mind, the contrasts planned are those which are meaningful in terms of the model under consideration. They are not always orthogonal. Most are tested using Scheffe's F test, with one degree of freedom in the numerator and the appropriate number of degrees of freedom in the denominator. Almost all are one-tailed tests, in that there are quite specific differences and specific directions predicted for the occurrence of those differences within the model. The significance level is thus reported in terms of a one-tailed test, except in the few instances where the difference was *not* in the predicted direction.

Using so many analyses of variance may cause some concerns regarding the total experiment-wise error rate, and justifiably. However, in a very real sense, the analysis of each item is an independent experiment in itself. Exceptions to this are the indices of the availability and adequacy measures of social support which, it is expected, will be highly correlated. The independent measures can only be viewed as constrained, or related, if the model is correct, and since that is what this study attempts to demonstrate, it cannot be assumed *a priori.*

While the contrasts are not formally weighted in mathematical terms the greatest differences are expected between the eastern groups and the control groups, and the eastern groups and the western NRM. For most measures early in the model, the therapy group is not expected to differ from the eastern NRMs, and, while a failure to reject a null hypothesis is not strong statistical support in any sense, it is an important feature of the model. Therefore, some hypotheses will address this lack of difference, and if it occurs in a context where other predicted differences are supported by the data, then *credence* will be claimed for that hypothesis, not *significanc*e.

When the more psychological variables are considered, differences will be postulated between the eastern NRMs and the therapy group. For example when the degree of personality constraint, traditionalism, and absorptive perceptual style are considered, then at this point differences *are* predicted between the therapy and the eastern NRMs and are viewed as important to the model's validation. These features, and the person's worldview, spiritual or otherwise, are the important 'later' variables of the model, in that they are assumed to direct a person (who by his or her loneliness and distress is presumed to be open to some form of involvement in a social agency) towards a uniquely spiritual kind of involvement. They are termed 'later' in recognition of Lofland and Stark's (1965) suggestion that temporal 'activation' was an important link between the different elements of the model. They are important in that they form the operational measures of the theoretical notion of Type Two Differential Openness to movement involvement and address

the question as to why a person becomes involved in one *genre* of movement rather than another.

While the therapy group is viewed as an important comparison group regarding differences between those drawn to NRMs and those drawn to a secular agency of self-change, they are expected to differ from the other two control groups in a number of important ways, regarding stress and loneliness. For this reason, the therapy group is distinguished as an 'active' control group, and will not be equated with the other control groups in the hypotheses.

Since there are two control groups in this study, a student control group and a control group representative of the general population, a comparison will be reported noting whether there is a difference between the two groups, its direction and significance level. Since there is no basis by which to hypothesise possible differences between the two, (many studies use student groups as samples and assume them to be adequately representative of the general public) this difference will not be included as part of the formal hypotheses. The sample size of the student group in some instances makes it a preferable comparison group, and so differences will be reported with respect to this group *(Control-s].* Wherever possible the General Population Control group *(Control-g]* will be used, as this group is more comparable to the experimental groups in terms of age. It will be made clear in each case between which experimental and control group a comparison is being made and consistency within each measure will be sustained.

The order of the hypotheses does not follow exactly their sequence with the introductory discussion. Of the formal measures, the traditionalism measure is considered first because it functions as a validity measure to verify the socially untypical nature of the eastern NRMs.

Before the results of the statistically analysed results are discussed, the results section will commence with a description of sample characteristics of the groups.

**HYPOTHESES**

**A) UNCONVENTIONALITY**

**I. Traditionalism**

The eastern groups are expected to be least traditional of all the groups. The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E<T<C<W**

It is suggested that the most traditional group will be the Pentecostal group [W]. The therapy group may be assumed to be questioning personal values, and searching for new understanding and new ways of coping. It is suggested that the Therapy group *[T]* will be less traditional than the Control group [C] but more traditional than the Eastern NRMs [E], who are not expected to differ from each other.

a) E<T

b) T<C

c) E<C

d) E<W

e) C<W

**B) DISRUPTION – separating people from identity-sustaining life circumstances and relationships**

*i) The Incidence and Impact of Life Events*

In terms of the incidence and impact of recent life events it is expected that the eastern groups will have the greatest incidence and impact of *distressing* life events, though a greater emotional and adjustment response even to positive events is expected and for this reason these indices are retained in this section of the results. The incidence of positive life events is discussed in the section on subsidiary hypotheses below.

Disruption is portrayed above as a necessary but not sufficient condition for change. It is expected that those approaching religious groups for the first time [E] will have experienced along with those approaching therapy [T], the greatest amount of disruption, greater than either of the Control groups [C]. There is no reason to assume that the Western NRM [W] will differ from the Control group in this regard.

With regard to the incidence of aversive life events and the impact of aversive or positive events the expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E=T>C=W**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E = T

b) E > Cs

c) E > *Cg*

d) W=C

e) *NRMs-clw > NRMS-shan.satya*

f) E > W

This predicted ordering refers to the twenty-one indices of disruption of a largely aversive nature, (bar the two indices referring to the impact of positive life experiences and positive social experiences) included in this study:

2. Total Incidence of Life Events: all categories summed.

3. Total Impact of Life Events: all categories summed.

4. Mean Impact per Life Event: all categories summed.

5. Total Incidence of Negative Life Events.

6. Total Impact of Negative Life Events.

7. Mean Impact of Negative Life Events.

8. Total Incidence of Negative Social Events.

9. Total Impact of Negative Social Events.

10. Mean Impact of Negative Social Events.

11. Total Incidence of Discontent with Personality.

12. Total Impact of Discontent with Personality.

13. Mean Impact of Discontent with Personality.

14. Total Incidence of Strain: Disappointment and enduring worry.

15. Total Impact of Strain: Disappointment and enduring worry.

16. Mean Impact of Strain: Disappointment and enduring worry.

17. Total Impact of Positive Life Events.

18. Mean Impact of Positive Life Events.

19. Total Impact of Positive Social Events.

20. Mean Impact of Positive Social Events.

**Do we bring about our own turning points in life? - Habitual Stress Response and Interpersonal Discord.**

It was suggested above that those contacting spiritual movements of· an eastern nature for the first time, and those drawn to psychotherapy may do so because they have reached a turning point in their lives. If this turning point is in part due to their habitual style of response to stress, or to a recent escalation in interpersonal discord, then it is predicted these two groups will have elevated scores on the following two measures, but will not differ from each other in terms of their habitual response to stress, and the level of interpersonal discord experienced in the recent past. If belonging to a religious community and sharing a set of beliefs which have implications for attitudes to suffering and one's fellow men and women has an ameliorating effect of stress response and interpersonal discord, then those who are members of the western NRM should score significantly lower on the following two measures than do the control groups.

For the following two measures the following group order is predicted:

E=T>C>W

The particular hypotheses derived from this group order are:

a) T = E

b) T> C

c) E > C

d) W < C

e) W <E


This ordering and hypotheses pertain to:

21. The stress index from Tellegen's (1982) MPQ

22. The incidence of interpersonal discord over 12 months.

**ii) How we respond - Styles of Emotional Response to Life Events**

Given that the scores of emotional impact are derived from the summation of eight separate indices, in Likert form, it is informative to consider the differences among the groups in terms of the profiles of characteristic experiences of emotion and disruption. It has been suggested that those drawn to NRMs have had more intense experience of life events in the recent past. The extent of their response to life events will be considered in comparison to the intensity of response to life events of members of other groups. While we will consider below a detailed breakdown of the particular emotions and adjustment reactions which occur across the groups in response to life events, it is relevant to consider first the total or cumulative response. It might be that those drawn to eastern NRMs have not experienced *each event* in a more intense manner than the other groups, but that more has happened to them in the recent past, and the cumulative impact of life events has therefore been greater. It is just this cumulative impact of all that has happened which concerns us from the point of view of the rites of passage model. It is for this reason that we will consider the overall responsiveness per impact item scale. (The interested reader is referred to the end of Appendix 5 for the impact item scales).

It is expected that those drawn to Eastern NRMs will have experienced more cumulative impact from recent life events than any other group. Since the Community of Living Waters rebirthing group specifically emphasises the ventilation of intense emotional experiences in the past

it is assumed that this group will appeal to those who have report the greatest impact of such experiences in the past. It is therefore assumed that those drawn to this group will exceed the other eastern groups on this measure. The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E>T=C=W**

The specific hypotheses following from this ordering are:

a) E>T

b) E >*Cs*

c) E>Cc

d) *Eclw > Eshan.satya*

e) E<W

**This ordering is expected to apply to the following indices:**

23. Adjustment Required

24. Mean Adjustment Required

25. Disruption Experienced

26. Mean Disruption Experienced

27. Anxiety Felt

28. Mean Anxiety Felt

29. Anger Felt

30. Mean Anger Felt

31. Upset Felt

32. Mean Upset Felt

33. Lingering Emotional Impact of the Memory

34. Mean Lingering Emotional Impact of the Memory

35. Helplessness Felt

36. Mean Helplessness Felt

37. Depression Experienced

38. Mean Depression Experienced

## C) ISOLATION AND LONELINESS

Isolation refers to not having enough people around, while loneliness refers to feeling as though the support and closeness is inadequate from those one has around.

## C i) RELATIVE ISOLATION: Availability of Acquaintances & Close

*Friends:*

Relative isolation is operationalised as the unavailability of acquaintances and intimate friends; the fewer available, the more isolated a person is assumed to be.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E=T<C<W**

Since both NRMs and therapy groups are both social options, which according to Type One Differential Openness (whereby much recent life stress experienced in social isolation is assumed to predispose a person to make contact with some kind of *social* agency), will be more appealing to isolated and lonely people, it is assumed that those approaching social agencies for help are less likely to have help available in their own social networks than are the control groups, and those who are already members of a NRM. It is hypothesised that those with least resources will be those approaching Eastern NRMs [E] and the Therapy group [T]. Since data exists for these measures of the ISSI regarding a *graduate* rebirthing group, *[NRMclw-g]* comparisons will be made between those approaching that group for the first time *[NRMclw],* and those who have recently completed three months of experience in that community. Those approaching eastern groups are predicted to have

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significantly fewer resources than the Control group [C]. If belonging to a religion does make available a social community, then the Western NRM [W] will have more resources available than the Control group.

Hypotheses referring to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E=T

b) *T<Cg*

c) E *<Cg*

d) E<W

e) Cc <W

f) *Eclw < Eclw-g*

This predicted ordering refers to the two indices of availability of social resources:

39. The Availability of Acquaintance-Level Bonds

40. The Availability of Close Bonds.

## C ii) RELATIVE LONELINESS: Adequacy of Acquaintances and Intimates

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E=T<C<W**

Those approaching social agencies for help are less likely to rate as adequate the resources in their own social networks. It is hypothesised that those with least resources are those approaching agencies of a social nature for the first time; the therapy group [T] and the eastern groups [E]. It is suggested that they will have fewer resources than the Control groups [C]. It is hypothesised that social bonds will be rated as more adequate by those already belonging to a religion [W] than by the Control group.

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E=T

b) T<C

c) E<C

d) E<W

e) C<W

f) *NRMclw < NRMclw-g*

This predicted ordering refers to the two indices of adequacy of social resources:

41. The Adequacy of Acquaintance-Level Bonds

42. The Adequacy of Close Bonds.


**D) MENTAL HEALTH**

Those approaching NRMs in some instances have been shown to have diminished resilience, with a relief effect attendant on NRM involvement. If this is so, there should be maximal suffering in those approaching NRMs and minimal suffering in those who have no need of such groups (the control groups) with the committed members being midway between.


Regarding indices of wellbeing, the expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E<T<C<W**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E<T

b) T<C

c) E<C

d) E<W

e) C<W

f) *NRMclw < NRMclw-g*

This predicted ordering refers to the two indices of wellbeing:

43. General Wellbeing: Galanter's Index.

44. Wellbeing: Tellegen's MPQ Subscale.

45. Neurotic Distress: Galanter's Index.


## E) REAWAKENING THE PAST: APPRAISAL OF PARENTS IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

It has been suggested that a high incidence of life events provokes a turning point, a rupture or disjunction in lifestyle rather than continuous adaptation, or a 'muddling through'. Ullman (1982) suggests that this is because these events reawaken memories and emotions connected with early conflicts and disruptive experiences, specifically those related to early bonding and attachment. While in optimum circumstances parental bonding provides role models for the modelling of coping styles, and, attachment figures who provide a sense of reliable alliance, protection, and self-worth, if there have been disturbances in early bonding, communication and reciprocal valuing, then an individual might be left searching for guidance and reassurance, and for someone to idealise. It is suggested that these are among the provisions supplied by religious involvement, especially *new* religions movements. If this is so, then the provisions offered will appeal as compensations for lacks felt by those drawn to the movements. Since lifetime immersion in a NRM is a more committed option than temporary involvement in psychotherapy,

it is predicted that those involved in the Western NRM will be closer to the Eastern NRM groups than the control groups on this measure, and will rate their parents more adversely than those drawn to the temporary option of psychotherapy. Since *membership* of a Western NRM may have compensated already for the lacks felt as a result of past situations, memories may be modified on the basis of the present situation from which they are recollected, (Mills, 1934). Therefore, those long-term members of the Western NRM are expected to recollect their parents as more optimal than do those making contact with Eastern NRMs.

**Members of NRMS will recollect their parents as less satisfactory**

It is therefore hypothesised that all of those drawn to NRMs, eastern and western groups respectively, will evaluate, more than any other group, their family life as having been disrupted and suboptimal. Parental appraisals will be more negative, especially in regard to the extent to which their parents approached their ideals.

It is suggested that those drawn to eastern and western NRMs will have less positive memories of both parents, and will view them as less ideal than do those involved in therapy or the control groups.

If participation in a rebirthing group has a positive effect on the ability to reappraise the past, and if it has promoted the sense of some release of emotions relating to past situations, then some relief effect will occur, and a difference in recollections will be apparent between the novice and the graduate groups *[NRMclw* and *NRMclw-g* respectively]. It is

expected that the graduate group will be more positive that the novice group.

The following hypotheses consider the retrospective positive appraisal of and satisfaction with mother and father in childhood and adolescence. The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E<W<T<C**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E < W

b) T < E

c) E <*Cg*

d) E < Cs

e) W <C

This order refers to the following eight indices of parental appraisal and satisfaction in childhood and adolescence:

**Childhood:**

46. Appraisal of Mother in Childhood.

47. Satisfaction with Mother in Childhood.

48. Appraisal of Father in Childhood.

49. Satisfaction with Father in Childhood.

**Adolescence:**

50. Appraisal of Mother in Adolescence.

51. Satisfaction with Mother in Adolescence.

52. Appraisal of Father in Adolescence.

53. Satisfaction with Father in Adolescence.

**F) SUBMISSION TO TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY:**

It might be thought that early experience of unsatisfactory parental relations might lead to involvement in religious groups with a living and immediately available leader, and that this might be an expression of the tendency for all of those approaching NRMs to be more open to the sway of *any* authority. However, there are a number of considerations which lead to a review of the postulate that these people have a generalised tendency to submit to authority. It is suggested that the Authoritarian F Scale commonly used in psychological research is based on a *traditional* conception of authority, and so, despite the obvious behavioural affiliation shown by NRM subjects in this study in the form of involvement with a charismatic group around a powerful form of authority (a spiritual leader), it is predicted that the eastern NRMs will in fact repudiate traditional conceptions of authority and will score lowest of all groups on this measure. It is predicted that the western group will score most highly of all groups on this measure, as the values expressed in the scale are deemed consonant with their spiritual worldview.

This submission is expected to be expressed in a desire to conform and oblige to what is normatively considered an unrealistic extent, but which is not out of keeping with a spiritual focus guided by spiritual aims beyond everyday ease of fulfilment. These virtues are assessed in this study as captured by Tellegen's Unlikely Virtues subscale.

The therapy group is expected to be more questioning of traditional forms of authority than the control groups, given the gestalt focus of the group which is more present oriented and focuses on responsiveness to

organismic needs rather than obedience to moral norms. These groups have not taken such an unconventional course of action as the eastern groups and are thus expected to score more highly on this measure than the eastern groups.

The expected order of the groups is as follows:
**E<T<C<W**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E < T

b) T < C

c) E < C

d) C <W

e) E < W

This order applies to the following indices:

54. The Submission to Authority Subscale of the Balanced F Scale.

55. The Unlikely Virtues Subscale of the MPQ.

## G) IMPATIENT FOR PARADISE: PERSONALITY VARIABLES INFLUENCING DIFFERENTIAL OPENNESS:

### G i) IMPULSE CONTROL: Pleasure-pain regulatory style.

### 56. Constraint

Perhaps the central feature of new religious movements of an eastern nature is their questioning of the notions that renunciation and postponement are defining features of a spiritual way of life. It is suggested that those drawn to eastern NRMs are impatient for paradise,

and that they are committed to personal change here and now. If this is so, they should appear remarkably less constrained than any other group in this study.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E<T<C<W**

Since constraint assesses an individual's approach to his/her pleasure/pain regulatory style and the degree of impulsivity, it was assumed that those involving themselves with non-traditional social agencies like Eastern NRMs would be least constrained, while those involved in the Western NRM would be most constrained. It was expected that those inclined to take action to change their way of life by becoming involved in therapy would be less constrained than the Control group, but not so unconstrained as those approaching the Eastern NRMs.

Hypotheses referring to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E < T

b) E < C

c) E <W

d) C <W


## G ii) A MYSTICAL PERCEPTUAL STYLE?

### 57. Absorption

This hypothesis concerns the extent to which those drawn to NRMs have an absorptive perceptual style, and almost mystical immersion in what is being perceived or recollected such that the awareness of separateness from the objects of perception is experienced as breaking down. Since this experience is most consonant with the eastern conception of the

divine as *immanent,* as it were "in you out there", where there is no distinction between the natural and the spiritual, and no distinction between humankind and the natural world it is expected that those drawn to Eastern NRMs will score most highly on this variable. Since the eastern conception of *advaita* and the particular items of the scale used in this study refer to possible perceptions of everyday events and objects, and not a sense of union or communication with a divine being such experiences as *walking in the spirit* or *speaking in tongues* which characterise Pentecostal groups it is assumed that the western group will not claim this perceptual style to the same extent at all. In fact such perceptions of a special personal link with the material world may be considered quite subsidiary to good works and union with god.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E>T>C>W**

It is hypothesised that those approaching Eastern NRMs, which posit a monist worldview (where there is a presumed underlying unity of perceiver and perceived) will score most highly out of all of the groups on this measure. Those approaching the therapy group (of a gestalt nature), it is hypothesised, will be less open to absorption than the eastern groups but more so than the Control group [C] as assessed by this measure. Because of the dualist focus of non-mystical offshoots of western religion, it is hypothesised that the Western NRM will score lowest of all on this variable.

The specific hypotheses relating to this variable are:

a) E > T

b) T> C

c) E > C

d) E> W

e) C >W


## H) SPIRITUAL WORLDWIEW

### 58. General Spiritual Orientation

The following hypothesis concerns the intensity of belief in the General Spiritual Items of the SOS, items which address issues central to *any* spiritual worldview, regardless of tradition or denomination.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**W = E>T= C**

Since these general spiritual items are assumed to be components of any spiritual worldview, the level of assent to them is expected to be equally high regardless of the specific orientation of the NRM. It is expected that those involved in the NRMs will have a higher level of endorsement of these items than the Therapy and Control groups.

a) W = E

b) W>C

c) E > C

d) E > T

e) T = C

f) *Eclw-g > Eclw*

## 59. Eastern Spiritual Orientation

This hypothesis addresses the intensity of belief and the orientation of that belief in terms of level of assent to items of an eastern spiritual orientation.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E>T>C>W**

Since it is suggested that an individual's pre-existing beliefs In part determine which of an array of social agencies is approached when strife occurs, it is predicted that those approaching these Eastern NRMs [E] for the first time will endorse eastern spiritual items to a greater extent than either the therapy group [T] or the Control group [C], and will certainly show a higher level of assent than the Western NRM [W].

a) E>T

b) T>C

c) E>C

d) E>W

e) C>W

f) *Eclw-g >Eclw*


## 60. Western Spiritual Orientation

This hypothesis addresses the intensity and orientation of belief as assessed by the level of assent to items of a western spiritual orientation.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**W>T>C>E**

Following the suggestion that a consonance of belief is not only a predisposition to belong to a NRM but will also characterise those

already involved, it is suggested that those members of the Western NRM will show a higher level of assent to Western spiritual tenets than any other group. Since the majority of people in Australia are Christian it is assumed that the Control group will reflect this and be more Western than the Eastern NRMs but less Western than those involved in a charismatic offshoot of Christianity. The Therapy group is expected to show greater spiritual assent than the Control group, and they are expected to be more western in orientation than the Eastern NRMs.

a) W > C

b) T> C

c) C > E

d) T> E

e) W > E

**SUBSIDIARY HYPOTHESES:**

Personality features not directly relevant to the *Rites de Passage* model

**I) LIFE-AFFIRMING EXPERIENCES**

**I i) Positive Life Events:**

The following hypotheses address the extent to which a person's sense of self worth and social identity are affirmed by life events which mark recognition or advance in work and social networks, and which permit, as do holidays, leisurely appraisal of one's life course and one's place in it. Since it has been suggested that a rite of passage has been set in motion for those contacting NRMs of an eastern nature, and to a lesser extent those drawn to psychotherapy, it is suggested that they will have had fewer positive life events regarding work and holidays, and regarding their social networks than have the control groups, though

they are not expected to differ from each other in this regard. There is no reason to expect that those who are members of a western NRM will have more positive life experiences than the control groups, so while these groups are expected to have a more positively-toned recent past than the therapy and eastern NRM groups, they are not expected to differ from each other.

For the indices of the incidence of positive life events and positive social experiences the expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E = T<C = W**

61. Total Incidence of Positive Life Experiences.

62. Total Incidence of Positive Social Experiences.

## J) ASOCIAL TRAITS

Historically precursors of movement involvement include alienation and frustrated aspirations. This study has made some attempt to assess the experiential basis for motivation to achieve a change of lifestyle. A possible operationalisation of personality dimensions which might capture these posited precursors is suggested by two subscales of Tellegen's MPQ: alienation and aggression. In this study, the motivation for change expressed in movement involvement has been viewed as resulting from a relation between recent events, (which perhaps trigger historical issues regarding bonding, attachment and self worth), response style, personal coping resources, and explanatory framework which has resulted in an existential crisis which has led the person into the first stages of a *Rite de Passage* and exploratory movement contact. Nonetheless, involvement in a NRM is not only due to parameters of a

person's recent existential situation, but also likely to be due to enduring personality traits. The role of alienation and aggression are not central to the rites of passage model, but to the extent that they may be productive of social isolation, they may characterise those approaching NRMs. Therefore it is hypothesised that those recently drawn to NRMs will score most highly of all of the groups on the two indices of alienation and aggression.

## i) Alienation

It is assumed that those drawn to eastern NRMs will be more alienated than those drawn to psychotherapy, since they are taking what may be viewed as a socially extreme affiliative course of action. Their affiliative option is highly 'alternative' given social mores regarding lifestyle and belief of the dominant 'western' culture. Psychotherapy is an option which may appeal when people feel that they cannot go on as they have before. This may refer to their appraisal of their place in personal social networks and the wider cultural milieu. If this is so, then the Therapy group will be less alienated than the Eastern NRM groups, but more so than the control groups. If being part of a group which, while innovative, is formed around beliefs and lifestyle practices which are consonant with the wider western culture, and which provides close bonds, a sense of shared beliefs, community, and affirmation of personal worth, then those who are members of the Western NRM will be less alienated than all other groups in this study.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E>T>C>W**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E > T

b) T> C

c) E > C

d) E > W

e) C > W

This ordering applies to:

63. Alienation.

## ii) Aggression

Since those drawn to eastern NRMs are expected to be less conventional and less constrained, and to more positively value intense emotional experiences, it is predicted that they will evidence more aggressive impulses than the therapy group who are expected to have become more aware of their aggressive impulses than the control groups. The western group is expected to be most inhibitive of any expression of aggression. The expected ordering is as follows:

**E>T>C>W**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E> T

b) E> C

c) C >W

d) E > W

This order applies to:

64. Aggression.

## K) SOCIAL COMPETENCY:

Is religious involvement a refuge from a hectic, committed and productive life? Or is it a retreat from life's pressures by those who are

not oriented towards achievement and social involvement anyway; is it what is colloquially termed a "cop out"? It is suggested that NRMs are temporary refuges, vantage points from which a recent and acutely-felt 'turning point' can be assessed, and possibilities for the future considered. It is therefore suggested that involvement is not necessarily the result of a lack of achievement *orientation,* but that expectations of achievement may continue undiminished in the absence of the personal resources to continue to do so. Achievement expectations in the face of extreme levels of recent life stress and a diminishment of social networks and coping resources may actually contribute to the need to abruptly change life course and move away from traditional achievement-oriented scenarios, to a different kind of achievement which is not necessarily valued in the wider culture. To the extent that people becoming actively involved in new movements are taking action rather than 'muddling through', they may see this as a way of linking up with like-minded individuals. Therefore, it cannot be assumed that they lack social potency.

It is therefore predicted that those taking action, those drawn to the NRMs and to psychotherapy will be higher in achievement and social potency than the control groups.

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**W=E=T>C**

Hypotheses referring to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) W > C

b) E> C

c) T> C

These hypotheses refer to both indices of social competence.

65. Achievement.

66. Social Potency.


## L) HABITUAL MODES OF ENGAGEMENT:

The independence of positive and negative affectivity is well established. Therefore a simple split of low scores on positive affectivity and high scores on negative affectivity is not expected to be part of the seeker profile. The rite of passage model suggests that people who feel they have lost their social context will experience their life as in a state of transition. This may also result in a discontent with personal coping style, and a loss of self-esteem. Tellegen's scale assessing negative affectivity captures the mood and trait component of negative affectivity. Have these disruptive life events taken their toll because of an habitual tendency to brood over worries and set-backs?

Are those drawn to NRMs searching for a way to change their intensity of negative engagement? Further, are these people not merely suffering from a tendency to brood and consider the dark side of life, but who are to some extent, strangers to joy, and to a rewarding style of engagement in life? Therefore, with regard to these enduring parameters it is predicted that those in therapy and approaching eastern NRMs will score most highly the negative affectivity scale and lower on the positive affectivity scale.

## i) Negative Affectivity

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E>T>C>W**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E > T

b) T> C

c) E > C

d) E > W

e) C > W

This ordering applies to the following index of strong engagement of an aversive kind.

67. Negative Affectivity: Tellegen's MPQ composite scale.


## ii) Positive Affectivity

The expected ordering of the groups is as follows:

**E<T<C<W**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E < T

b) T < C

c) E < C

d) E < W

e) C <W


This ordering applies to the following index of strong engagement of a joyous kind.

68. Positive Affectivity: Tellegen's composite scale.

**M) LOCUS OF CONTROL:**

**i) Responsibility Attributed to Oneself**

It is assumed that if those drawn to Eastern NRMs have accepted the notions of karma, then they will accept more personal responsibility for all life events than will any other group. The therapy group is expected to take more responsibility than the control groups, who are expected to take more responsibility than the western group, since the Western group may see individual responsibility as limited by, or contextualised by, the will of God.

The predicted order of the groups is as follows:

**E > T > C > W**

Hypotheses relating to specific Contrasts are as follows:

a) E > T

b) T> C

c) E> C

d) E > W

e) C > W

This ordering applies to:

69. Personal Responsibility Attributed: Total

70. Personal Responsibility Attributed: Mean


**ii) Responsibility Attributed to Others**

The attribution of responsibility to oneself or to others is not a dichotomous option. If it is to be treated as such, it might be best to anchor scales with *self* and *others* as polar opposites. Those who believe they can determine life options may also feel aware of the degree to which they are directly and indirectly affected by others. Those drawn to

Eastern NRMs are predicted to be those for who much has been occurring in life recently, particularly in terms of social networks. So, while they may be expected to embrace the notion of 'taking responsibility for one's own life' as expressed in the hybrid of eastern philosophy and thought from the Human Potential movement which informs the belief systems of many NRMs, they may also be people for whom social contacts and social influence are a highly salient dimension in the recent past.

If those drawn to Eastern NRMs believe that they are responsible for life events, it is not necessarily the case that they will exclude the influence of others from the occurrence of events in their lives. It is therefore predicted that they will see others as more responsible for life events than do the control groups and the Western NRM. Since it is likely that those drawn to therapy have experienced problematic interchanges with others, and will be alert to the influence of interpersonal relations in their lives, the Eastern NRMs are not expected to differ from the therapy group in this regard.

The predicted order of the groups is as follows:

**E > T > C > W**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E > T

b) T> C

c) E > C

d) E> W

e) C >W

This ordering applies to:

71. Responsibility Attributed to Others: Total

72. Responsibility Attributed to Others: Mean


### iii) Attributions to Chance

Given that Eastern NRMs promote a philosophy which concerns the causally interconnected nature of all events, and since it is expected in this study that those drawn to these groups already have a consonance of worldview in terms of the general parameters, it is predicted that those drawn to eastern movements will attribute less to chance than the control groups and not differ from the other groups.

The predicted order of the groups is as follows:

**E<W<T<C**

Hypotheses relating to specific contrasts are as follows:

a) E < W

b) E < T

c) T < C

d) E < C

e) W < C

This ordering refers to:

73. Attributions to Chance: Total

74. Attributions to Chance: Mean

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# Results

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### 28. Descriptive Data – an overview of sample characteristics

A survey style questionnaire with open and limited option responses was developed by the author to assess features of the subjects' early religious affiliation, the nature of the family religion(s) and the extent to which they were involved. Since Richardson (1978) characterises movement involvement as a step in what is often a long conversion career, and since Galanter, Barker and Richardson, in their numerous publications have also reported multiple involvements, questions were included about spiritual contacts of an eastern or western nature, contacts which are neither with parental religion, nor with the movements presently adhered to. Space was provided for indication of the intensity and duration of that involvement. Using these two indices of intensity and duration, for each of the items the subject was asked to indicate to what extent s/he had been involved in parental religion and spiritual groups other than the family religion such as eastern movements and western movements. Each subject was also asked about drug use history.

The *intensity of involvement* ranges provided spanned:

0= not at all

1= slightly

2= moderately

3= quite seriously

4= intensely

These categories were used for the questions regarding involvement in family religion, western and eastern spiritual groups other than the family religion and current religious affiliation, and the question regarding a history of drug involvement.

### 28.1 Sex of Participants

**TABLE 13. The sex ratios of the different groups**

| Group | N | Female | Male |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 10 | 4 |
| Control-s | 32 | 25 | 7 |
| Control-g | 16 | 11 | 5 |
| Therapy | 12 | 9 | 3 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 13 | 7 |
| NRM-E clwg | 17 | 14 | 3 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 19 | 5 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 6 | 5 |
| Total | 146 | 107 | 39 |

It can be seen from Table 13 that the sample is predominantly female, a pattern which characterises all of the groups studied. Given the almost exhaustive sampling, in that an 80% response rate was achieved, it seems that this is a reflection of group composition rather than

differential willingness to fill out a three hour questionnaire, or differential rapport with a female researcher.

## 28.2 Age

**TABLE 14. The average age and range of ages of those involved in the different groups**

| Group | N | Mean Age | Range |
|-------|-----|----------|-------|
| NRM-w | 14 | 29 | 20-43 |
| Control-s | 32 | 19 | 17-32 |
| Control-g | 16 | 30 | 20-53 |
| Therapy | 12 | 37 | 21-49 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 36 | 24-54 |
| NRM-E clwg | 17 | 36 | 24-54 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 33 | 18-65 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 28 | 23-36 |

It can be seen from Table 14 that apart from the relatively young student control group, (which must occur in all studies using first year psychology students as a control), the other groups are comparable in average age, and comparable in age range.

The involvement of older people, (predominantly women) in the therapy and NRM groups is interesting in the light of historical literature which makes much of adolescent conversion.

## 28.3 Marital Status

**TABLE 15. Marital status of the different groups**

| Group | N | Single [%] | Married [%] | Separated |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 43 | 57 | 0 |
| Control-s | 32 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Control-g | 16 | 50 | 44 | 6 |
| Therapy | 12 | 33 | 50 | 17 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 60 | 15 | 25 |
| NRM-E clwg | 17 | 41 | 18 | 41 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 61 | 17 | 22 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 73 | 9 | 18 |

It was evident from Table 14 that the student group are very young, and so their single status, revealed in Table 15, is unsurprising. Given the comparability of the other groups in terms of age, an interesting pattern emerges. The therapy group has a similar percentage married to the western religious group, but a higher percentage is separated. There is an extremely high incidence of separated people drawn to the eastern groups, with very few being married. These people are without significant others in their life, as *defacto* was considered an equivalent status to marriage for the purpose of this study.

## 28.4 Parental Religion

**TABLE 16. Incidence of different maternal and paternal religious affiliation in the family environment**

| Group | N | Dual Parental Religion [%] |
|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 21 |
| Control-s | 32 | 21 |
| Control-g | 16 | 25 |
| Therapy | 12 | 50 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 30 |
| NRM–E clwg | 17 | 29 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 18 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 18 |

Since Barker (1981) found that more cult members came from dual religion families, data was gathered for the groups in this study. The most striking difference apparent from Table 16 is in the high percentage of the therapy group who have come from dual religion homes. This did not prevent them from an intense involvement in their family religion, as their intense adolescent commitment to parental religion evidences.

However, having witnessed divided parental commitment, any one religion might have been seen as offering one of a variety of perspectives on life, rather than promulgating in them an unquestioning denominational loyalty. Subsequently therapy might be viewed as a viable option which does not conflict with a unitary family perspective.
The small sample size makes this at best, suggestive evidence. For the rebirthing and yoga groups (*NRM–E clw* and *NRM–E satya* respectively)

there is also a high incidence of dual religion in the home. The Shan Theosophist group appears to be the exception among the eastern NRMs, coming from family homes which, having a greater percentage than the control and western groups coming from families with a unitary religious affiliation.

**TABLE 17. Parental religion: duration & intensity of involvement**

| Group | N | Age of Involvement Cessation [average] | Childhood Intensity [average] | Adolescent Intensity [average] |
|-------|---|----------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| NRM-w | 14 | 12 | 1.6 | 0.64 |
| Control-s | 32 | 12 | 1.6 | 1.3 |
| Control-g | 4 | 15 | 2 | 1.2 |
| Therapy | 10 | 19 | 1.9 | 2.1 |
| NRM–E clw | 16 | 27 | 2.3 | 2.2 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 18 | 1.7 | 1.4 |
| NRM–E shan | 9 | 17.8 | 1.9 | 1 |

**N.B. The intensity of involvement ranges from:**
**0= not at all**
**1= slightly**
**2= moderately**
**3= quite seriously**
**4= intensely**

Despite the fact that all but one of the subjects in this study come from family backgrounds of a western orientation, for example: Catholic, Church of England, Jewish and Greek Orthodox, there is a definite predominance of prolonged involvement in family religion on the part of those drawn to eastern NRMs and the therapy group apparent from Table 17. There is not so prominent a difference in terms of childhood intensity of involvement, as rated in retrospect, but there is an increased

intensity apparent in their assessment of their adolescent intensity of involvement.

The western NRM has a definite lack of intensity of involvement at adolescence in the parental religion, suggesting that for some their involvement fell away from the religion into which they were primarily socialised. Given the fact that some of the group has been involved in their new western group for 23 years this lack of involvement in the parental religion might be indicative of their adolescent conversion to Pentecostalism. Adolescent intensity of involvement is especially high for the rebirthing group (*NRM–E clw*) and the therapy group.

## 28.5 Alternative Involvements

**TABLE 18. Involvement in Western Religious groups other than Family or Current Religion**

| Group | N | Western Involvement [%] | Moderate-intense [%] | Mean Duration [years] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 29 | 64 | 7 |
| Control-s | 32 | 31 | 19 | 2 |
| Control-g | 4 | 25 | 40 | 6* |
| Therapy | 10 | 60 | 60 | 9# |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 18 | 6 | 2 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 33 | 21 | 4+ |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 73 | 73 | 2+ |

**\* this is based on one subject**

**# this does not include three subjects who are still involved.**

**+ (in each case) this does not include one subject who is still involved.**

It is apparent from Table 18 that a surprising number of the Shan group have become involved, and with intensity, with western-style religions other than their family affiliations, more than the Pentecostal group, and a similar number to the therapy group. The other two eastern groups do not seem to have had much contact with western NRMs, and those who have tend not to rate that involvement as being moderate or intense, with only a few having contact of any duration. Bar the Shan Theosophist group, which had a higher percentage coming from homes where there was a unitary parental religious affiliation, the eastern groups have had less contact with western spiritual groups than have the control groups.

**TABLE 19. Involvement in Eastern Spiritual Movements other than the current involvement**

| Group | N | Eastern Involvement [%] | Moderate-intense [%] | Mean Duration [years] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 14 | 0 | 3 |
| Control-s | 32 | 6 | 0 | 1 |
| Control-g | 4 | 25 | 0 | 1 |
| Therapy | 10 | 30 | 30 | 7 |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 41 | 12 | 2 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 63 | 29 | 2 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 64 | 9 | 2* |

**\* this is based on one subject**

The pattern of involvement changes dramatically across the groups when eastern movements are considered. It can be seen from Table 19 that flirtation with eastern options is far less common among the western and control groups, none of any intensity, and on average for a

shorter duration when it does occur. There seems to be little interest in contact with these movements among these groups. The involvement of the therapy group is half as great as it was for western spiritual movements, though those who did get involved seemed as likely to find that contact moderately or intensely involving and the mean duration of that contact is high at 7 years. Those affiliating with the eastern groups for the first time in this study, nonetheless seem to have a history of contact with these movements, and, comparing the involvement rates across tables 6.8 and 6.9, that involvement seems to have been largely with groups of an eastern orientation, with only the Shan Theosophist group showing a behavioural eclecticism. A close look at the data, revealed one out of each group (*NRM–E clw, NRM–E shan*, *NRM–E satya*) to have had 4 such contacts in the past, and two subjects in the rebirthing group (*NRM–E clw*) to have had two and three contacts respectively.

There is definite support for seekership here in the serial involvements apparent. Note however, that few of the contacts are reported to have been in the moderate to intense range. It seems they are still uncommitted, still seekers.

## 28.6 Separation Difficulties

**TABLE 20. Percentage reporting sadness in adolescence at the demise of relationships**

| Group | N | Sadness at Relationship Demise [%] |
|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 50 |
| Control-s | 32 | 75 |
| Control-g | 4 | 75 |
| Therapy | 10 | 40 |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 47 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 63 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 64 |

From Table 20 it is apparent the control groups avow more sadness during adolescence than the other groups. In the student sample this may be because of the freshness of the memories, considering many are still adolescent. Two of the eastern groups have a high proportion acknowledging sadness, the exception being the rebirthing group. It was thought that if these people had experienced the early loss of significant others, which might leave them searching for a substitute model for help and guidance, they might evidence more separation anxiety as a result of the breakup of significant relationships in later years. They are not distinct from the control groups on this measure.

**TABLE 21. Percentage avowing sadness at relationship demise at the time of this study**

| Group | N | Sadness at Relationship Demise [%] |
|-------|---|-----------------------------------|
| NRM-w | 14 | 50 |
| Control-s | 32 | 60 |
| Control-g | 4 | 50 |
| Therapy | 10 | 70 |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 47 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 58 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 82 |

The most striking difference between Table 20 and Table 21 is the increase on the part of the therapy group in the acknowledgement of sadness at current relationship breakups, and an increase in the $NRM-E\text{-}shan$ group's acknowledgement of this. The remainder of the groups have similar percentages avowing sadness.

## 28.7 The Need for Guidance

**TABLE 22. Percentage expressing difficulty in evaluating different viewpoints**

| Group | N | Difficulty in critically evaluating different viewpoints [%] |
|-------|---|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| NRM-w | 14 | 7 |
| Control-s | 32 | 43 |
| Control-g | 4 | 25 |
| Therapy | 10 | 20 |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 35 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 37 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 45 |

From Table 22 it is apparent that the group expressing the greatest difficulty with evaluating different viewpoints is the eastern NRM which is an eclectic theosophist group, the Shan group (*NRM–E shan*) which evidences a frequency of expressed difficulty with evaluation of different viewpoints similar to that of the student group.

The Shan group had a high proportion coming from households where the parent shared their religious affiliation. The students' difficulty may in part derive from the fact that they are evaluated for their capacity to do so. The general population control group, the Pentecostal group and the therapy group have few members who suggest this is an area of difficulty for them. Higher frequencies occur in the eastern groups, especially the Shan group (*NRM–E shan*). If it were the case that religion were a flight from having to take a critical stance on a complex array of life events, a pattern of a great amount of difficulty would be expected for those drawn but not yet members, and a low level of difficulty for those who have a consensually agreed upon interpretive perspective. The data do seem to support this interpretation, especially the extremely low incidence of difficulty for the western religious members.

**TABLE 23. Percentage Expressing a Desire for finding a Leader (Discrepancy between desire and actuality)**

| Group | N | Desire for a leader [%] | Leader already found [%] |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 71 | 71 |
| Control-s | 32 | 63 | 41 |
| Control-g | 4 | 25 | 0 |
| Therapy | 10 | 40 | 30 |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 47 | 24 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 54 | 25 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 55 | 55 |

If religious affiliation is not merely concerned with having a belief system but in having a leader as a source of guidance, it was expected that the religiously inclined people (as reflected in their patterns of affiliation) would have a higher desire to find a leader. In fact there is from Table 23, a high percentage of people expressing the wish to find a leader in all groups, bar the tiny general population group. However, if we look at how satisfied that wish is, by comparing frequencies across groups of those who have found a leader, the eastern groups stand out remarkably in this regard, bar the Shan group who are already members, and who have their female leader who is perhaps whom they refer to here. Note that the students are also vulnerable in this regard though the discrepancy between wish and reality is not so great for them.

**TABLE 24. Drug Use History: intensity and duration of involvement**

| Group | N | Drug Use [%] | Moderate Intense [%] | Mean Duration [years] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 21 | 14 | 4 |
| Control-s | 32 | 25 | 13 | 2 |
| Control-g | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Therapy | 10 | 30 | 20 | 2 |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 6 | 6 | 4* |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 54 | 17 | 2 |
| NRM–E shan | 11 | 36 | 29 | 5 |

From Table 24 it seems that there is a higher frequency of involvement with drugs for two of the eastern groups and the therapy group than for the control groups and the western NRM and an elevated intensity and duration of involvement. There is not evidence that religion truly is the opium of the people, but there is confirmation of Bird and Reimer's (1982) and Buckley and Galanter's (1979) findings of an elevated level of drug use in the history of at least some of those drawn to NRMs, only those of an eastern variety here. Further, it seems to be a feature of those drawn to therapy as well. While similar numbers experimented with drugs for the western group and with the same intensity as the student group, the duration of involvement is longer.

The therapy group shows a slightly elevated level and intensity of involvement, though the average duration for those who did get involved is similar to the student group.

# Results – Testing the Rites de Passage Model

## Personality Attributes that predispose people to involvement in New Religious Movements

### 29. UNCONVENTIONALITY

I suggested above that the more orthodox beliefs and practices of the Christian church were by many no longer seen as timely messages: that there has been a disaffection with the spiritual orthodoxy in the West, a failure of traditional Christian beliefs to meet modern needs. There are twin themes here of a movement away from Western beliefs and a more individual and present-oriented spirituality where postponement and renunciation are less valued. I assumed that those drawn to NRMs would be *impatient for paradise*, would endorse spontaneity rather than control, an existential 'here and now' orientation rather than a postponement for the future, the positive valuation of non-possessive sexuality. In short people whose beliefs are at odds with conventional aspirations and values. Given that NRMs have been portrayed as 'encapsulated critiques of convention' (Beckford, 1979) and are often unorthodox in so far as they have communal living arrangements, a pooling of labour and resources, and labour which does not receive individual monetary reward, they may be expected to attract people who are less traditional than the general community. This would be especially true of NRMs of an Eastern orientation rather than charismatic offshoots of Western religions like Pentecostalism, where the doctrinal innovation responsible for their new religious status is

likely to leave the foundation of traditional values consonant with those of the wider community, and perhaps more intensely endorsed.

Tellegen's (1982) Traditionalism subscale of the MPQ assesses the degree to which an individual endorses high moral standards, supports traditional religious values and institutions, condemns selfish disregard of others, and deplores permissiveness.

I suggested that those approaching Eastern NRMs may be open to critiques of convention, and searching for new ways of viewing their lives. I hypothesised that they would be less traditional than the control group. Those approaching secular social agencies of personal change, in this instance the therapy group, are also considered likely to be questioning of traditional values and lifestyle, and therefore less traditional than the control group. They are expected to be more traditional than those drawn to the eastern groups since therapy is perhaps a more conventional and positively socially sanctioned involvement option, and more acceptable to conventional individuals. While the Western group is a new religious movement, they were expected to be the most traditional group in the light of the content of the scale which assesses familial values akin to Christian values.

# TABLE 25. TRADITIONALISM

Are those drawn to new religious movements already less traditional?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: E < T < C-g < C-s < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 19.5 | 4.39 |
| Control-s | 39 | 14.03 | 26.9 |
| Control-g | 17 | 13.71 | 41.38 |
| Therapy | 10 | 11.8 | 36.16 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 4.95 | 24.95 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 9.73 | 14.2 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 12.92 | 11.58 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 1.21 | 0 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 57.04 | 2.38 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 22.87 | 0.95 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 262.51 | 10.94 | .0001 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 1179.47 | 49.15 | .0001 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 257.74 | 10.74 | .001 |
| error | 135 | 24.00 | | |
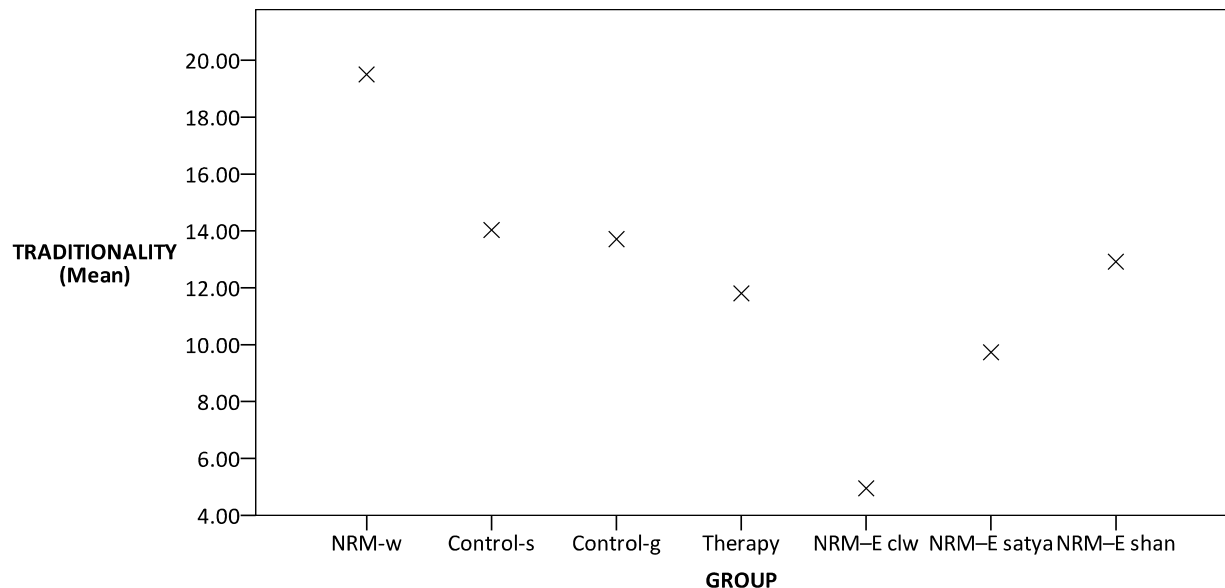
**Figure 5. LEVELS OF TRADITIONALISM**

From Table 25 it is apparent that the student group did not differ from the general population on this measure. The revolutions of the 1960s are not even in memory for these subjects. The eastern NRMs are not significantly less traditional than the therapy group, so hypothesis 1 a) is unsupported. It seems that each are questioning to a similar extent traditional values, and emerge as non-normative in this regard. The therapy group is not significantly less traditional than the student controls (Therapy = 11.80, *Control-g* =13.71, p<.05), which provides no support for hypothesis 1 b), although the difference was in the predicted direction. As predicted the Eastern NRMs are significantly less traditional than either the student control group (which does not differ significantly from the general population control) or the Western NRM (*NRMs-E* = 9.20, *Control-g* = 13.71; p<.0001) which provides support for hypothesis 1 c).

Despite their new religious status the Western NRM is a highly traditional group, at least as assessed by the traditionalism subscale

from Tellegen's MPQ. From Table 25 it is apparent that the Western NRM is the most traditional of all of the groups (mean $NRM\text{-}w$ =19.50). The lack of individual variation in this regard is reflected in the small variance (4.39) and suggests an homogeneity of attitude in this regard. The western group is significantly more Traditional than the eastern groups (p<.0001) which provides strong support for hypothesis 1 d), and are traditional than the general control group (mean *Control-g* = 13.71, p<.0001) which is a relatively traditional group, a difference which provides strong support for hypothesis 1 e).

There are some differences among the eastern groups on this measure which could not have been predicted. The therapy group mean (XT=11.80) is similar to but less than the theosophical eastern group mean, which is considerably higher than the other eastern group means (*NRM–E shan* =12.92). There was no a priori reason to single out the theosophical group from the other two eastern groups as the most traditional group, but it IS important to acknowledge inter-group differences, to prevent the indiscriminate grouping of different NRMs.

Combining the eastern groups masks a further difference between the residential (*NRM–E clw*) and non-residential (*NRM–E satya*) Eastern NRMs. The residential rebirthing group, *NRM–E clw* is the least traditional group of all (which is quite apparent from Figure 5), and, as data snooping using Scheffe's analysis revealed, is significantly less traditional than the weekend workshop group *NRM–E satya* (X *NRM–E clw* =4.95 cf. X *NRM–E satya* =9.73, p<.001). The larger variance for *NRM–E clw* suggests less homogeneity of attitude than is the case for

the Eastern *NRM–E satya* where the variance is smaller than the therapy and control groups.

Ideally, the distinctions could have been retained among the eastern groups, with this measure, as there are significant differences among the groups themselves. The *NRM–E satya* and the *NRM–E clw* are quite untraditional groups, but the theosophical group (*NRM–E shan*) is quite comparable to the therapy group, though still distinct from the control groups. Eastern movements vary in level of traditionalism as assessed by questions regarding their attitudes to traditional religions and family values.

**Recap of the Rites de Passage model:**

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*The Rites de passage* model is made up of three rites:

**Phase One***: Separation* - from a role previously held in society

**Phase Two:** *Transition* - a liminal state, where one is not what one was - nor yet what one will become - a point of great ritual and ceremony

**Phase Three:** *Reincorporation* - the reintegration of the person into his/her new role in the community, often with new name, and certainly with a new set of expectations and contingencies operative.

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**30. Phase one: Separation from previous roles - DISRUPTION**

The following tables consider in detail some of the responses to the *recent life event inventory*, singling out for special attention those items which are directly pertinent to the *Rites de Passage* model. While the

results section is not the place for detailed interpretation of results, because of the isolated form of some of the items, some background detail will be provided where appropriate concerning the findings of other researchers, to detail the ways in which this sample differs from others dealt with in the literature.

The sample sizes for the different groups are not constant, as they pertain to different measures, some of which were developed later in the course of the study.

## 30.1 Descriptive Indices of Recent Disruption

**TABLE 26. Recent Loss of Partners, Friends and Significant Others**

| Group | N | DEATH Sig. O_R [%] | PARTNER LOSS [%] | FRIEND LOSS [%] |
|-------|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| NRM-w | 14 | 7 | 21 | 50 |
| Control-s | 35 | 3 | 11 | 49 |
| Control-g | 12 | 17 | 16 | 33 |
| Therapy | 11 | 0 | 18 | 27 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 0 | 46 | 46 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 0 | 38 | 50 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 0 | 30 | 40 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 10 | 40 | 50 |

From Table 26 it is apparent that the descriptive data detailing the recent incidence of loss of partners, friends and significant others in the last 12 months indicates that those drawn to the eastern NRMs are not distinguished from the other groups by a higher incidence of recent bereavement, nor by a higher incidence of a recent loss of close friends,

as all groups seem to experience a high incidence of such separations. The student group of first year students contains many who have just left their old social networks, and perhaps their home town. However, the eastern affiliates are remarkably distinct in terms of the recent loss of significant others, revealed in the recent high incidence of separation, divorce or breakup with their de facto or spouse. Such separation occurred, on average, for twice as many eastern affiliates (NRMs-E= 39%) in the last twelve months as for those in the next highest group (NRMw= 21 %), and three times as much for the student group who were least represented in this category (Controls= 11%).

Interestingly, those who are over-represented in the category of having lost a significant other and with it an intimate relationship, are also those who express the most discontent with their personality and coping style. The items, which were added by the author to assess qualitatively areas of felt difficulty for the eastern NRMs in comparison to the other groups, are discussed below in detail.

**TABLE 27. Discontent with Coping Style and Personality in last 12 months**

| Group | N | CHANGE-P [%] | XS-WORRY [%] | LACK [%] | COPING [%] | SOLITARY [%] | ODD [%] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 57 | 14 | 14 | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Control-s | 35 | 20 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 9 | 11 |
| Control-g | 12 | 33 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 0 | 8 |
| Therapy | 11 | 18 | 18 | 0 | 18 | 9 | 27 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 62 | 46 | 38 | 31 | 38 | 23 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 69 | 38 | 38 | 44 | 25 | 13 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 32 | 12 | 24 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 |

**KEY:**
**CHANGE-P: Desire to make major personality changes**
**XS-WORRY: Felt as though spent too much time worrying**
**LACK: Felt there was something unnameable lacking in life**
**COPING: Felt anxious over how something was dealt with**
**SOLITARY: Had a problem and no-one appropriate to turn to**
**ODD: Recently having felt the odd person out in a previously close group.**

Table 27 covers the individual items which were added by the author of this study which were highly revealing of differential degrees of personality discontent across the groups. Those drawn to rebirthing are disproportionately represented in the category of those characterised by the felt need to have major changes occur in their personality. These groups have the highest percentage of members expressing this need, and it is as true of the graduate group *NRM-E clwg* = 69%) as it is of the novice rebirthing group (*NRM-E clw*= 62%). Those who already belong to a religious group, the western NRM, also have a distinctively high percentage of members who express this concern, (*NRM-w* = 57%). It is not possible to say whether this is due to high personal expectations and

self-monitoring or due to life difficulties which are perceived to be personality-related. The western group is not highly represented on any other measure regarding discontent with personality, unlike the eastern rebirthing groups whose high representation on this felt difficulty also characterises their degree of representation relative to other groups on the other items.

While it is tempting to draw a link between loss of an intimate relationship and the representation of a group in the category expressing personality discontent, it is not possible to generalise about the eastern groups on these descriptive measures, as the yoga group (*NRM–E satya*) and the theosophist group (*NRM–E shan*) have experienced as much interpersonal loss as the other groups, but have not the same level of personal doubt, unease and questioning regarding coping style, and social appropriateness. A reasonable number of the yoga group (32%) feel they would like to change major aspects of their personality, but in this they are similar to the control group 33% of whom have the same need. Affiliates of the yoga group are more likely than the general control group, to express feeling that there is something lacking in life which they cannot name than the control group, but fewer have experienced anxiety at how they dealt with a recent event, or the sensation of suddenly feeling the 'odd person out' in a group they are normally comfortable with. The theosophist group is uniformly low on all these items. The biggest difference among any of the groups in terms of personality discontent seems to lie with the rebirthing groups. The only measure of personality discontent where these groups are not the most represented groups is the item regarding

having felt the odd person out. This item is the only one on which the therapy group is over-represented relative to the control groups, to a greater extent than the eastern (rebirthing) affiliates. It seems that these items are important in the way they separate the rebirthing groups from the other groups, bar a high incidence of a desire for personality change from the western affiliates and a high incidence of a sudden sense of social misplacement on the part of the therapy group.

**TABLE 28. Disappointments, continuous worry and unemployment in the last 12 months**

| Group | N | DISAPPOINTMENTS [%] | CONTINUOUS WORRY [%] | UNEMPLOYMENT [%] |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 14 | 0 | 21 |
| Control-s | 35 | 14 | 6 | 20 |
| Control-g | 12 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Therapy | 11 | 9 | 9 | 9 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 23 | 23 | 31 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 19 | 6 | 38 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 4 | 4 | 28 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 |

If we look at the items in Table 28 which are indicative of life factors productive of enduring strain such as unemployment, it is apparent that the eastern groups are clearly separated from the other groups and are over-represented on this item. Thirty-four percent had experienced unemployment in the last twelve months, four times as many as the general population control group and therapy group and just less than twice as many as the student group and the western new religious movement. They are not merely having interpersonal difficulties, which

in the rebirthing groups are compounded with self-doubt, but the material basis for their participation in society has been shaken. A picture of their recent marginality begins to emerge here. A number of the groups have a similar incidence of disappointment in the last 12 months, though the rebirthing groups are somewhat high, and the yoga group conspicuously low among the eastern groups. In terms of continuous worry, the novice rebirthing group is uniquely singled out as having a high incidence of this form of stress.

This descriptive outline of specific life events is an attempt to address those life events which demarcated the eastern affiliates from the other groups, and which address issues important to the rites of passage model. Included in Table 29 are items which also distinguished these groups, but which are related to recent disruptive changes in life circumstances and provide support for the affiliates' putatively transitional status. These items address recent changes in living and working arrangements, the commencement of a new relationship and the persistence of financial difficulties. Two of these items involve quite basic needs: for shelter, and a sense of security in terms of financial participation in society. The new job and new relationship challenge the extent to which a person can present themselves in new situations without the comfort of familiarity, and is likely to present an at least minor challenge to a person's confidence.

**TABLE 29. Continual Financial Worry and Changes in Living Space, Partner and Job**

| Group | N | MOVING HOUSE [%] | NEW JOB [%] | NEW RELATIONSHIP [%] | CONTINUAL FINANCIAL WORRY [%] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 21 | 7 | 14 | 7 |
| Control-s | 35 | 9 | 17 | 11 | 9 |
| Control-g | 12 | 0 | 17 | 25 | 17 |
| Therapy | 11 | 27 | 9 | 9 | 36 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 38 | 31 | 31 | 23 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 69 | 31 | 19 | 13 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 44 | 24 | 28 | 12 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 50 | 10 | 40 | 10 |

While it was expected that the graduate rebirthing group would have 'moved house' as part of their involvement in the group, this does not explain the high incidence apparent from Table 29 of relocation which characterises the other three eastern groups: the average percentage of those who have moved in the last 12 months of all four being 40%. This is an extremely high rate of relocation, twice as high as the western NRM, and 13% higher than the therapy group which is the group with the next highest incidence. It seems that those drawn to eastern NRMs have recently been somewhat nomadic, especially in comparison to the rather stable individuals in the control groups. The yoga group and the rebirthing groups are both characterised by many of the affiliates having recently changed job. The rebirthing groups have almost twice as many people having changed jobs than the control groups.

It seems that while the eastern affiliate groups have a high incidence of recent rupture in love relationships, they also have the highest

percentages of those having become involved in new relationships. The graduate rebirthing group has a diminished percentage involved in a new relationship, relative to the other eastern groups and to the general control group, which may be due to the residential 'holding environment' formed by the intensive course this group has recently completed. It is the therapy group which is markedly lower on this item: very few have just begun new relationships, and, as we saw from the descriptive outline of subject characteristics, many of them are single.

The therapy group emerges as under most strain in terms of enduring financial worry. The other eastern groups do not seem to have this difficulty, bar the novice rebirthing group which is likely to have recently faced the considerable outlay for the residential course on which they are embarking.

It seems then, that those drawn to NRMs of an eastern nature have experienced many disruptive life events which are likely to produce a sense of being in transition regarding: basic supports, their involvement in the labour market and financial security, which form important anchors of a sense of identity and personal competence. They are quite consistently demarcated from the other groups.

Having looked at the descriptive indices of their existential life situation with items which capture the recent texture of the daily lives of those drawn to NRMs, it is now appropriate to consider more quantitative analyses of the incidence and impact of life events, in total, and divided into categories which not only capture the positive or negative valence

of what is occurring for them, but also the source of the recent character, be it social and therefore also influencing the quality of support available in their networks, or connected with other life features regarding unemployment, illness, holidays and changes in work status.

The contrasts which are of primary interest for this study refer to the differences between those drawn to eastern NRMs and the control groups. In some instances, the difference between the eastern groups and the therapy group will also be expected to attain significance. All of the groups are placed in an expected order for completeness, but the significances tested between the therapy group and the control groups, and those between the western group and the control groups are of subsidiary interest. The unabashed focus of this study is on those who, there is reason to believe, might have recently embarked on a rite of passage, which has resulted in preliminary contact being made with new religious groups. Whether participation in religious groups actually does satisfy the needs and motives which draw people within their ambit is in a very real sense beside the point. Thus the differences between the western group and the control groups are largely exploratory considerations regarding a possible relief effect of religious participation. They can only be exploratory because they concern cross-sectional data rather than monitoring individual change through time, and because, between-group comparisons comparing members to affiliates also traverses western and eastern spiritual orientation. Where such data exists, comparisons will be made between the novice and graduate eastern rebirthing groups. This is also cross-sectional data concerning

different groups of individuals at different points in their involvement, but both have affiliation to the same eastern group.

The therapy group was included as an example of a secular social agency which provides an agenda which some researchers have compared to the agenda of NRMs. The therapy group, as an active control group, (since whatever members distress they have not been drawn to a NRM), permits comparisons to be made between those who are distressed and involved in a secular option, and those who are distressed and spiritually involved. In keeping with the value-added form of the model, there are some measures and contrasts where no difference is expected. It is acknowledged that the failure to find a significant difference is not strong support statistically. The researcher relies on the apposite prediction of when a difference will or will not be significant, to convince the reader that the discovered pattern of differences fulfil the cornerstone predictions of the model. Even if subsidiary differences like the relative standing of therapy group to the control groups, or the western group to the control groups are not significant, the model is supported as long as the eastern groups differ from the control groups, and (in all but parental appraisal and the general spiritual belief items) from the western group. In this way the skeletal model is fleshed out with empirical detail.

For each table of results, the predicted order of the group means, and the order which empirically occurred will be inserted at the top of the table, to facilitate comparisons between hypotheses and results. Since there was no a priori reason to expect a difference between the two

different control groups there will be no distinction between the student control group (Cs) and the general control group (Cg ) in the predicted ordering of the groups, but a distinction will be made where these two differ in the empirically discovered ordering. The empirical ordering merely refers to apparent differences in group means, and does not imply that the differences are significant. If there are eight groups, there are eight factorial (8!) orderings of those groups. The chance of predicting the actual ordering on the basis of chance alone is thus I in 40320, which is .00002. Given that no distinctions are being made between the control groups and that in most instances the eastern groups are being treated as one group, there are functionally four groups, in which case there is a one in 24 chance of predicting the correct ordering (.04) on the basis of chance alone. In those instances where a distinction is drawn between the rebirthing eastern groups and the other eastern groups, there are effectively five groups, and the chance of predicting the correct ordering by chance is .008. Therefore, independently of the significance of the differences between the groups, if the *Rites de Passage Model* facilitates the correct prediction of group order in terms of mean scores, there is some evidence provided for that model.

The following statistics are t-tests generated by the ONEWAY programme of the SPSS-X which permits the a priori selection of contrasts from an ANOVA analysis.

# TABLE 30. TOTAL INCIDENCE OF LIFE EVENTS

Have more life events recently occurred to those drawn to NRMs?

PREDICTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > C-s > T > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 6.64 | 3.34 |
| *Control-s* | 35 | 7.29 | 3.67 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 6.17 | 2.37 |
| *Therapy* | 11 | 7.18 | 3.37 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 13 | 12.69 | 7.02 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 9.63 | 3.76 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 25 | 7.8 | 3.73 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 8.6 | 6.04 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy vs NRMs-E* | 9.99 | 5.04 | 1.98 | .05 |
| *Control-s vs NRMs-E* | 9.57 | 3.88 | 2.47 | .01 |
| *Control-g vs NRMs-E* | 14.05 | 4.04 | 3.47 | .0005 |
| *Control-g vs Therapy* | 0.47 | 1.12 | 0.42 | ns |
| *NRM-w vs Control-g* | 1.02 | 1.22 | 0.83 | ns |
| *NRM-E clw vs NRM-E shan-satya* | 5.92 | 2.98 | 1.98 | .025 |
| *NRM-w vs NRMs-E* | 12.15 | 4.65 | 2.61 | .01 |
| df | 128 | | | |

The most important hypotheses are strongly supported by these data. From Table 30 and Figure 6 it can be seen that the eastern groups emerge as having recently endured significantly more disruption than any other group. The general control group and the therapy group are, like the western NRM, sheltered relative to the eastern affiliates which form the focus of the study.
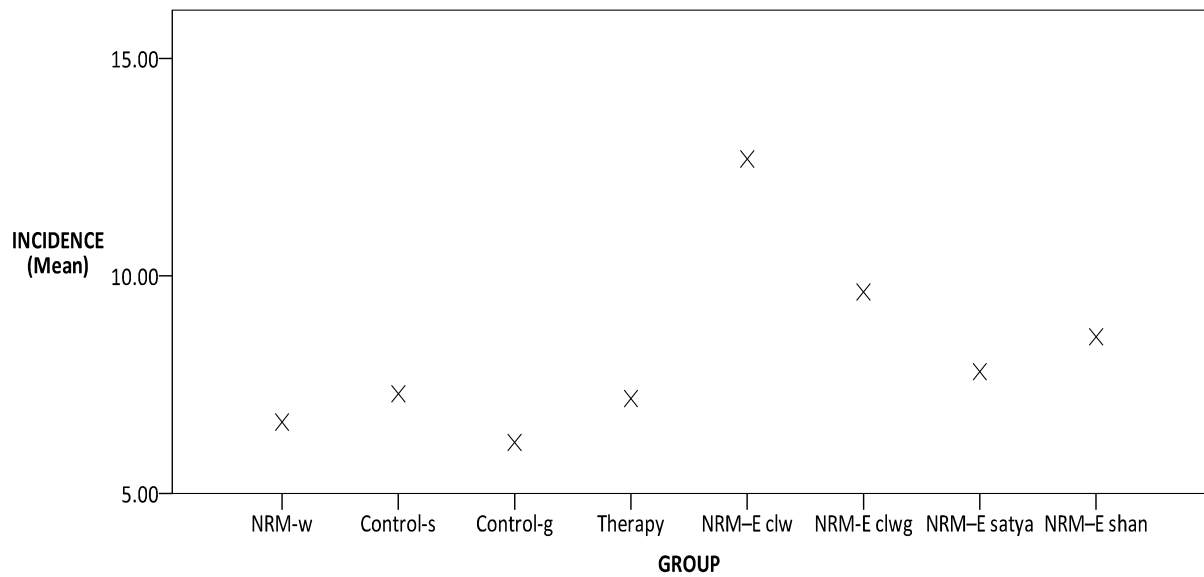
**Figure 6. TOTAL INCIDENCE OF LIFE EVENTS**

There was an unexpected difference between the therapy group and the eastern groups in that the eastern groups had a higher number of recent life events in the last 12 months (p<.05), which does not support hypothesis 2 a) which predicted no difference in incidence. There is strong support for hypothesis 2 b) in that the eastern NRMs have had significantly more recent life events than the student control group (*Control-s*, p<.01), and significantly more than the general population (*Control-g*, p<.0005) which supports hypothesis 2 c). As expected there is no difference between the western NRM and the general population control group, lending credence to hypothesis 2 d). There is reason to believe that the rebirthing groups who have taken three months out of their normal lifestyle to 'work on themselves' would have experienced more extreme levels of disruption in the recent past. Therefore, in hypothesis 2 e) they are compared to the other two eastern groups, and the difference is significant (p<.025): the rebirthing groups have had

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significantly more life events occur to them in the last 12 months than the other two eastern NRMs. This is especially true of the novice rebirthing group (*NRM-E clw* = 12.69), although the graduate group (*NRM-E clw* = 9.63) also has an elevated incidence of recent life events relative to the control groups.

Since the more subtle indicators of the eastern groups' different and more transitional status in terms of the rigours of enduring many life events have been significant, namely the differences between the eastern groups and the therapy and control groups respectively, it is not surprising that the difference predicted between the eastern groups and the western group in hypothesis 2 f) is also highly significant (p<.01). The eastern groups have, on average ($X_e$ = 9.68) a significantly higher incidence of life events than the western NRM ($NRM_w$ = 6.64). The major predictions of the model are supported by this measure, and a difference was found which suggests that those drawn to religions have an elevated level of life-event incidence over and above the experiences of the therapy group.

It is all very well to consider the relative incidence of life events, but, as was discussed above, the literature on stress suggests an imperfect relationship between the *sheer number* of events, and the *detrimental impact* of those events. It was with this issue in mind that measures were taken to assess the subjective level of impact experienced by the different individuals. We will now consider the relative psychological impact of events in terms of the total impact experienced. This measure does not distinguish between elevated impact of events due to an

increased reaction per event, or due to an increased level of subjective wear and tear as a result of the cumulative impact of a higher incidence of life events. The following scores represent the summation of eight impact items (discussed in detail in Chapter Five) which relate to the emotions felt, the degree of adjustment and disruption attendant on the occurrence of a particular event, and the degree to which the memory of the event has a lingering emotional impact.

These items are highly inter-correlated, and therefore their summation is justified. The correlation table below displays the inter-correlations of the individual impact items.

Items 8, 9 & 10 are not relevant to the immediate discussion as they address the locus of control attributed for each event, and as such are not estimates of impact, though they may of course be correlated with level of impact. Thus item 8 (personal responsibility attributed) item 9 (responsibility attributed to others) and item 10 (the degree to which the event was felt to be a matter of chance) will not be considered in the following tables regarding the impact of life events, but will be considered below.

In this later section the specific emotional responses of different groups to life events in terms of individual impact items summed across all events: for example anger, helplessness, depression and so on, are discussed in detail.

**TABLE 31. IMPACT ITEM INTERCORRELATION: PEARSON CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS**

| Items | S1 | S2 | S3 | S4 | S5 | S6 | S7 | S8 | S9 | S10 | S11 |
|-------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|------|
| S1 | 1 | | | | | | | | | | |
| S2 | .93** | 1 | | | | | | | | | |
| S3 | .89** | .90** | 1 | | | | | | | | |
| S4 | .95** | .90** | .85** | 1 | | | | | | | |
| S5 | .95** | .91** | .91** | .94** | 1 | | | | | | |
| S6 | .92** | .84** | .79** | .91** | .88** | 1 | | | | | |
| S7 | .94** | .87** | .84** | .93** | .92** | .89** | 1 | | | | |
| S8 | .70** | .72** | .81** | .67** | .75** | .62** | .63** | 1 | | | |
| S9 | .80** | .76** | .77** | .80** | .80** | .79** | .81** | .60** | 1 | | |
| S10 | .65** | .55** | .52** | .65** | .64** | .63** | .66** | .41** | .64** | 1 | |
| S11 | .91** | .87** | .89** | .90** | .91** | .86** | .89** | .74** | .78** | .59** | 1 |

**KEY: Significance Levels.**
**\* - p< .01**
**\*\* - p< .001 (2-Tailed)**

Considering then, the index of psychological impact formed by the summation of these items, the profile of those drawn to eastern NRMs becomes one of a higher incidence of life events and of higher psychological impact of life events in the recent past. Life events are personally disruptive for these groups.

# TABLE 32. TOTAL IMPACT OF LIFE EVENTS

Have life events had greater impact on those drawn to NRMs?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 201.64 | 189.29 |
| Control-s | 35 | 245 | 159.36 |
| Control-g | 12 | 199.25 | 133.52 |
| Therapy | 11 | 294.73 | 225.21 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 570.31 | 469.76 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 364.25 | 223.17 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 306.76 | 193.79 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 289.2 | 315.51 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 351.6 | 324.52 | 1.08 | ns |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 550.52 | 207.74 | 2.65 | .005 |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 733.52 | 235.19 | 3.12 | .002 |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 2.39 | 63.59 | 0.04 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 95.48 | 78.08 | 1.22 | ns |
| NRM–E clw **vs** NRM-E shan satya | 338.6 | 177.61 | 1.91 | .05 |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 723.95 | 269.24 | 2.69 | .01 |
| df | 128 | | | |

Once again it is apparent from Table 32 and Figure 7 (below) that all of the major hypotheses of the model are supported. The higher incidence of life events for the eastern NRMs compared to the therapy group is not in evidence for this measure. In terms of *impact felt* from life events, the therapy group is, like the eastern NRMs, relatively disrupted.
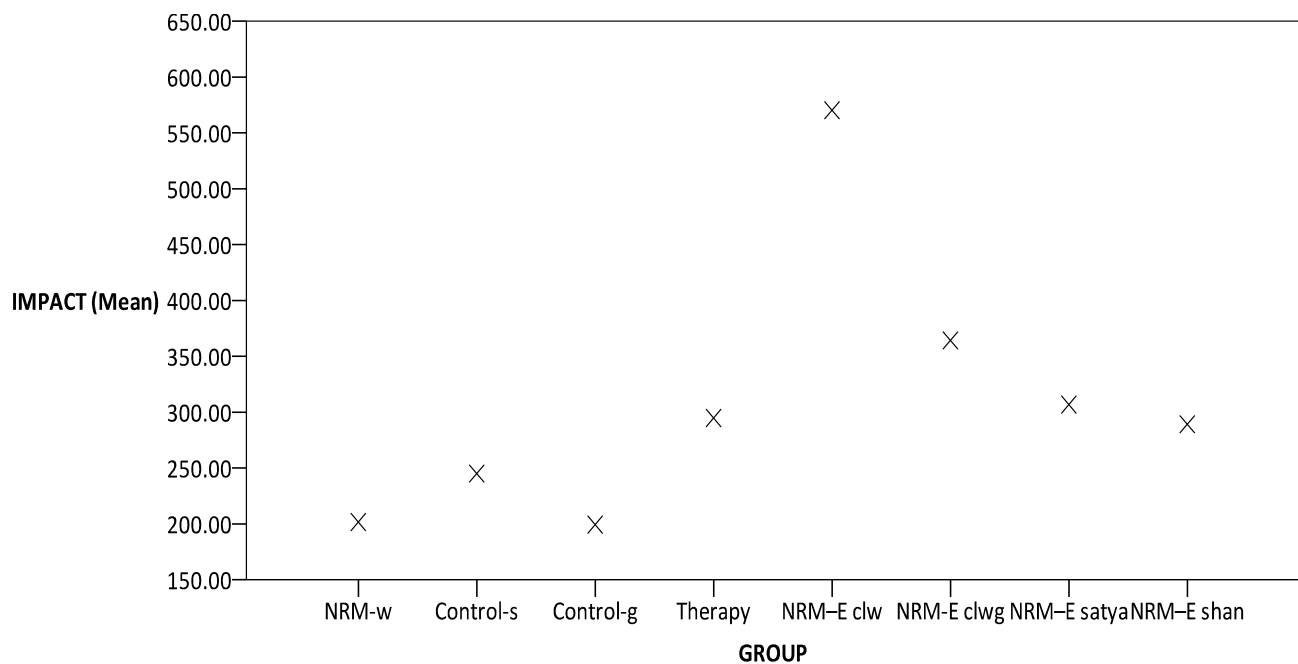
**Figure 7. TOTAL IMPACT OF LIFE EVENTS**

There is no difference between the eastern groups and the therapy groups on this measure, lending credence to hypothesis 3 a). There is strong support for hypotheses 3 b) and c) as the eastern groups have endured significantly more psychological impact from life events than have the student control group ($X_e$= 382.63, X *Control-s* = 245.00, p<.005) or the general control group (X *Control-g* =199.25, p<.002). There is no difference between the general control group (X *Control-g* = 31.43) and the western NRM ($X_w$= 27.40) which lends credence to hypothesis 3 d). The predicted difference between the rebirthing groups and the other two eastern groups was significant, (p<.05). Thus hypothesis 3 e) is supported. The difference between the eastern groups and the western NRM is significant (p<.001) which strongly supports the hypothesis 3 f) that the eastern groups would have endured more

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psychological impact from life events in the last 12 months than those already involved in a western NRM.

When the differentially higher incidence of life events for the eastern groups is controlled for, and only the average impact per life event item is considered, the differences between the groups change. The means are still in the predicted order, but the significance of a number of the differences between the control groups and the eastern groups falls away, though the difference between the eastern groups and the western NRM is robust.

## TABLE 33. THE MEAN IMPACT OF RECENT LIFE EVENTS

Do events have a greater mean impact for those drawn to NRMs?

EXPECTED ORDER: E =T > C =W

OBSERVED ORDER: T > E > C-s > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 27.4 | 11.12 |
| Control-s | 35 | 32.69 | 10.62 |
| Control-g | 12 | 31.43 | 9.91 |
| Therapy | 11 | 37.64 | 11.37 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 40.04 | 12.10 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 37.61 | 14.68 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 37.75 | 10.54 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 29.49 | 15.67 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | SIG. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 5.66 | 15.55 | 0.36 | ns |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 14.15 | 10.26 | 1.38 | ns |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 19.18 | 13.59 | 1.41 | ns |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 4.03 | 4.13 | 0.98 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 6.21 | 4.47 | 1.40 | ns |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya | 10.42 | 7.33 | 1.42 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 35.29 | 13.97 | 2.53 | .01 |
| df | 128 | | | |

It can be seen from Table 33 that for this measure, there is only support for hypothesis 4 f), as the only difference to attain significance is the higher level of impact of life events on the eastern groups compared to the western NRM which is significant ($p < .01$). While the other differences are not significant, the order of means is close to that

predicted. The absence of significant differences when the mean impact is considered suggests that it is not the case that those drawn to eastern movements react with more intensity to similar life circumstances, but that they do seem to have, for whatever reason, a higher incidence of life events, and it is the cumulative impact of these events which distinguishes them from the other groups, as reflected in the total impact scores.

In the introduction it was suggested that people drawn to NRMs might have experienced unsatisfying family relationships and that this troubled bonding might have left them open to charismatic others, and to a certain degree of idealisation of them. Some theorists also suggest that there is in these people an enhanced desire for mirroring: for feedback, and for reassurance from others as to their qualities and their worth. For this reason it is suggested that these individuals might have difficulties with social relationships, especially of an intimate nature, due to an elevated level of requirements and expectations from social interchanges. It is therefore posited that the life difficulties encountered are more likely to be connected to the social world for these affiliate groups than for the control groups, (who, theoretically at least, might evidence fewer mirroring needs) or for the western NRM (who are more likely to have their mirroring needs met via group membership).

Therefore in the qualitative analysis of differences in recent life events, there is a special emphasis on the negative social life experiences and the impact of them. It is important to acknowledge the reduced expectation that differences will be significant regarding negative life

experiences in general though the ordering of the means is expected to reflect the predicted ordering of the groups.

## TABLE 34. TOTAL INCIDENCE OF NEGATIVE LIFE EVENTS

Have those drawn to NRMs had more aversive life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > C-g > T > W > C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 2.43 | 1.79 |
| *Control-s* | 35 | 2.29 | 1.49 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 3.33 | 2.06 |
| *Therapy* | 11 | 2.73 | 1.49 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 13 | 4.46 | 3.64 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 2.56 | 1.79 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 25 | 3.08 | 2.18 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 3.1 | 3.25 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 2.29 | 2.39 | 0.96 | ns |
| *Control-s* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 4.06 | 1.86 | 2.18 | .01 |
| *Control-g* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 0.13 | 2.85 | 0.05 | ns |
| *Control-g* **vs** *Therapy* | 0.9 | 0.76 | 1.19 | ns |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *Control-g* | 0.61 | 0.75 | 0.81 | ns |
| *NRM-E clw* **vs** *NRM-E shan-satya* | 0.84 | 1.57 | 0.54 | ns |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 3.49 | 2.47 | 1.41 | ns |
| df | | 125 | | |

It can be seen from Table 34 that the predicted ordering of the groups is not fulfilled by these data. Summation of the incidence of negative life

events for the eastern groups, reveals them to have a similar incidence (XE=3.4) to the general control group (XC-g= 3.33), seen in Figure 8.
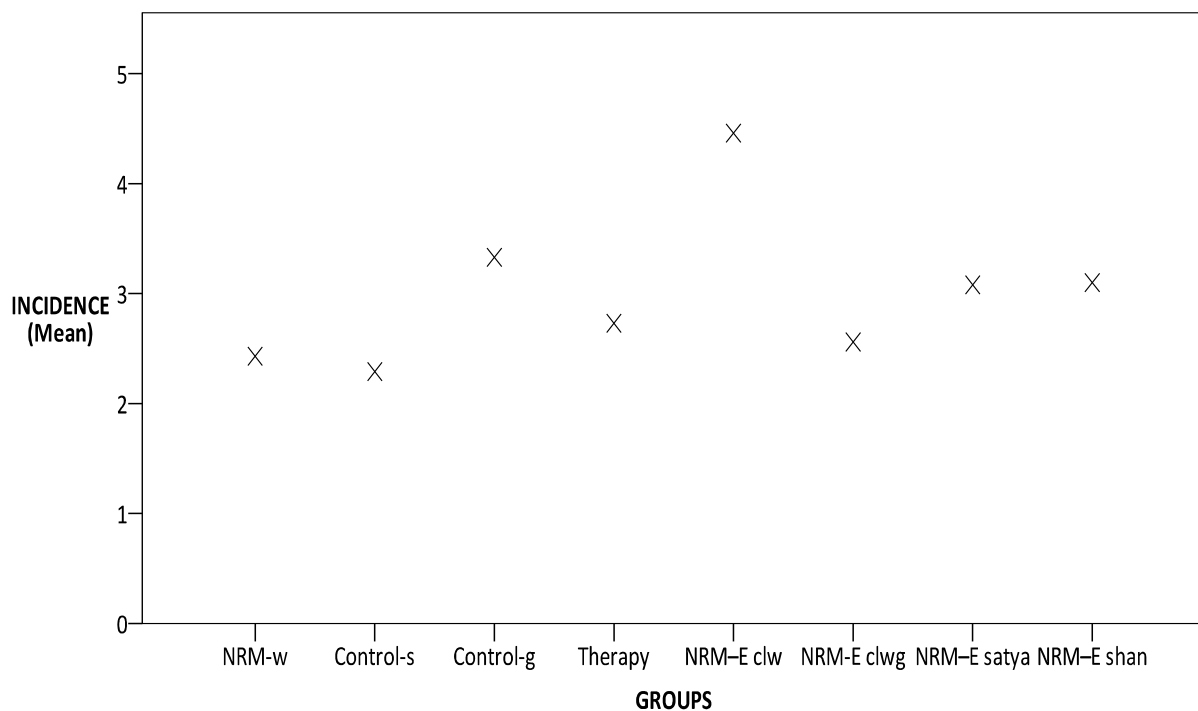


**Figure 8. INCIDENCE OF NEGATIVE LIFE EVENTS**

The only significant difference is an important one which supports hypothesis 5 b), revealing the eastern groups to have a significantly higher incidence of negative life events than the student control group (XC-s =2.29. p<.01). However, it cannot be concluded that those drawn to eastern NRMs have had more aversive general life events. It remains to be seen whether the more important differences predicted regarding negative *social* experiences are supported by the data.

If the impact of those events is considered, the difference between the eastern groups and the student sample is robust, but a change emerges which suggests that what was shown to be a numerically similar

incidence of events for the eastern and western NRMs is felt rather more strongly by the eastern groups than by the western group.

## TABLE 35. TOTAL IMPACT OF NEGATIVE LIFE EVENTS

Have negative life events had more total impact for those drawn to NRMs?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-g > C-s > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 82.86 | 85.65 |
| Control-s | 32 | 96.78 | 73.03 |
| Control-g | 12 | 121.5 | 109.76 |
| Therapy | 10 | 130.3 | 83.53 |
| NRM–E clw | 12 | 248.7 | 245.43 |
| NRM-E clwg | 15 | 104.6 | 82.10 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 134.7 | 111.33 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 117 | 149.81 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 83.73 | 139.26 | 0.60 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 217.8 | 104.39 | 2.09 | .02 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 118.93 | 155.86 | 0.76 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 38.64 | 39.09 | 0.99 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 8.8 | 41.25 | 0.21 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 101.6 | 90.72 | 1.12 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 273.5 | 128.9 | 2.12 | .02 |
| df | | 121 | | |

From Table 35 it can be seen that there is credence for hypothesis 6 a) as there is no difference between the eastern groups and the therapy

group. Hypothesis 6 b) is supported in that the level of impact for negative life events is significantly higher for the eastern groups, (XE =151.23) than for the student group (XC-s =96.78, p<.02). While the elevated mean of the eastern groups is largely a function of the extremely high mean of the novice rebirthing group (*NRM–E clw* =248.67), these groups are definitely readily distinguished from the student group, and from the western NRM from whom, as hypothesis 6 f) predicted, they differ significantly (p<.02). Most of the major hypotheses of the model are supported, when the impact measure is considered.
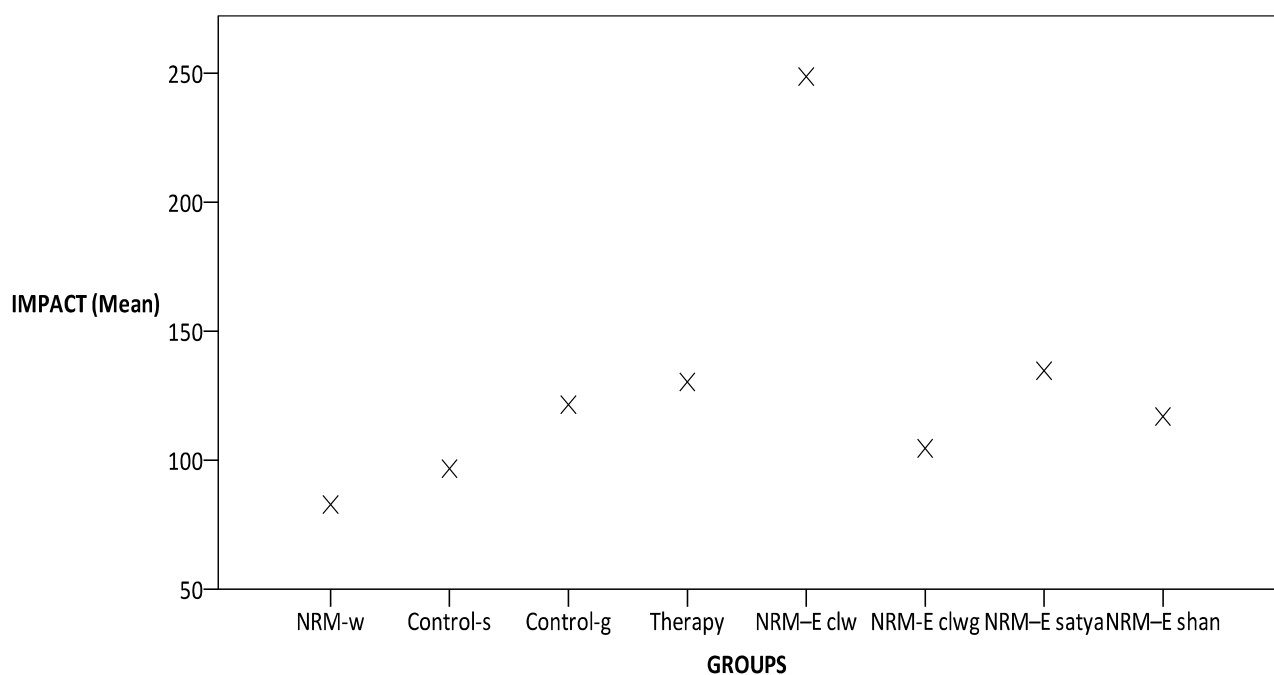


**Figure 9. TOTAL IMPACT OF NEGATIVE LIFE EVENTS**

When the differential incidence of negative life events is taken into account by looking at the mean impact of these events, the same two contrasts remain significant. This suggests that this elevated level of psychological discomfiture is not purely a function of a total impact, but that some increased sensitivity exists which produces more of a sense of

impact of each event. This may be due to any number of causes: personality or temperament differences, diminished social resources or cumulative impact of life events occurring to those whose life disruption is already high, and whose coping resources may be rather strained in the short or long term.

### TABLE 36. MEAN IMPACT OF NEGATIVE LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience negative life events more adversely per event?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: C-g > E > T > C-s > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 59.95 | 45.29 |
| *Control-s* | 32 | 69.31 | 37.84 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 102.2 | 110.83 |
| *Therapy* | 10 | 83.35 | 50.49 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 12 | 115.5 | 84.69 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 15 | 78.73 | 60.23 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 24 | 84.26 | 64.78 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 71.82 | 50.58 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy vs NRMs-E* | 16.93 | 73.13 | 0.23 | ns |
| *Control-s vs NRMs-E* | 73.1 | 44.57 | 1.64 | .05 |
| *Control-g vs NRMs-E* | 58.5 | 132.84 | 0.44 | ns |
| *Control-g vs Therapy* | 42.26 | 34.21 | 1.23 | ns |
| *NRM-w vs Control-g* | 18.86 | 35.76 | 0.53 | ns |
| *NRM-E clw vs NRM-E shan-satya* | 38.16 | 35.64 | 1.07 | ns |
| *NRM-w vs NRMs-E* | 110.52 | 60.12 | 1.84 | .04 |
| df | | 121 | | |

The significance of the differences found in support of the higher mean impact of negative life events is somewhat lower than that found when total impact was considered, as can be seen from Table 36, but support is still offered for hypotheses 7 b) and f). The eastern groups have experienced significantly higher levels of psychological impact for negative life events than have the student control group (p<.05). This supports hypothesis 7 b), and the higher levels of impact characterising the eastern groups relative to the western group, supports hypothesis 7 f). The high impact on the general control group of a fairly high incidence of negative life events has disrupted the predicted order of the groups for these measures.

The emphasis on negative social experiences (deriving from the theoretical inferences concerning what those drawn to charismatic movements might hoped for and require of social interchanges) was quite justified. The data support predictions of a higher total incidence, and total impact of negative social events.

# TABLE 37. TOTAL INCIDENCE OF NEGATIVE SOCIAL EVENTS

Have there been more aversive social events for those drawn to NRMs?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 1.29 | 0.99 |
| Control-s | 35 | 1.54 | 1.17 |
| Control-g | 12 | 0.91 | 0.79 |
| Therapy | 11 | 1.91 | 1.45 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 2.77 | 1.30 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 2.5 | 1.15 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 2.32 | 1.65 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 2.8 | 1.32 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 2.75 | 1.88 | 1.46 | ns |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 4.22 | 1.06 | 3.98 | .0001 |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 6.72 | 1.16 | 5.82 | .0001 |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 0.37 | 0.35 | 1.05 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 0.99 | 0.49 | 2.02 | .03 |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya | 0.14 | 0.70 | 0.21 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 5.25 | 1.28 | 4.11 | .0001 |
| df | | 121 | | |

The eastern groups are really singled out from the others on this measure, as Table 37 and Figure 10 show.  They have a high incidence of aversive experiences in this life domain. The general control group, which had a somewhat higher than expected incidence of negative life events overall, does not seem to have experienced difficulties in this

more social realm of their lives. Bar their unexpectedly low mean, the order of the groups is as predicted, and the important contrasts highly significant providing convincing support for the major hypotheses.
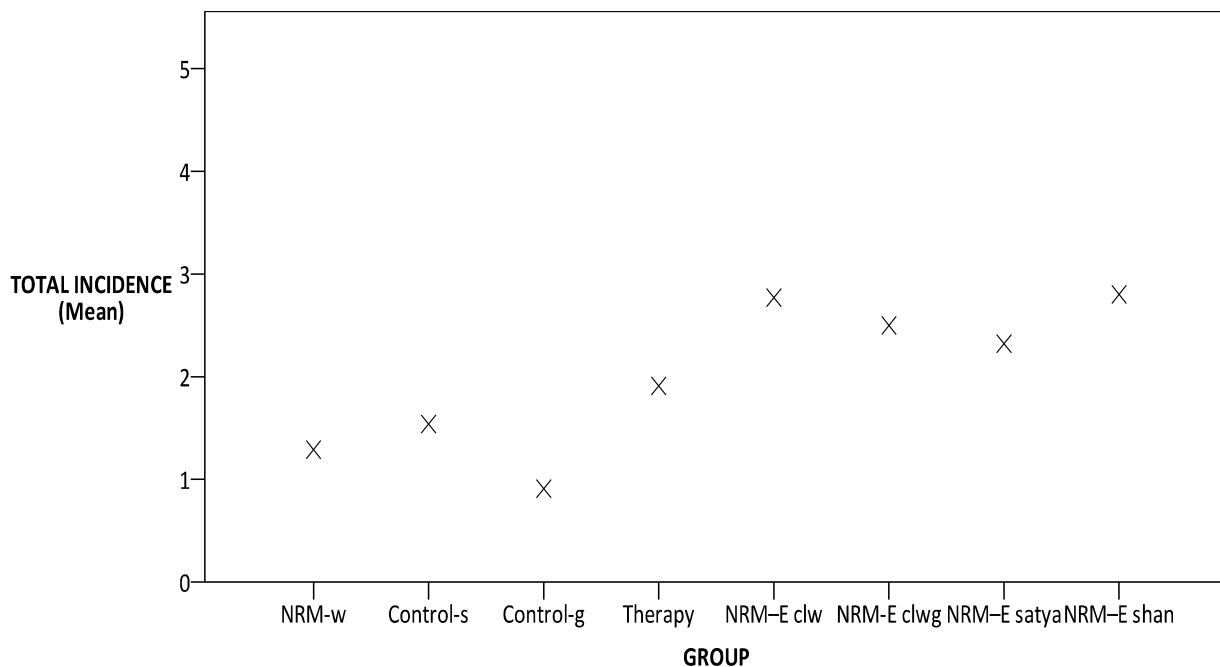


**Figure 10. INCIDENCE OF NEGATIVE SOCIAL EVENTS**

The absence of a difference between the eastern groups and the therapy group lends credence to hypothesis 8 a). The differences between the eastern groups and the two control groups are highly significant, providing strong support for hypotheses 8 b) and 8 c), (both $p<.0001$); the eastern groups experience a relatively elevated level of turmoil in the social relationships domain. They certainly have more difficulties than the western group, as hypothesis 8 f) is also supported at the .0001 level of significance. Though there was an interesting and unexpected difference between the western NRM and the general control group, in the direction opposite to that predicted by the ordering of the means. There is evidence to suggest that the western group also

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has a slightly higher incidence of negative social experiences than the general control group, though less than the student group.

There is no difference between the rebirthing groups and the other eastern groups on any of these measures of the incidence of negative social events, in contrast to the elevated levels of life events overall and their impact overall for the rebirthing groups.

It seems that social difficulties are a feature of life in common across the four eastern groups. They share a common existential situation. A difference does emerge between the rebirthing groups when the total impact of negative social experiences is considered, but it does not carry through into the consideration of the mean impact of negative social events.

## TABLE 38. TOTAL IMPACT OF NEGATIVE SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more impact from social network difficulties?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 11 | 51.09 | 56.29 |
| *Control-s* | 29 | 67.45 | 48.97 |
| *Control-g* | 8 | 40.63 | 41.71 |
| *Therapy* | 9 | 95.78 | 71.96 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 12 | 132.3 | 75.78 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 88.81 | 67.19 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 24 | 108.2 | 78.83 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 87.6 | 86.55 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 33.8 | 104.76 | 0.32 | ns |
| *Control-s* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 147.12 | 55.61 | 2.65 | .005 |
| *Control-g* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 254.41 | 72.43 | 3.51 | .001 |
| *Control-g* **vs** *Therapy* | 10.47 | 22.48 | 0.47 | ns |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *Control-g* | 55.15 | 28.16 | 1.96 | .05 |
| *NRM-E clw* **vs** *NRM-E shan-satya* | 25.38 | 42.05 | 0.60 | ns |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 212.54 | 79.86 | 2.66 | .01 |
| df | 111 | | | |

Table 38 and Figure 11 illustrate that, when the total impact of negative social experiences is considered, the pattern of significant differences found for the incidence of such experiences is repeated. The differences between the eastern groups and the control groups are again highly

significant, the higher level of psychological impact endured by the eastern groups significantly differing from the student control group (p<.005) and the general control group (p<.001) providing highly significant support for hypotheses 9 b) and c) respectively.
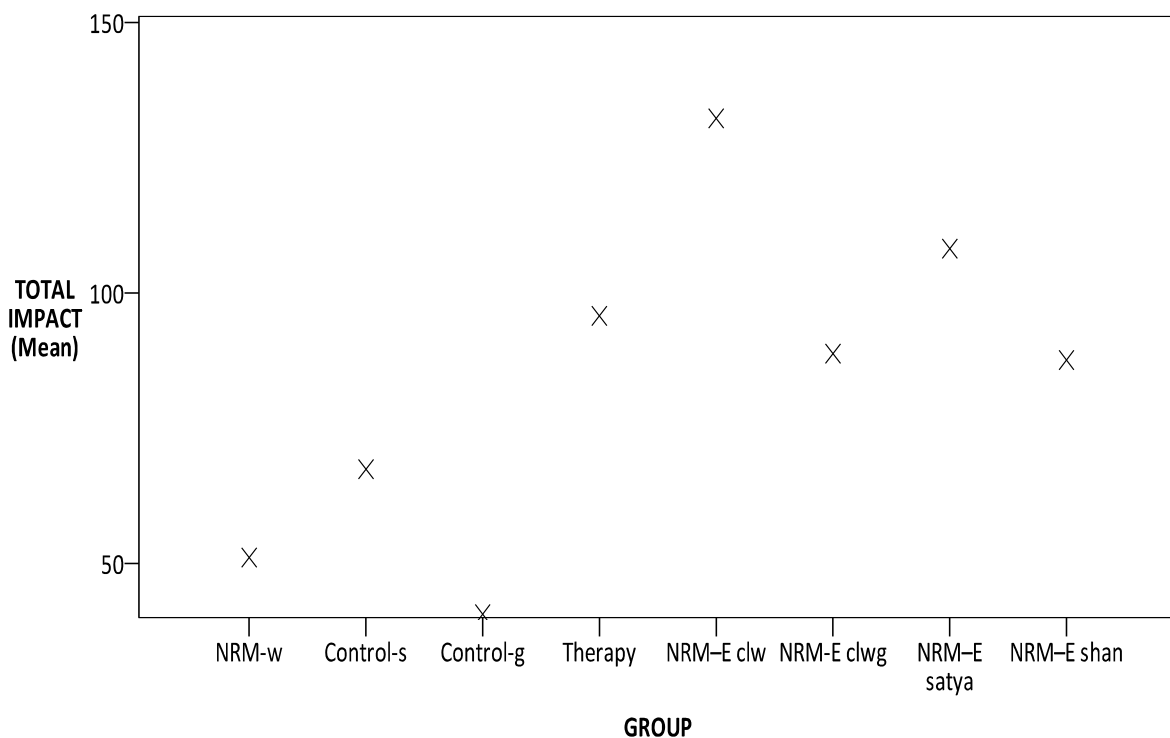


**Figure 11. TOTAL IMPACT OF NEGATIVE SOCIAL EVENTS**

The unexpected difference between the western group and the control group found for the assessment of the total incidence of negative social events is robust, and once again reveals the western group to experience rather more disruption in this domain than the general control group, (p<.05). In spite of this, the western group is still less troubled than the student group, and significantly less troubled than the eastern groups (p<.01), providing strong support for hypothesis 9 f). These differences seem to be a function of different overall incidence of

negative social events however, as when the mean impact of negative social events is considered, all differences fail to attain significance, and no support is offered for hypotheses 10 a) to f).

## TABLE 39. MEAN IMPACT OF NEGATIVE SOCIAL EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience each event more adversely?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: T > E > C-s > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 11 | 49.77 | 57.26 |
| Control-s | 29 | 53.55 | 40.09 |
| Control-g | 8 | 40.62 | 41.71 |
| Therapy | 9 | 80.11 | 63.12 |
| NRM–E clw | 12 | 70.5 | 45.82 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 53.2 | 43.44 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 73.04 | 66.82 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 52.92 | 83.64 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 70.79 | 90.89 | 0.78 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 35.45 | 45.45 | 0.78 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 87.16 | 68.24 | 1.28 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 9.15 | 22.70 | 0.40 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 39.49 | 25.70 | 1.54 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 2.26 | 34.33 | 0.07 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 50.57 | 77.12 | 0.66 | ns |
| df | 111 | | | |

It seems then from Table 39 that those drawn to eastern NRMs do not have a more adverse reaction to negative social experiences, but they do have more of them, and functionally speaking, this means that this domain of life is more of a problem for them.

## TABLE 40. TOTAL INCIDENCE OF EXPRESSED DISCONTENT WITH PERSONALITY

Are those drawn to NRMs less content with their personality?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T> W> C-g > C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 1.07 | 1.54 |
| Control-s | 35 | 0.89 | 1.07 |
| Control-g | 12 | 0.92 | 1.00 |
| Therapy | 11 | 1.18 | 1.94 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 2.38 | 1.89 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 2.19 | 1.94 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 0.80 | 0.96 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 0.60 | 0.97 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 1.25 | 2.47 | 0.50 | ns |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 2.43 | 1.08 | 2.24 | .01 |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 2.31 | 1.40 | 1.65 | .05 |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 0.15 | 0.50 | 0.31 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 0.26 | 0.65 | 0.41 | ns |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya | 3.17 | 0.80 | 3.96 | .0001 |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 1.69 | 1.83 | 0.92 | ns |
| df | 128 | | | |

From Table 40 it can be seen that there is no difference between the therapy groups and the eastern groups, which, in the light of the significance of other predicted difference lends credence to hypothesis 11 a). Keeping in mind the disproportionate contribution of the rebirthing groups to this measure, there is strong support for hypotheses 11 b) and c), (p<.01, and p<.05 respectively), suggesting that the eastern groups are more concerned and discontented with their personality, have felt more of a lack in their lives, more likely to have felt odd in a group with who they are normally comfortable and concerned with how they handled a recent event. The mean for the eastern groups (XE = 1.49) masks a strong disparity which is reflected in the highly significant difference between the rebirthing groups and the other two eastern groups (p<.0001), which provides strong support for hypothesis 11 e). It seems that those who are willing to take three months out of their usual lifestyle to explore their ways of experiencing and dealing with life feel that they have much to learn and change about their personality and coping style. Given the small number of subjects who claimed to have had these experiences in the last twelve months, the descriptive data discussed above is perhaps more revealing of the pattern of differences across groups.

Further, sample sizes mean that this data are merely suggestive, and the replication of the significant contrasts is required. The pattern of results is also reflected in the measures assessing the total impact of this discontent, seen in Table 41.

# TABLE 41. TOTAL IMPACT OF DISCONTENT WITH PERSONALITY

Are those drawn to NRMs more concerned by perceived personality problems?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: T > E > C-s > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 8 | 68.12 | 86.31 |
| Control-s | 18 | 83.94 | 60.39 |
| Control-g | 7 | 55.00 | 32.11 |
| Therapy | 5 | 146.00 | 133.40 |
| NRM–E clw | 10 | 164.50 | 109.13 |
| NRM-E clwg | 12 | 157.92 | 119.74 |
| NRM–E satya | 12 | 67.17 | 49.69 |
| NRM–E shan | 3 | 93.00 | 47.70 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 101.42 | 245.54 | 0.41 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 146.81 | 81.19 | 1.81 | .04 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 262.58 | 75.55 | 3.48 | .001 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 13.12 | 32.84 | 0.40 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 91.00 | 60.88 | 1.49 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 162.25 | 57.88 | 2.80 | .006 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 210.08 | 135.09 | 1.55 | ns |
| df | 67.00 | | | |

Table 41 reveals that these concerns are important issues to the rebirthing groups and the therapy group. As mentioned above, the numbers are diminished in these statistical analyses, due to the fact that the calculations are based on the subset of people for whom these events had occurred and had impact. It is perhaps for this reason that

the apparently big difference between the therapy group and the general control group (Therapy= 146.00, *Control-g* = 55.00) does not attain significance, and the high variance on this measure which characterises the therapy group. The eastern groups, taken as a whole, differ significantly from the two control groups, providing support for their elevated level of discontent at the .04 and .001 level of significance for hypotheses 12 b) and c) respectively. The rebirthing groups are once again significantly more perturbed by these issues than the other eastern groups, which supports hypothesis 12 f) at the .006 level of significance. This suggests strongly that these groups are responsible for the significance between the control groups and the eastern groups.

When the mean impact of these issues is considered, as illustrated in Table 42, however, the difference between the eastern groups and the general control group is sustained, but the differences between the student group and the eastern groups and between the rebirthing groups and the other eastern groups disappear. It seems that the rebirthing group has more qualms about their personal style than the other groups, but for those who do have those qualms in other groups, they are felt with the same intensity. A difference emerges between the western NRM and the general control group, suggesting that the former are slightly more concerned by these issues.

**TABLE 42. MEAN IMPACT OF PERSONALITY DISCONTENT**

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more discontent with personality?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: T > C-s > E > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 8 | 32.75 | 14.53 |
| Control-s | 18 | 46.83 | 17.95 |
| Control-g | 7 | 34.40 | 10.95 |
| Therapy | 5 | 53.52 | 19.11 |
| NRM–E clw | 10 | 49.37 | 12.22 |
| NRM-E clwg | 12 | 52.67 | 16.31 |
| NRM–E satya | 12 | 38.14 | 19.74 |
| NRM–E shan | 3 | 46.50 | 23.85 |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 27.39 | 37.79 | 0.72 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 0.63 | 23.36 | 0.03 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 49.07 | 23.09 | 2.12 | .03 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1.65 | 6.60 | 0.25 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 19.12 | 9.50 | 2.01 | .05 |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 17.41 | 16.10 | 1.08 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 55.69 | 26.10 | 2.13 | .03 |
| df | 67.00 | | | |

Hypothesis 13 c) is significantly supported at the .03 level, suggesting that the eastern groups are more concerned by issues of discontent with personality than the general control group. The mean of the eastern groups ($X_E$ =46.67) is more truly reflective of all of the eastern groups than any of the other measures of incidence or impact of personality

discontent have been, in that the rebirthing groups are no longer outliers.

The mean impact of these issues on the eastern groups is comparable to that of the student sample, and actually lower than the concern expressed by the therapy group.

Reduced group numbers here make the results speculative, but intriguing. An unexpected difference in a direction contrary to mean ordering emerges between the general control group and the western group, portraying the latter as significantly more concerned by these issues, ($p<.05$, two-tailed test) than the former.

If the numbers were small concerning the incidence and impact of personality concerns, they are tiny considering the incidence and impact of continuous strain. No significant differences emerge concerning the incidence of these items. Table 43 is presented for interest.

### TABLE 43. TOTAL INCIDENCE OF STRAIN: WORRY AND DISAPPOINTMENTS

Have those drawn to NRMs experienced more strain?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E> C-s > T > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 2 | 0.14 | 0.36 |
| Control-s | 6 | 0.20 | 0.47 |
| Control-g | 1 | 0.17 | 0.58 |
| Therapy | 1 | 0.18 | 0.60 |
| NRM–E clw | 5 | 0.46 | 0.66 |
| NRM-E clwg | 3 | 0.25 | 0.58 |
| NRM–E satya | 1 | 0.08 | 0.40 |
| NRM–E shan | 1 | 0.20 | 0.63 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 0.26 | 0.79 | 0.33 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 0.19 | 0.45 | 0.43 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 0.32 | 0.74 | 0.44 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 0.02 | 0.19 | 0.12 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 0.02 | 0.25 | 0.06 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 0.43 | 0.32 | 1.36 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 0.42 | 0.50 | 0.84 | ns |
| df | 128 | | | |

Such a low incidence of these concerns could not have been predicted. It is not possible to comment upon statistical significance with so few per group on this measure, and so none of hypotheses 14 a) to f) can be commented upon.

When the measure of the total impact of these concerns is considered, significances emerge, but the tiny sample sizes in some of the contrasts make even the most significant differences suggestive evidence only.

**TABLE 44. TOTAL IMPACT OF STRAIN: WORRY AND DISAPPOINTMENTS**

Do those drawn to NRMs have a history of enduring strain?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|-------|---|------|----------------|
| NRM-w | 2 | 43.00 | 22.63 |
| Control-s | 6 | 51.17 | 37.23 |
| Control-g | 1 | 35.00 | |
| Therapy | 1 | 104.00 | |
| NRM–E clw | 5 | 61.40 | 36.47 |
| NRM-E clwg | 3 | 64.00 | 17.58 |
| NRM–E satya | 1 | 114.00 | |
| NRM–E shan | 1 | 98.00 | |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|-----------|-------|----------|---|------|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 78.60 | 19.21 | 4.09 | .007 |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 132.73 | 63.75 | 2.08 | .04 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 197.40 | 19.21 | 10.27 | .0001 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 8.00 | 40.90 | 16.00 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 86.60 | 19.21 | 4.51 | .004 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 165.40 | 66.82 | 2.47 | ns |
| df | 12.00 | | | |

The hypotheses 15 a) to f) cannot be commented upon statistically since the data are so partial. Not everyone evinced these issues as problem

areas in their lives. The data are based on the small subset of the population who found them a problem.

Descriptively, from Table 44, the therapy person and the yoga person stand out from all others. The therapy person has a higher concern with enduring worry and strain than the average of the eastern groups (XE=84.25), and the average of the eastern groups is higher than the score for the general control person, and higher than the mean incidence for the student control group. In this instance, the comparison between the rebirthing groups and the other eastern pair reveals the latter two to have a higher incidence of concern about these items. This difference is not in the direction predicted by the hypothesis. When the mean impact of these concerns is considered, the difference between the eastern groups and the therapy and student groups fall away, as does the difference between the rebirthing groups and the therapy group, and only the difference between the eastern groups and the general control person remains.

**TABLE 45. MEAN IMPACT OF STRAIN: WORRY AND DISAPPOINTMENTS**

Do those drawn to NRMs experience strain more intensely?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > W > C-s > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 2 | 43.00 | 22.63 |
| Control-s | 6 | 41.50 | 21.03 |
| Control-g | 1 | 17.50 | |
| Therapy | 1 | 52.00 | |
| NRM–E clw | 5 | 48.80 | 9.44 |
| NRM-E clwg | 3 | 50.00 | 7.55 |
| NRM–E satya | 1 | 57.00 | |
| NRM–E shan | 1 | 49.00 | |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 3.20 | 6.07 | 0.53 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 38.80 | 34.88 | 1.11 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 134.80 | 6.07 | 22.21 | .0001 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 25.50 | 16.00 | 1.59 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 7.20 | 6.07 | 1.19 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 32.80 | 64.29 | 0.51 | ns |
| df | 12 | | | |

When the data concerning the mean impact of disappointment and worry are considered, in Table 45, there is a difference between the person in the general control group and the eastern groups, suggesting that the latter might have more concern on average, regarding these issues. This cannot be taken as support for hypothesis 16 c) due to the

small samples involved, and the failure to find differences with the student control group (*Control-s*).

## 31. RECENT AVERSIVE LIFE EVENTS: AN OVERVIEW

The least traditional groups also have the most eventful lives as assessed by Henderson et al's (1981) recent life events scale concerning the preceding twelve months. It was predicted that the eastern NRMs would have experienced a similar amount of disruption to the Therapy group (in terms of number of recent life events in the last twelve months). The results did not support this hypothesis when the total incidence of life events is considered, as the eastern groups had had significantly more eventful lives in the recent past than the therapy group. However when the impact of those events is taken into account, there are no differences, as predicted, between the therapy and eastern groups.

### 31.1 The Impact of Positive Life Events

There were no hypotheses pertinent to the *Rites de Passage* model regarding expected differential incidence of positive life events, and positive social events. If these people are in a state of transition however, they may experience more strongly the impact of even positive life events. If (to anticipate data presented later in this section) their relatively unsatisfactory early life bonding has left them uniquely open to social "mirroring", a profile expected to characterise those drawn to eastern NRMs, they may be more affected by positive social experiences than those whose history of bonding is more positively subjectively appraised.

## TABLE 46. TOTAL IMPACT OF POSITIVE LIFE EVENTS

Do positive life events have greater impact on those drawn to NRMs?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > C-s > W > C-g > T

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 9 | 21.89 | 16.34 |
| Control-s | 32 | 38.47 | 25.38 |
| Control-g | 6 | 17.17 | 11.13 |
| Therapy | 5 | 13.80 | 8.92 |
| NRM–E clw | 11 | 50.73 | 37.99 |
| NRM-E clwg | 8 | 42.25 | 24.78 |
| NRM–E satya | 11 | 31.82 | 37.07 |
| NRM–E shan | 6 | 27.33 | 29.73 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 96.93 | 27.12 | 3.58 | .002 |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 1.75 | 28.32 | 0.06 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 83.46 | 28.47 | 2.93 | .004 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 4.72 | 7.09 | 0.67 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 3.37 | 6.05 | 0.58 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 33.83 | 21.91 | 1.54 | ns* |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 64.57 | 30.9 | 2.09 | .02 |
| df | | 80 | | |
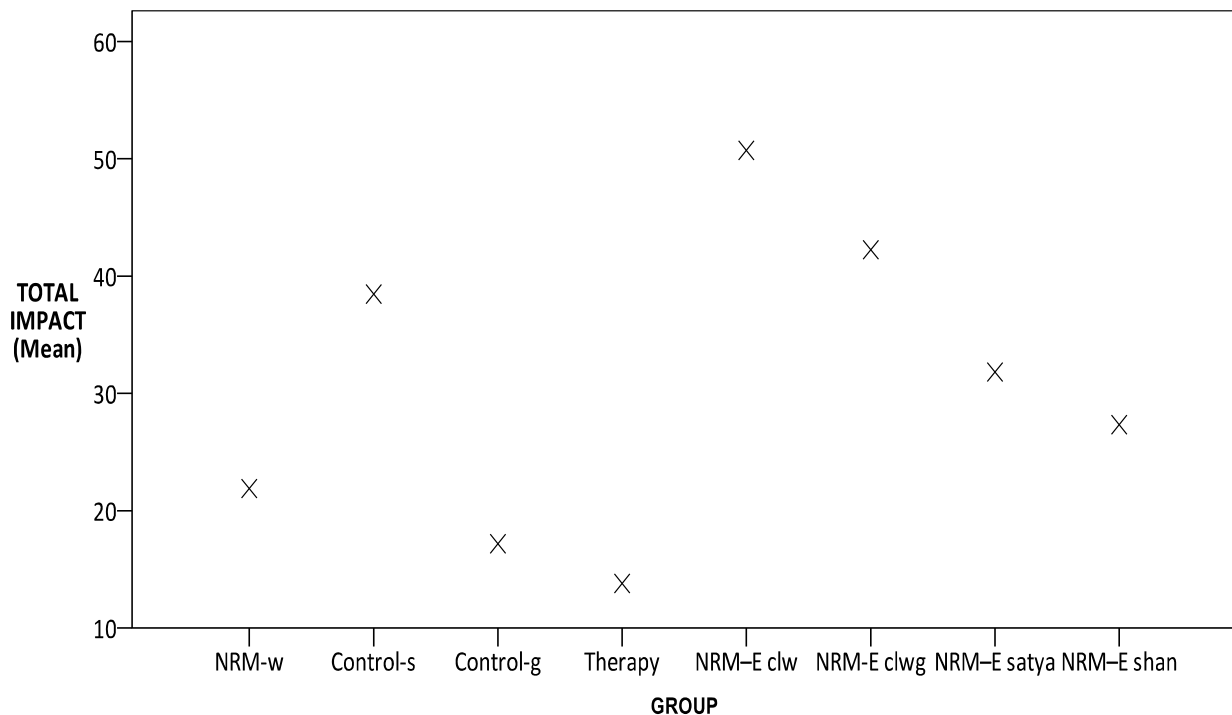
**Figure 12. TOTAL IMPACT OF POSITIVE LIFE EVENTS**

There does seem to be an elevated level of impact of positive life events on those drawn to NRMs. They rate them as having significantly higher impact than does the therapy group (p<.002), which is a difference that was not predicted by hypothesis 17a). The eastern groups do not differ from the student control group in terms of this measure, as the latter also seem to respond emotionally to positive life events. So hypothesis 17 b) is not supported. However, the significant difference between the eastern groups (XE =38.03) and the general control group (X *Control-g* = 17.17) provides strong support for hypothesis 17 c) (p<.004). Despite the rebirthing groups having, as predicted, higher means than the those of the other two eastern groups, the difference did not attain significance leaving hypothesis 17 d) unsupported. The predicted difference between the eastern NRMs and the western group is highly significant, and provides strong support for the suggestion that those drawn to NRMs have a higher responsivity (p<.02) to life events of a positive or negative

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nature than those who are already involved in a NRM. There is no difference between the rebirthing groups and the other eastern groups, so hypothesis 17 e) is unsupported. There is a significant difference between the eastern NRMs and the western group revealing the western group to have much less aversive impact attendant on positive life events. This supports hypothesis 17 f) (p<.02).

## TABLE 47. MEAN IMPACT OF POSITIVE LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more intensely positive life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > C-s > T > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 9 | 16.50 | 7.59 |
| Control-s | 32 | 23.00 | 11.93 |
| Control-g | 6 | 17.17 | 11.12 |
| Therapy | 5 | 13.80 | 8.93 |
| NRM–E clw | 11 | 26.30 | 14.33 |
| NRM-E clwg | 8 | 25.60 | 19.96 |
| NRM–E satya | 11 | 16.64 | 13.54 |
| NRM–E shan | 6 | 14.75 | 13.31 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 28.09 | 19.23 | 1.46 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 8.72 | 13.63 | 0.64 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 14.63 | 21.09 | 0.69 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 0.67 | 5.20 | 0.19 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 3.37 | 6.05 | 0.56 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 20.52 | 10.71 | 1.91 | .03 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 17.29 | 14.74 | 1.17 | ns |
| df | | 80 | | |

Looking at Table 47, when the mean impact of positive life events is considered, such that the differential incidence is taken into consideration, all of the differences predicted by the model disappear, and a significant difference emerges which provides support for the expected difference between those drawn to rebirthing movements, and those drawn to other eastern movements. This measure provides support only for hypothesis 18 e), ($p<.03$).

When the impact of positive social experiences is considered in Table 48 below, the only groups to differ from each other are the students and the eastern groups, with the latter being more responsive to positive life events than the former ($p<.05$) providing support for hypothesis 19 b).

# TABLE 48. TOTAL IMPACT OF POSITIVE SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

Do positive social events have greater impact on those drawn to NRMs?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > C-g > T > C-s > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 8 | 24.37 | 10.86 |
| Control-s | 19 | 22.63 | 18.20 |
| Control-g | 3 | 28.33 | 14.57 |
| Therapy | 6 | 27.17 | 19.34 |
| NRM–E clw | 7 | 35.57 | 20.06 |
| NRM-E clwg | 11 | 31.18 | 24.41 |
| NRM–E satya | 14 | 32.93 | 22.62 |
| NRM–E shan | 4 | 51.00 | 46.58 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 42.02 | 41.09 | 1.02 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 60.16 | 31.14 | 1.93 | .05 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 37.35 | 42.70 | 0.87 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 3.96 | 9.25 | 0.43 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1.17 | 11.54 | 0.10 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 17.18 | 26.28 | 0.65 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 53.18 | 30.44 | 1.75 | ns |
| df | | 64 | | |
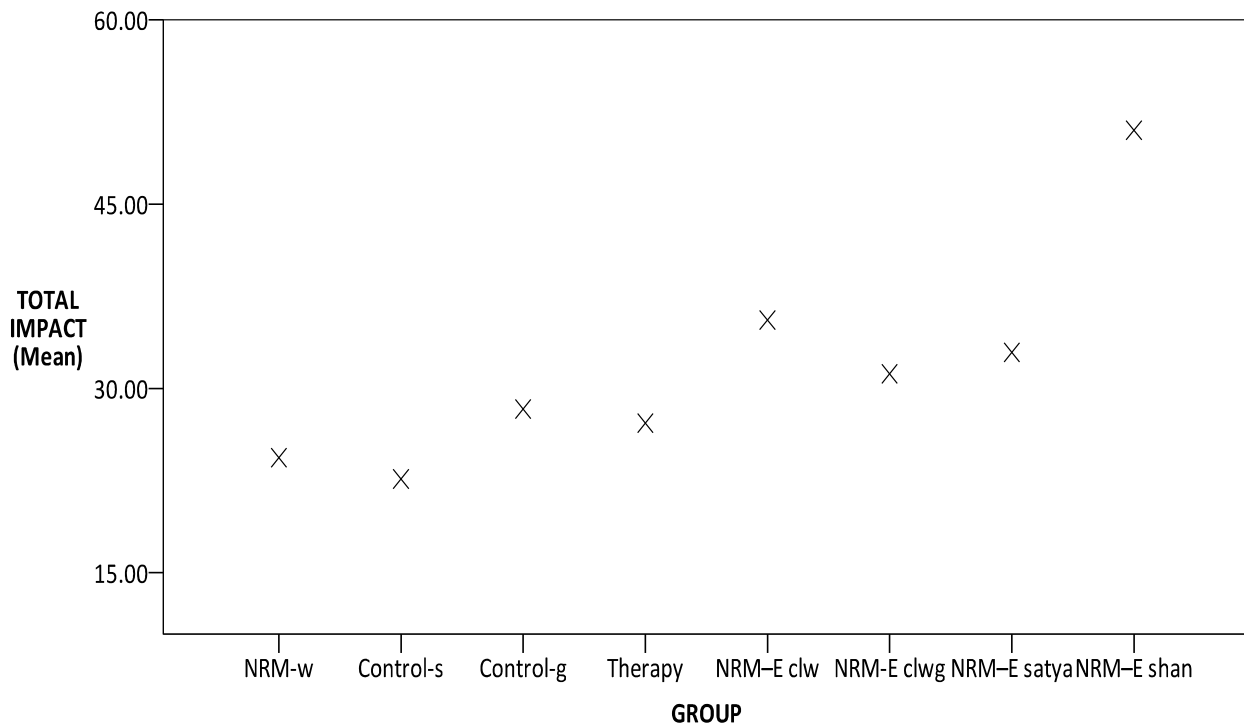
**Figure 13. TOTAL IMPACT FOR POSITIVE SOCIAL EVENTS**

When the mean impact of positive social experiences is considered in Table 49 (below) the important differences predicted by the model are once more in evidence.

It seems as though the eastern groups are not particularly singled out by the measures of the total impact of positive life or positive social experiences. This is perhaps because relatively fewer occur to them (differential incidence of positive events across the groups will be discussed in the subsidiary hypotheses section below). However, when the differential incidence is taken into account, they emerge as quite different from the other groups: as much more responsive to social experiences which do occur than any of the other groups.

# TABLE 49. MEAN IMPACT OF POSITIVE SOCIAL EXPERIENCES

Do those drawn to NRMs experience positive social events more intensely?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-g > W > C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 8 | 20.37 | 9.98 |
| Control-s | 19 | 18.34 | 10.17 |
| Control-g | 3 | 20.83 | 2.47 |
| Therapy | 6 | 22.00 | 10.12 |
| NRM–E clw | 7 | 27.21 | 16.10 |
| NRM-E clwg | 11 | 21.41 | 12.54 |
| NRM–E satya | 14 | 31.93 | 23.16 |
| NRM–E shan | 4 | 36.25 | 20.12 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | VALUE | STDERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 28.80 | 21.54 | 1.34 | ns |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 43.43 | 16.67 | 2.60 | .01 |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 33.47 | 14.94 | 2.24 | .025 |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 0.46 | 3.81 | 0.12 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 1.17 | 4.37 | 0.27 | ns |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya | 19.56 | 13.82 | 1.41 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 35.30 | 19.76 | 1.79 | .05 |
| df | | 64 | | |

It can be seen from Table 49 that there are significant differences between the student group and the eastern groups and between the general population group and the eastern groups, providing support for hypotheses 20 b) (p<.01) and c) (p<.025) respectively.

The eastern groups have a higher mean responsivity ($X_E$=29.20) than the student control group ($X_{c-s}$ =18.24) and than the general control group ($X_{cG}$ =20.83). They are also significantly more responsive than the western NRM ($X_w$= 20.37), which provides support for hypothesis 20 f), at the .05 level. This difference in responsivity when sheer incidence is accounted for suggests something other than an additive effect characterises the responsiveness of those involved in eastern NRMs, as far as the mean impact of positive and negative life events is concerned. It was suggested above in the introductory chapters, that there have been a number of people looking at possible mediators of life stress, many of which considered the *way in which life events are experienced*: as challenge, as due to the person's own effort and involvement and so on. These issues suggest that a person's life situation, in terms of the incidence of particular types of life events are important regarding a person's level of coping, and resilience, but so too are issues regarding the emotional response to life events, the psychological impact they have. This is especially so if the average impact for certain groups is higher than others. Consideration of particular and habitual ways of responding to life events is pertinent to their disruptive effect.

## 31.2 Stress Levels

Tellegen's subscale of the MPQ is relevant in this regard as it assesses the extent to which a person can put worries out of his/her mind; quickly gets over upsetting experiences and is not troubled by emotional turmoil or guilt feelings. A high score indicates that a person has a tendency to feel vulnerable and nervous; to be easily upset and irritable.

As assessed by this measure, the western NRM are the group with the lowest level of stress of any group.

## TABLE 5O. STRESS

Are those drawn to spiritual movements more stress prone?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: C-s > T > C-g > E > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 5.07 | 15.78 |
| Control-s | 39 | 10.28 | 17.89 |
| Control-g | 17 | 8.29 | 16.56 |
| Therapy | 10 | 8.60 | 14.84 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 7.60 | 26.34 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 9.87 | 14.18 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 7.33 | 16.22 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRASTS | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 46.79 | 2.53 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 0.94 | 0.00 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 0.59 | 0.00 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 0.62 | 0.00 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 79.74 | 4.31 | .03 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 113.51 | 6.14 | .01 |
| error | 64 | 18.49 | | |
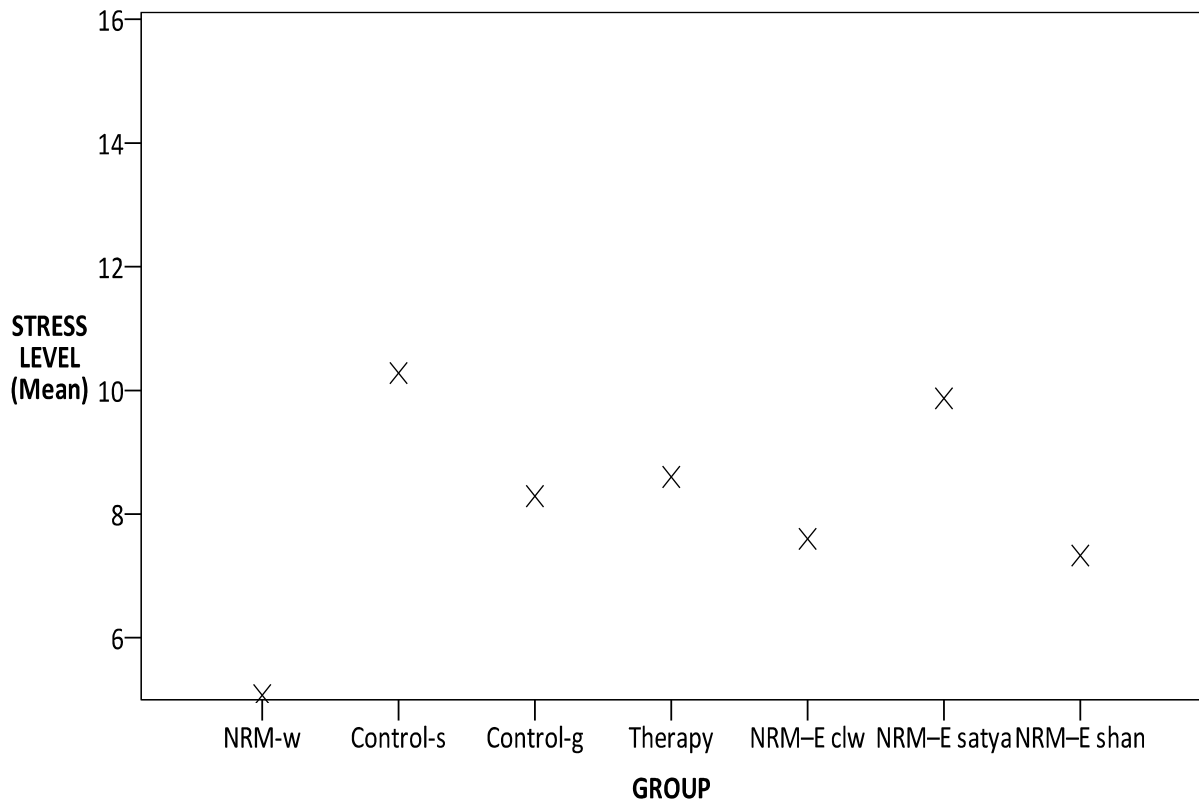
**Figure 14. STRESS LEVELS ASSESSED BY THE MPQ**

The MPQ stress measure is an assessment of usual moods, feelings, bodily reactions and habits, rather than of the events of the recent past. Therefore it is close to an assessment of a personality feature than ·an existential situation which has been characterised by disruptive events, or a person's responsiveness to those life events. It is interesting, given the different conceptual slant of this measure, that the most salient differences to emerge in Table 50 are those between the western group and the general control group, and the western group and the eastern groups. It seems that, habitually, the members of the western NRM are little troubled by moods feelings and bodily reactions indicative of stress, see Figure 14. The highest group of all on this measure is the student group, though the difference between them and the general control group is not significant. As suggested in hypothesis 21 a) there is no difference between the therapy group and the eastern NRMs in terms of

the habitual experience of stress reactions. Hypothesis 21 b) is not supported, as the therapy group does not have a higher tendency to experience stress than the control group. There is also no support for the hypothesis (21 c) that the eastern groups have an increased tendency to experience stress relative to the control group. There is support for the suggestion that they experience more stress than the western NRM, supporting hypothesis 21 e) at the .01 level of significance. This is also the case for the general control group, who also have a higher propensity towards the experience of stress than the western group (p<.03). It seems then, that this measure does not reveal the eastern groups to be relatively disadvantaged regarding an intensified experience of stress; rather it seems that the western group is particularly insulated from habitual stressful experience.

## 31.3 Recent Interpersonal Discord

The results are much less remarkable if a different index of life stress is considered, namely the incidence of recent interpersonal discord (from Henderson et aI's (1981) social interaction scale), for which there are slight differences in sample size.

Significant differences do not emerge between any of the control groups and the eastern groups. However, the therapy group is distinguishable from the general control group on this measure (see Table 51).

# TABLE 51. RECENT DISCORD

Is spiritual affiliation a flight from troubled interpersonal relations?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T > C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: T > C-s > E > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 0.36 | 0.80 |
| Control-s | 33 | 0.85 | 1.28 |
| Control-g | 51 | 0.49 | 0.96 |
| Therapy | 13 | 1.15 | 1.36 |
| NRM–E clw | 12 | 0.75 | 0.52 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 0.81 | 1.03 |
| NRM–E satya | 28 | 0.71 | 1.20 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 0.50 | 0.42 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s vs Control-g | 1 | 2.57 | 2.43 | ns |
| NRM-w vs Control-g | 1 | 0.19 | 0.18 | ns |
| NRM-E clw vs NRM-E clwg | 1 | 1.67 | 0.00 | ns |
| Control-g vs NRMs-E | 1 | 0.51 | 0.48 | ns |
| Therapy vs NRMs-E | 1 | 2.26 | 2.13 | ns |
| NRM-w vs NRMs-E | 1 | 1.29 | 1.21 | ns |
| Control-g vs Therapy | 1 | 4.56 | 4.30 | .01 |
| error | 171 | | | |
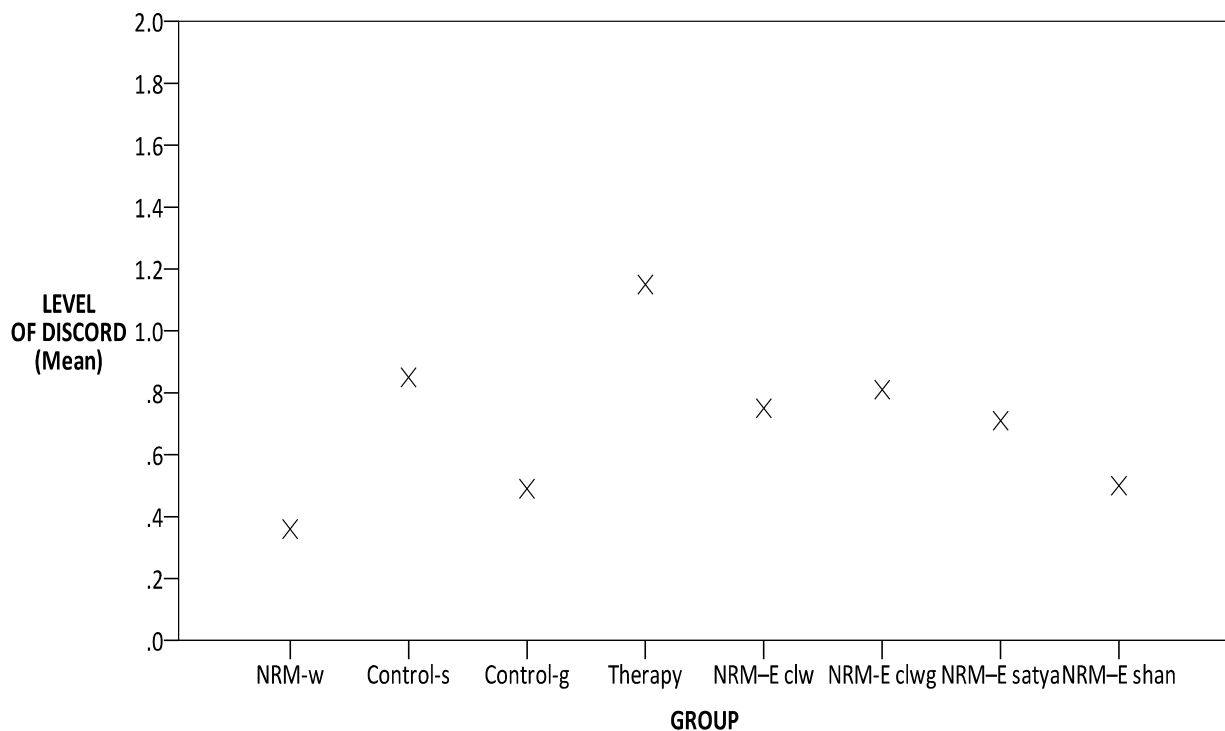
**Figure 15. RECENT INTERPERSONAL DISCORD**

From Table 51 it can be seen that the overall level of discord is not high for any of the groups; the average frequency of unpleasantness or rows being less than one (over the last 12 months) for all groups except the therapy group. Virtually none of the groups differs significantly from another on this measure, as is shown in Figure 15, except for the difference between the therapy group and the general control group which reveals the therapy group to have significantly more difficulty in this area than the general public. Support is provided for hypothesis 22 b), at the .01 level of significance, but none of the other differences hypothesised to occur is significant, leaving questionable the credence lent to the predicted absence of a difference between the therapy group and the eastern group.

## 32. THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF LIFE EVENTS: Uniqueness of responses assessed by SINGLE PARAMETERS

The fortunate aspect of the psychological impact scales being made up of individual items (which were sufficiently inter-correlated to be summed to provide an overall index of impact), is the availability of subject's responses to individual impact items. These permit commentary on the degree to which a high level of a *particular kind of response* was characteristic of the groups which are the focus of interest for this study. Given that it is suggested that those caught up, however briefly by some form of involvement with NRMs might be those for whom the course of life events has commenced a rite of passage for them, it is suggested that life events will be seen to require much readjustment for them, as, it is suggested, it is the dense occurrence of these events, particularly those connected with the social environment which is a triggering factor of the rite of passage.

Differences are expected to emerge between the therapy and the eastern NRMs here, because non-traditional spiritual involvement is presumed by the author to entail more of a rite of passage than involvement in what is perhaps a more socially accepted course of action to take when strife occurs. It is therefore assumed that a higher level of emotional disruption would have preceded such involvement. Since the reductivist, but sympathetic view of religious belief and involvement propounded here assumes that religious groups offer a way of life that is a more general compensatory and explanatory system in intensity of commitment and scope of explanation than that offered by therapy groups (as the former address ultimate as well as daily concerns), they

are likely to appeal to those with greater need. In this study, this is hypothesised to be those drawn to NRMs, who are not yet members. The focus of interest for this study then, is not only the nature of the events which have occurred, but also the degree to which such events provoke a degree of need for re-adjustment.

## TABLE 52. TOTAL IMPACT OF LIFE EVENTS: REQUIRED ADJUSTMENT

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more re-adjustment attendant on life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > W > C-s > T > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 36.50 | 21.24 |
| Control-s | 35 | 37.14 | 20.84 |
| Control-g | 12 | 30.75 | 24.56 |
| Therapy | 11 | 33.64 | 17.48 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 88.00 | 69.99 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 53.81 | 29.71 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 47.92 | 26.89 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 49.00 | 48.78 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 104.19 | 33.81 | 3.08 | .002 |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 90.16 | 29.96 | 3.01 | .002 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 115.73 | 38.77 | 2.98 | .003 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 5.75 | 9.08 | 0.63 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 2.89 | 8.83 | 0.33 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 44.89 | 26.44 | 1.70 | .05 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 92.73 | 34.85 | 2.66 | .001 |
| *df* | 128 | | | |
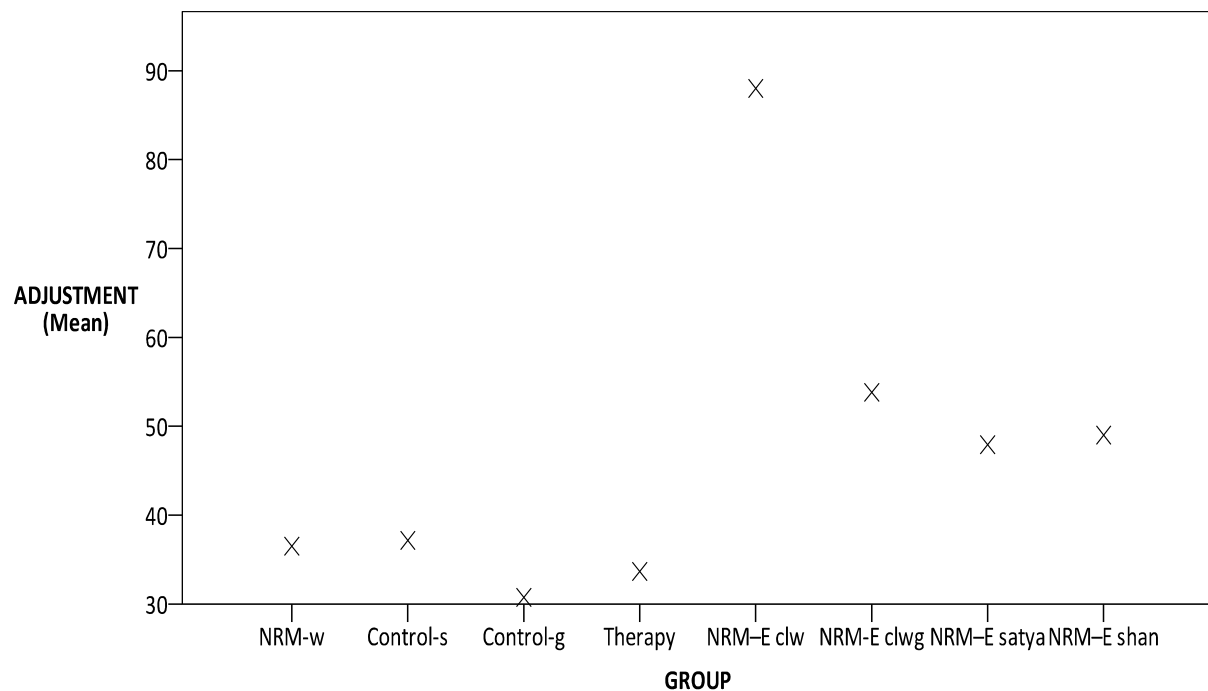
**Figure 16. ADJUSTMENT ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS**

Considering the total adjustment required by life events, in Table 52, the by now familiar pattern of group means emerges, (see Figure 16), with the addition of strong support for hypothesis 23 a) being provided by the highly significant difference between the therapy group and the eastern NRMs (p<.002). The eastern groups have felt the need for much more adjustment in response to recent life events than either of the control groups. They have a significantly higher level of adjustment required than the student control group (XE= 59.68, *Control-s* = 37.14, p<.002) which provides strong support for hypothesis 23 b). They also experience the need for more readjustment than the general control group, providing strong evidence for hypothesis 23 c) (p<.003). This need is especially characteristic of the rebirthing groups who differ significantly from the other eastern groups in this regard (*NRM-E clw* = 70.91, *NRM-E shan-satya* = 48.46, p<.05), which supports hypothesis 23 d). It seems that those who are most disrupted by life events take the

more all-encompassing involvement route and arrive at some form of movement contact. Further, within that subset of people, there is a further subset that are willing to become involved in a three-month residential group, which in this instance specifically addresses emotional catharsis. The eastern groups have a substantially higher level of readjustment than the western group, ($p<.001$) providing support for the hypothesis 23 e) that they are in more of a state of transition than those who are already committed members of a religious group.

# TABLE 53. MEAN ADJUSTMENT REQUIRED BY LIFE EVENTS

Is more readjustment per event required of those drawn to NRMs?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > W > C-s > T > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 5.46 | 1.78 |
| Control-s | 35 | 5.28 | 1.68 |
| Control-g | 12 | 4.40 | 1.67 |
| Therapy | 11 | 4.72 | 1.23 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 6.37 | 1.65 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 5.55 | 1.87 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 5.96 | 1.31 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 5.13 | 2.06 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 4.15 | 1.76 | 2.35 | .01 |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 1.89 | 1.49 | 1.27 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 5.41 | 2.16 | 2.51 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1.06 | 0.68 | 1.57 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 0.31 | 0.61 | 0.52 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 0.83 | 0.96 | 0.87 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1.16 | 2.13 | 0.55 | ns |
| df | 128 | | | |

When the mean intensity of adjustment as an emotional response is considered, in Table 53, the pattern of differences is largely unchanged except that the differences between the eastern groups and the student control group and between the eastern groups and the western group fall away. There is strong support for hypothesis 24 a) showing the

higher responsiveness of the eastern groups compared to the therapy groups, and strong support for hypothesis 24 c) regarding the higher level of responsiveness of the eastern groups compared to the general population. An allied notion to having felt the need to readjust following life events is the extent to which one felt them as disruptive (Table 54).

### TABLE 54. DISRUPTION ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more disruption during life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 28.86 | 20.45 |
| Control-s | 35 | 34.91 | 23.32 |
| Control-g | 12 | 29.33 | 19.80 |
| Therapy | 11 | 38.27 | 27.22 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 80.38 | 62.76 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 57.81 | 38.04 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 44.96 | 28.06 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 46.30 | 49.20 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 76.37 | 41.77 | 1.83 | .04 |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 89.80 | 30.26 | 2.97 | .003 |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 112.12 | 34.49 | 3.25 | .002 |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 0.48 | 7.91 | 0.06 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 8.94 | 10.00 | 0.89 | ns |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya | 46.94 | 25.83 | 1.82 | .04 |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 114.03 | 33.84 | 3.37 | .001 |
| df | 128 | | | |

The major predictions of the model are strongly supported by highly significant differences for this measure, as Table 54 and Figure 17 (below) show. The difference between the therapy group and the eastern NRMs was highly significant, as can be seen in Table 54, and Figure 17, with the latter experiencing much greater disruption than the former, ($X_E$= 57.36, $X_T$= 38.27, p<.04) providing strong support for hypothesis 25 a). Hypotheses 25 b) and c) are also significant in that the eastern groups experience life events as much more disruptive than either the student control group (X *Control-s* = 34.91, p<.003) or the general control group (X *Control-g* = 29.33, p<.002). The rebirthing groups find life events to be especially disruptive, relative even to the other eastern NRM affiliates (X *NRM-E clw* = 69.10, X *NRM-E shan-satya* = 45.63, p<.04). This provides strong support for hypothesis 25 d). The difference between the eastern group and the western group is highly significant, (p<.001) which suggests that this group of members is now

as resilient as the general control group when it comes to weathering life events with little sense of their disruptive impact.
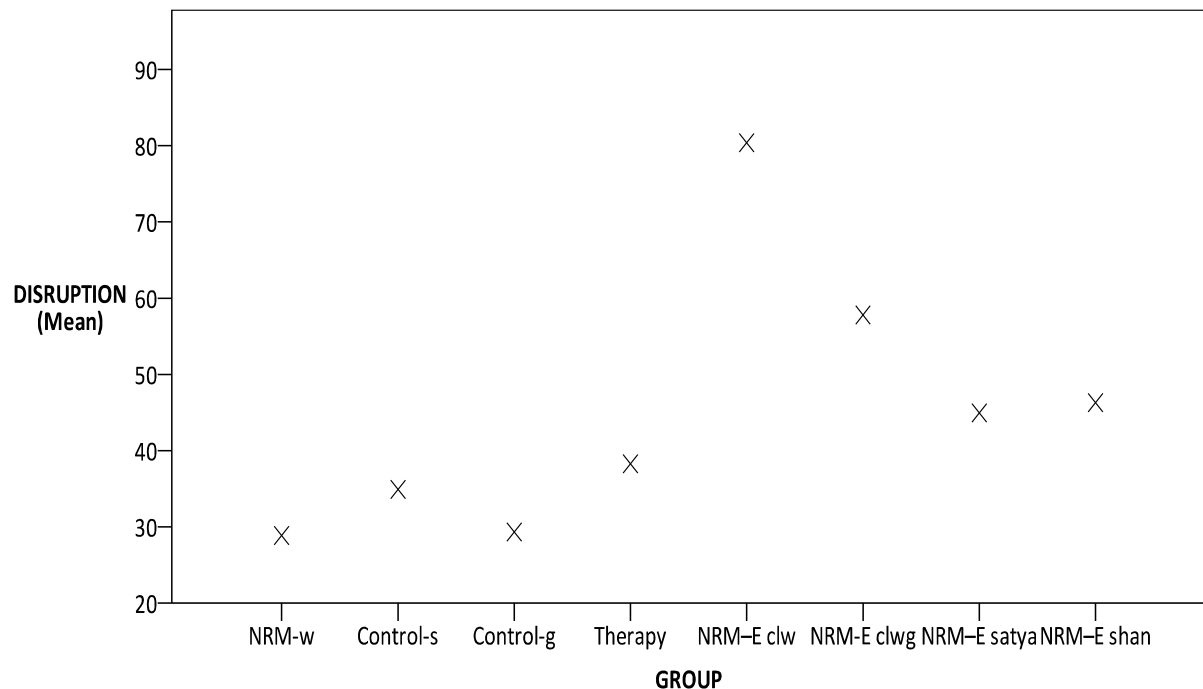


**Figure 17. DISRUPTION ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS**

When the differentially high incidence of life events is taken into account, as shown in Table 55 (below), many of the differences fall away, though support is still provided for hypothesis 26 c) as the eastern groups still differ markedly from the general population control group ($p<.05$). These groups are also still different from the western NRM ($p<.02$). So it seems that not all of the increased sense of the disruptiveness of life events on the part of the eastern group is due to the higher incidence level. Perhaps the density of their occurrence leads to a cumulative fatigue such that additional occurrences meet with fewer resources on the part of the already quite strained person.

# TABLE 55. MEAN DISRUPTION ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more disruption per life event?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 4.12 | 1.75 |
| Control-s | 35 | 4.65 | 2.18 |
| Control-g | 12 | 4.57 | 1.31 |
| Therapy | 11 | 4.96 | 1.43 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 5.42 | 2.20 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 6.10 | 4.25 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 5.49 | 1.86 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 4.79 | 2.46 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1.97 | 2.29 | 0.86 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 3.22 | 2.10 | 1.53 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 3.53 | 2.13 | 1.66 | .05 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 0.44 | 0.60 | 0.74 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 0.39 | 0.57 | 0.68 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 1.25 | 1.50 | 0.83 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 5.31 | 2.40 | 2.21 | .02 |
| *df* | 128 | | | |

**TABLE 56. ANXIETY ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS**

Do those drawn to NRMs undergo more anxiety?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 23.86 | 24.61 |
| Control-s | 35 | 36.03 | 23.83 |
| Control-g | 12 | 30.42 | 24.61 |
| Therapy | 11 | 38.82 | 31.85 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 80.62 | 74.62 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 53.25 | 29.63 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 40.92 | 26.84 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 40.10 | 46.35 |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 59.61 | 46.93 | 1.27 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 70.77 | 31.41 | 2.25 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 93.22 | 39.17 | 2.38 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 6.56 | 9.68 | 0.68 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 8.40 | 11.94 | 0.70 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 52.85 | 26.96 | 1.96 | .03 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 119.46 | 37.67 | 3.17 | .002 |
| df | 128 | | | |

In terms of the anxiety attendant on recent life events, there is no doubt that the eastern NRMs are once again singled out from some of the other groups. However, there is no significant difference between the eastern NRMs and the therapy group in this regard, as Table 56 shows,

though the order of the means is quite apparently in the predicted direction, as Figure 18 shows.
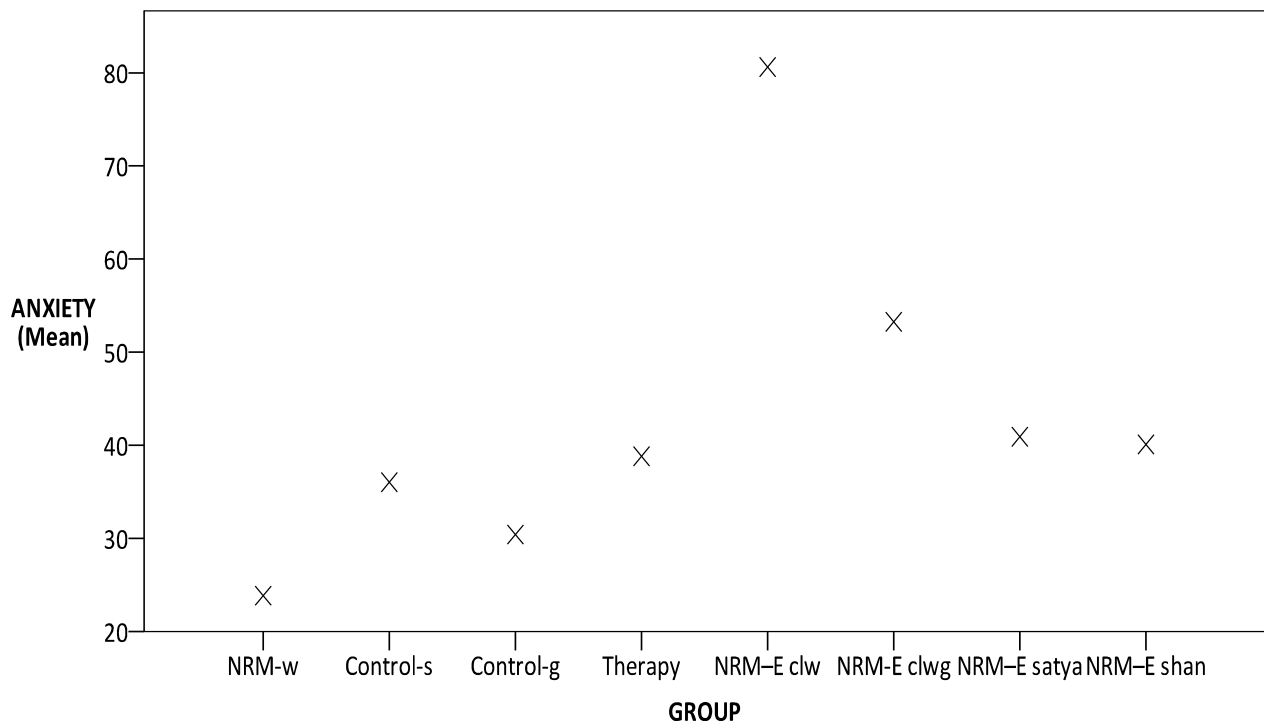


**Figure 18. ANXIETY ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS**

Hypothesis 27 a) is unsupported. Hypotheses 27 b) and c) are supported strongly, (p<.01, in both cases) substantiating the expectedly higher level of anxiety experienced by the eastern groups in comparison to the control groups. The eastern groups also have a much higher level of anxiety in response to life events than the western NRM (p<.002), providing strong support for hypothesis 27 e).

**TABLE 57. MEAN ANXIETY ATTENDANT ON RECENT LIFE EVENTS**

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more anxiety?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > C-s > T > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 3.20 | 1.87 |
| *Control-s* | 35 | 4.94 | 1.69 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 4.67 | 1.94 |
| *Therapy* | 11 | 4.88 | 1.61 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 13 | 5.15 | 2.34 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 5.34 | 1.56 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 25 | 4.92 | 1.63 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 3.93 | 2.38 |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy **vs** NRMs-E* | 0.18 | 2.24 | 0.08 | ns |
| *Control-s **vs** NRMs-E* | 0.43 | 1.60 | 0.27 | ns |
| *Control-g **vs** NRMs-E* | 0.68 | 2.50 | 0.27 | ns |
| *Control-g **vs** Therapy* | 1.46 | 0.75 | 1.96 | ns |
| *NRM-w **vs** Control-g* | 0.22 | 0.74 | 0.29 | ns |
| *NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya* | 1.65 | 1.12 | 1.48 | ns |
| *NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E* | 6.55 | 2.29 | 2.86 | .005 |
| *df* | 128 | | | |

When the differences between the groups are considered in terms of mean anxiety felt in response to life events, an unexpected difference emerges between the therapy group and the general control group, see

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Table 57, which is consonant with the predicted ordering of the groups, though it is not one of the differences central to the model. The difference between the eastern groups and the western groups is even more significant than was the case for the total impact in terms of anxiety scores, which provides strong support for hypothesis 28 e).

## TABLE 58. ANGER ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more anger in response to life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 18.29 | 30.79 |
| *Control-s* | 35 | 20.60 | 16.98 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 16.92 | 13.62 |
| *Therapy* | 11 | 37.09 | 27.42 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 13 | 56.62 | 46.43 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 43.06 | 35.92 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 25 | 30.56 | 24.38 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 22.30 | 24.40 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy vs NRMs-E* | 4.17 | 37.72 | 0.11 | ns |
| *Control-s vs NRMs-E* | 70.14 | 21.48 | 3.26 | .001 |
| *Control-g vs NRMs-E* | 84.87 | 24.02 | 3.53 | .0005 |
| *Control-g vs Therapy* | 1.37 | 9.12 | 0.15 | ns |
| *NRM-w vs Control-g* | 20.17 | 9.15 | 2.20 | .04* |
| *NRM-E clw vs NRM-E shan-satya* | 46.82 | 18.16 | 2.58 | .007 |
| *NRM-w vs NRMs-E* | 79.35 | 37.59 | 2.11 | .02 |
| *df* | 128 | | | |

*not in expected direction, two-tailed test.
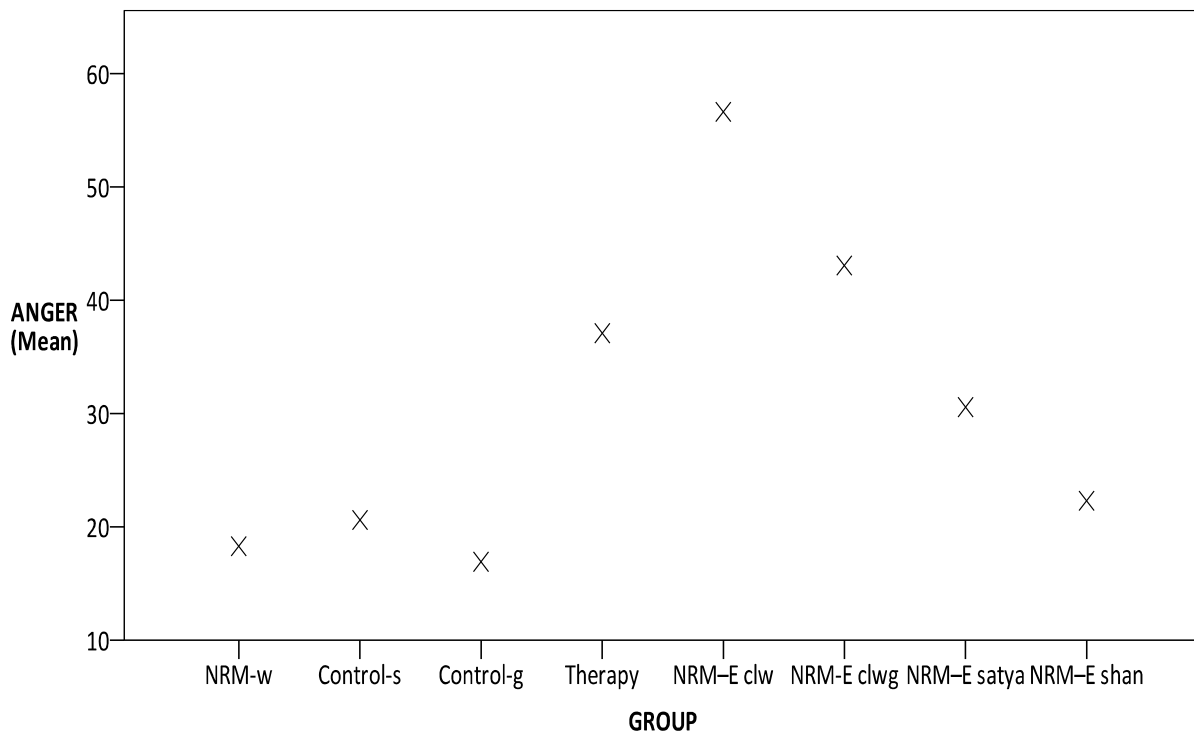
**Figure 19. ANGER ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS**

Considering the extent to which life events were responded to with anger, a significant difference did not occur between the eastern groups and the therapy group. On the whole this subset of individuals in the study seems to have quite a high awareness of their anger in response to life events (see Table 58 and Figure 19).

The eastern groups certainly differ significantly from the student control group ($X_e$= 38.13, $X_{Cs}$ = 20.60), p<.001). So, hypothesis 29 b) is strongly supported. Hypothesis 29 c) is also supported by a difference between the control group and the eastern NRMs that is highly significant (p<.0005), establishing the elevated occurrence of anxiety for the eastern NRMs. There is also a significant difference between the western NRM and the general population control group which was unexpected,

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in that it did not form one of the major predictions of the model in this instance, but also because it was in the opposite direction from that predicted in the ordering of the means set out in the hypotheses. The western NRM actually had a higher incidence of anger than the general population, (X *Control-g* = 16.92, Xw= 18.29, p<.04, not in expected direction* two-tailed test). The rebirthing groups differed significantly from the other eastern groups (p<.007) providing evidence for the postulated greater emotionality of those drawn to the former group's activities, (X *NRM-E clw* = 49.84, X *NRM-E shan-satya* = 26.43, p<.007) and supporting hypothesis 29 d) strongly. There is also evidence for the postulated difference between the eastern and western groups, (p<.02) revealing the eastern groups to experience more anger in relation to life events than the western group.

## TABLE 59. AVERAGE ANGER FELT

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more anger per event?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: T> E > C-g > C-s > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 2.09 | 2.27 |
| Control-s | 35 | 2.62 | 1.68 |
| Control-g | 12 | 2.80 | 1.76 |
| Therapy | 11 | 4.89 | 1.76 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 4.07 | 1.47 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 4.29 | 2.69 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 3.58 | 1.86 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 2.39 | 2.55 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 5.22 | 2.43 | 2.15 | .02 |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 3.86 | 1.64 | 2.35 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 3.14 | 2.35 | 1.33 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 0.71 | 0.79 | 0.90 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 2.09 | 0.74 | 2.84 | .005 |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 2.39 | 1.18 | 2.02 | .03 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 5.97 | 2.70 | 2.21 | .02 |
| df | 128 | | | |

When the measure of the mean amount of anger is considered, there is only a loss of one of the significant differences central to the postulates of the model (see Table 59). The therapy group still differs significantly from the eastern NRMs (p<.02) which provides strong support for

hypothesis 30 a). The difference between the eastern group and the student control group is similarly robust and so significant support (p<.01) is accorded to hypothesis 30 b). Hypothesis 30 c) concerning the difference between the eastern NRMs and the general control group falls away. Hypothesis 30 c) is not supported. The difference between the western group and the general population is not attenuated by the elimination of the effects of differential incidence from the impact scores. Rather the difference is even more significant, though the nature of the difference is reversed. It is now the general control group who is more anger prone. It seems that the western group had a higher level of anger as a response due to the more frequent experience of anger, but at a milder level of intensity than that which is characteristic of the control group. This result is in accordance with the order predicted by the model. The difference between the western NRM and the eastern groups is also significant, and in the direction predicted by the model. The eastern groups experience far more anger on average, in response to life events than do the western group (XE= 3.58, Xw= 2.09, p<.02).

# TABLE 60. UPSET ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more upset in response to life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C =W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > C-g = W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 24.79 | 32.21 |
| *Control-s* | 35 | 30.46 | 21.34 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 24.33 | 16.95 |
| *Therapy* | 11 | 38.81 | 32.05 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 13 | 78.54 | 64.55 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 40.94 | 30.92 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 25 | 41.32 | 23.34 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 36.50 | 43.78 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 42.02 | 45.70 | 0.92 | ns |
| *Control-s* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 75.48 | 28.32 | 2.66 | .005 |
| *Control-g* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 99.96 | 31.25 | 3.20 | .001 |
| *Control-g* **vs** *Therapy* | 0.45 | 9.90 | 0.05 | ns |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *Control-g* | 14.48 | 10.83 | 1.34 | ns |
| *NRM-E clw* **vs** *NRM-E shan-satya* | 41.66 | 24.37 | 1.71 | .05 |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 98.15 | 42.18 | 2.33 | .01 |
| *df* | 128 | | | |
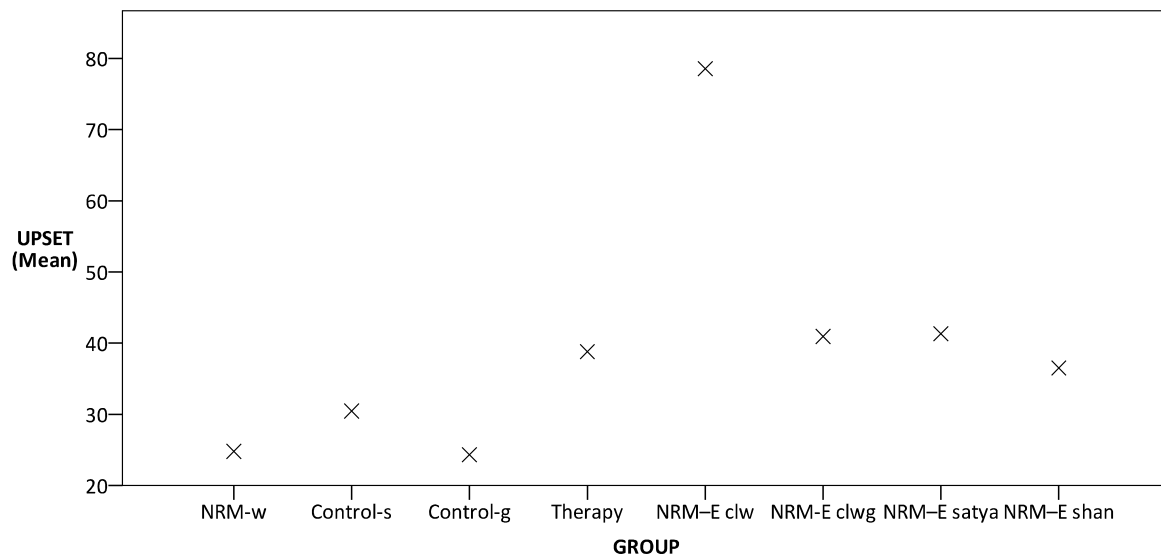
**Figure 20. UPSET ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS**

In terms of the upset experienced due to recent life events, the pattern established in terms of differences among group means is recreated here in Table 60, and Figure 20, with a reassuring regularity. There is no difference between the eastern groups and the therapy group, and in fact this postulated difference has been the one most intermittently supported. When a difference does occur between the eastern groups and the therapy groups, it has so far always been in the predicted direction, however, for some measures of emotionality, the therapy group is as upset as the eastern groups, as is the case with this measure. The eastern groups experience significantly more upset than the student control group (p<.005), in support of hypothesis 31 b) and than the general control group (p<.001) in support of hypothesis 31 c), (XE= 49.33, X *Control-s* =30.46, X *Control-g* = 24.33). There is also support for hypothesis 31 d) that there is more upset felt by the eastern rebirthing NRMs than the other two eastern groups, (X *NRM-E clw* = 59.74, X *NRM-E shan-satya* = 38.91, p<.05). The difference between the eastern and

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western NRMs is once again strongly significant, (p<.01) providing strong support for hypothesis 31 e).

## TABLE 61. MEAN UPSET ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs respond with more upset?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: T> E > C-g > C-s > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 3.06 | 2.14 |
| *Control-s* | 35 | 3.93 | 1.72 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 3.79 | 1.41 |
| *Therapy* | 11 | 4.94 | 1.78 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 13 | 5.26 | 2.10 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 4.10 | 2.15 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 25 | 5.12 | 1.62 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 3.60 | 2.23 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy **vs** NRMs-E* | 1.66 | 2.42 | 0.69 | ns |
| *Control-s **vs** NRMs-E* | 2.34 | 1.60 | 1.46 | ns |
| *Control-g **vs** NRMs-E* | 2.94 | 1.97 | 1.49 | ns |
| *Control-g **vs** Therapy* | 0.73 | 0.70 | 1.03 | ns |
| *NRM-w **vs** Control-g* | 1.15 | 0.67 | 1.71 | .05 |
| *NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya* | 0.64 | 1.11 | .058 | ns |
| *NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E* | 5.85 | 2.54 | 2.30 | .02 |
| *df* | 128 | | | |

When the average upset felt in response to life events is considered, the differences between the eastern groups and the control groups fall away (see Table 61). An unexpected difference emerges between the western

group and the general control group, significant at the .05 level and in the direction predicted by the ordering of the means. There is significant support for hypothesis 32 e) in that the western groups experience significantly less average upset per event than the eastern NRMs.

## Lingering Emotional Memory of Events

A factor which the author considered a potentially powerful indicator of a susceptibility to be undermined by disruptive life experiences was the extent to which an event *persisted in the memory and emotional experience* of the individual after the actual event was no longer objectively operative in the life environment of that person.

An impact item was developed to reflect that tendency, which is discussed as the lingering emotional impact of life events. The order of the means is in the predicted direction, bar the slightly lower mean for the general population.

**TABLE 62. LINGERING EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF EVENTS**

Do those drawn to NRMs have emotionally more intense memories of life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > W > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 28.21 | 21.99 |
| Control-s | 35 | 30.69 | 26.19 |
| Control-g | 12 | 24.83 | 19.08 |
| Therapy | 11 | 36.55 | 28.77 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 76.77 | 66.70 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 44.81 | 29.17 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 34.96 | 23.88 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 33.70 | 34.60 |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 44.05 | 41.73 | 1.06 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 67.50 | 29.18 | 2.31 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 90.91 | 31.99 | 2.84 | .004 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 3.38 | 8.06 | 0.42 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 11.71 | 10.28 | 1.14 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 52.95 | 23.19 | 2.28 | .02 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 77.38 | 33.02 | 2.35 | .01 |
| *df* | 128 | | | |

The Eastern groups and the therapy group all experience memories as heightened in emotional intensity as shown by Table 62. There are significant differences supporting hypotheses 33 b) and c) in that the

eastern groups have more emotional responses to the memory of events than do either the student control group (p<.01) and the general control group (p<.004).
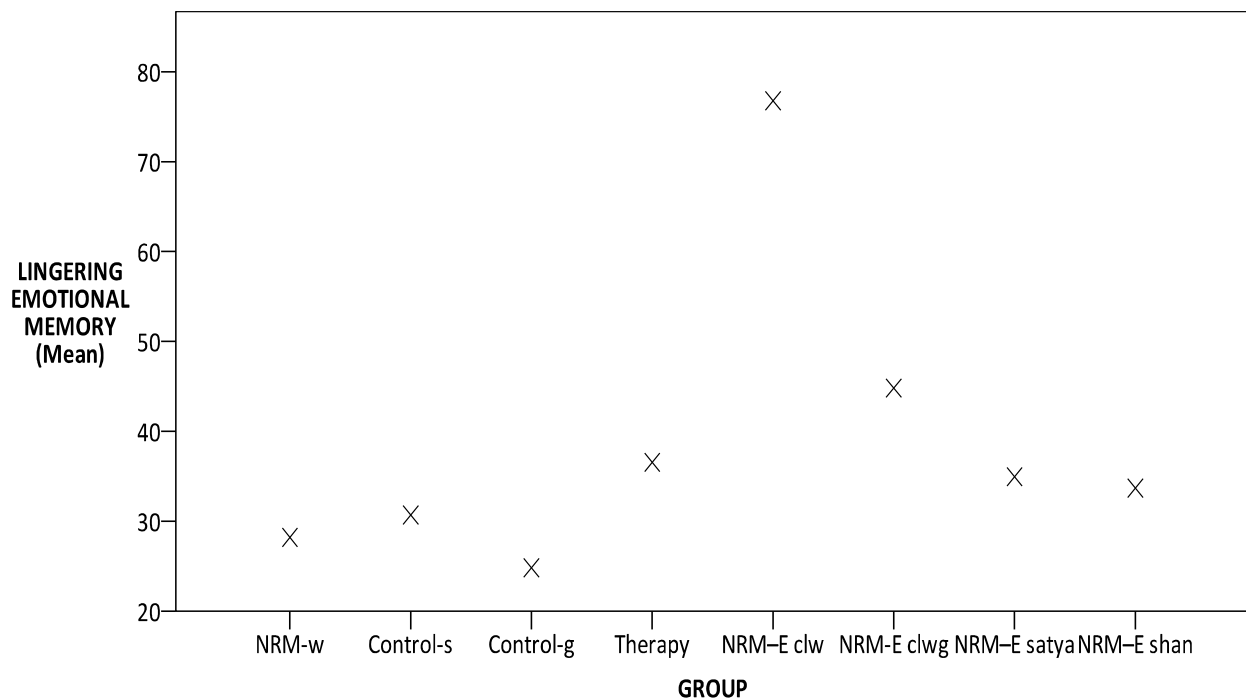


**Figure 21. LINGERING EMOTIONAL MEMORY**

The therapy group and the eastern groups do not differ on this item (but see Figure 21 – above - for the interesting anomaly). The rebirthing eastern groups are especially open to such experience and differ significantly in this regard from the other eastern groups, (XE= 60.79, X *NRM-E shan-satya* = 34.33, p<.02). The within group difference also appears to be much bigger for these groups, so caution is required in drawing conclusions regarding this item. However, given the significance level, this provides cautious support for hypothesis 33 d). The western

group is significantly less prone to this experience than the eastern groups (p<.01) providing strong support for hypothesis 33 e).

## TABLE 63. MEAN EMOTIONAL IMPACT FROM THE MEMORY OF LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience memories as emotionally more intense?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > W > C-g = C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 4.12 | 2.05 |
| Control-s | 35 | 3.82 | 2.12 |
| Control-g | 12 | 3.87 | 1.62 |
| Therapy | 11 | 4.45 | 2.17 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 5.57 | 1.98 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 4.6 | 2.02 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 4.32 | 1.9 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 3.68 | 2.26 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 0.35 | 2.84 | 0.12 | ns |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 2.88 | 1.81 | 1.59 | ns |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 2.71 | 2.17 | 1.25 | ns |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 0.25 | 0.72 | 0.35 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 0.59 | 0.81 | 0.73 | |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya | 2.16 | 1.10 | 1.96 | .03 |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 1.70 | 2.46 | 0.69 | ns |
| df | 128 | | | |

When the average emotional impact from the memory of life events is considered (see Table 63), all of the differences found in the previous set

of hypotheses fall away bar the robust difference between the rebirthing eastern groups and the other two eastern groups. It seems that they differ more extremely on this measure from other eastern affiliates than do the eastern groups as a whole from the control groups or from the western group. There is strong support for hypothesis 34 d) on this measure, but none of the others is supported.

There is a markedly low level of such a response from the Theosophist group (*NRM-E shan* = 3.68) which may be causing the difference between the eastern groups, and contributing to the lack of a significant difference between these groups and the control group.

**Helplessness & Hardiness**

It was mentioned above that one feature of a person who evidenced *a certain hardiness* in the face of stress was someone who had the trilogy of commitment, control and challenge in their way of viewing life change. Since a sense of helplessness is rather a reverse feeling from having a sense of control, it might be that those least able to deal with stressful life events without the help of some outside agency are those who feel most helpless in the face of these events.

The major predictions of the model are supported by this measure, as is apparent from Table 64 (below). The therapy group and the eastern groups, who have both contacted an external social agency, express the greatest feeling of helplessness of any groups. The predicted difference between the therapy group and the eastern groups is in the appropriate direction but it does not attain significance. The predicted differences

between the eastern groups and the control groups are highly significant (see Figure 22, below).

## TABLE 64. IMPACT OF LIFE EVENTS: HELPLESSNESS EXPERIENCED

Do those drawn to NRMs feel more helpless facing life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s = C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 22.36 | 28.38 |
| Control-s | 35 | 25.89 | 16.48 |
| Control-g | 12 | 24.08 | 19.70 |
| Therapy | 11 | 36.36 | 33.00 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 63.46 | 63.02 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 38.31 | 30.71 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 31.04 | 25.58 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 31.30 | 42.54 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 18.66 | 46.43 | 0.40 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 60.57 | 26.38 | 2.30 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 67.78 | 33.00 | 2.05 | .02 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1.73 | 9.48 | 0.18 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 12.28 | 11.46 | 1.07 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 39.43 | 23.91 | 1.65 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 74.69 | 38.63 | 1.93 | .03 |
| *df* | 128 | | | |
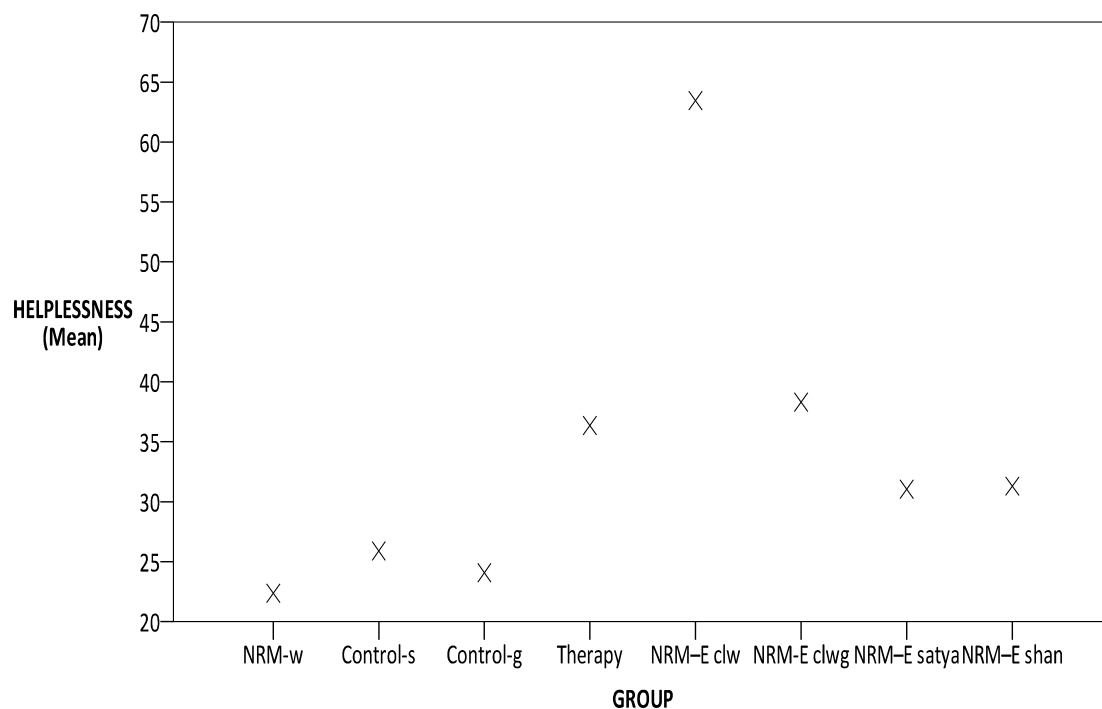
**Figure 22. HELPLESSNESS FELT DURING LIFE EVENTS**

The eastern groups have a higher level of expressed helplessness than the student control group (XE= 41.03, Xcs= 25.89. p<.01) which supports hypothesis 35 b), and than the general control group (Xc-g = 24.08, p<.02) which supports hypothesis 35 c). The predicted difference between the eastern rebirthing groups and the other two eastern groups only just fails to attain significance (p<.06), though it is in the predicted direction. This may be dues to the large within-group differences for the rebirthing groups, where the standard deviations reveal much intra-group variation on this variable. The difference between the eastern groups and the western group is significant, and provides strong support (p<.03) for hypothesis 35 e). These differences are more a function of the high incidence of life events in response to which helplessness was experienced than to an elevated level of

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experience per event, as the differences fall away when the mean amount of helplessness is considered.

## TABLE 65. MEAN HELPLESSNESS ATIENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs feel more helpless facing each life event?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T =C =W

OBSERVED ORDER: T > E > C-g > C-s > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 2.77 | 2.12 |
| Control-s | 35 | 3.49 | 1.54 |
| Control-g | 12 | 3.77 | 1.83 |
| Therapy | 11 | 4.40 | 2.08 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 4.15 | 2.29 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 3.81 | 2.07 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 3.74 | 1.86 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 3.01 | 2.09 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 2.90 | 2.75 | 1.05 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 0.74 | 1.53 | 0.48 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 0.35 | 2.39 | 0.15 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 0.99 | 0.77 | 1.29 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 0.64 | 0.82 | 0.77 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 1.22 | 1.12 | 1.10 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 3.64 | 2.53 | 1.44 | ns |
| df | 128 | | | |

None of hypotheses 36 a) to f) is significant for this item: see Table 65. It seems that those drawn to NRMs do not experience an inordinate amount of helplessness at each life event, but when the sum total of

events is considered, they do experience more helplessness overall. This does not seem to suggest that some feature of affiliates' style of response underpins the greater impact of life events, and therefore does not support this as a personality feature responsible for differential impact.

## TABLE 66. DEPRESSION ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more depression in response to life events?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T = C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 21.57 | 24.81 |
| Control-s | 35 | 29.77 | 20.58 |
| Control-g | 12 | 23.67 | 18.92 |
| Therapy | 11 | 35.18 | 35.26 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 64.00 | 64.61 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 39.31 | 34.76 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 35.80 | 25.27 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 30.00 | 36.25 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 28.39 | 48.59 | 0.58 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 50.03 | 27.33 | 1.83 | .04 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 74.45 | 32.11 | 2.32 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 2.10 | 8.59 | 0.24 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 11.52 | 11.95 | 0.96 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 37.51 | 23.53 | 1.59 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 82.83 | 35.49 | 2.34 | .01 |
| df | 128 | | | |

Since a sense of control and challenge are not consonant with helplessness and depression, it was explored whether those who are drawn to NRMs experience more depression in the face of life events and thus are less likely to evidence a hardiness in the face of them (see Figure 23).
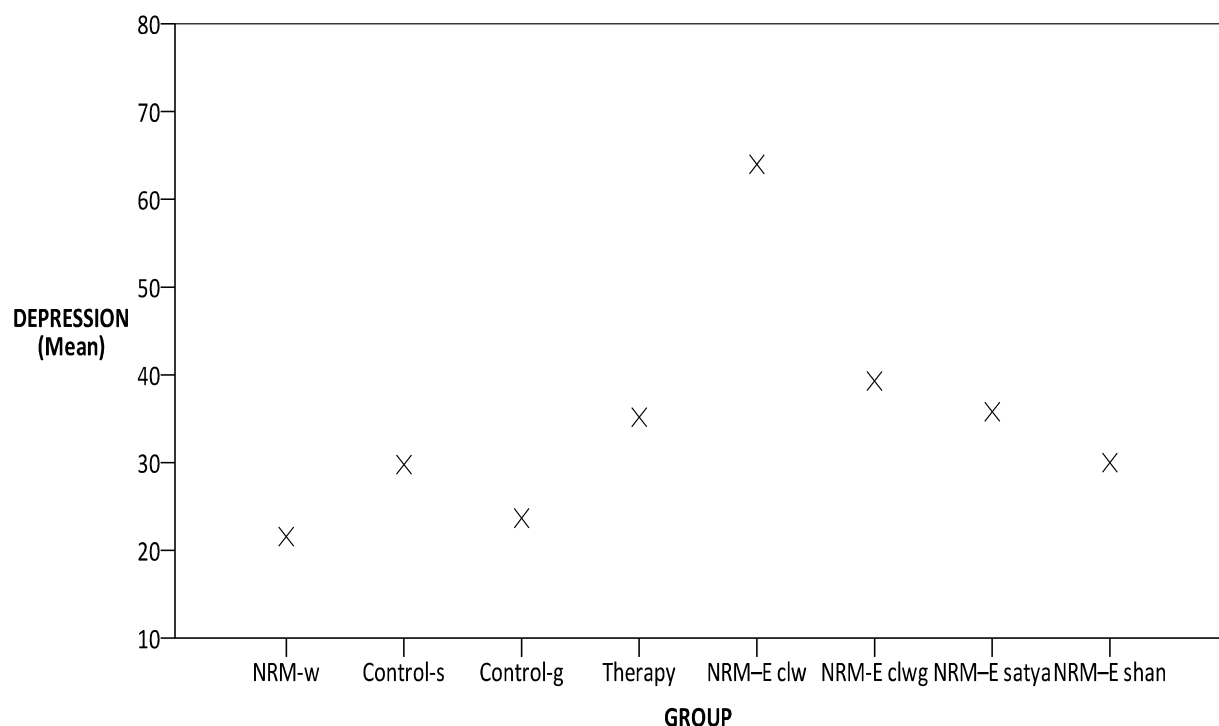


**Figure 23. DEPRESSION ATTENDANT ON LIFE EVENTS**

There is evidence to suggest that the eastern groups do experience more depression in response to life events, more than the two control groups, supporting hypotheses 37 b) and c) ($p<.04$, $p<.01$; respectively, see Table 66) and more than the western group ($p<.01$), supporting hypothesis 37 e). However, it is not likely that this is a character trait, as the effects seem to be due to differential incidence of life events rather than

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differential response, as the differences fades away when the mean depression experienced per event is considered, (see Table 67).

## TABLE 67. MEAN DEPRESSION FELT

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more depression with each life event?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T =C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: T > C-s > E > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|-------|-----|------|----------------|
| NRM-w | 14 | 2.69 | 1.74 |
| Control-s | 35 | 3.92 | 1.59 |
| Control-g | 12 | 3.64 | 1.53 |
| Therapy | 11 | 4.40 | 2.06 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 4.10 | 2.11 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 3.92 | 2.51 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 4.36 | 1.70 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 2.96 | 2.06 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|----------|-------|------------|------|------|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 2.26 | 2.73 | 0.83 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 0.31 | 1.56 | 0.20 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 0.78 | 2.10 | 0.37 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 0.95 | 0.64 | 1.48 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 0.76 | 0.76 | 1.00 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 0.70 | 1.13 | 0.61 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 4.60 | 2.18 | 2.11 | .02 |
| df | 128 | | | |

There is no support for any of the 38 a) to d) hypotheses associated with this item. There is evidence to suggest that the hypothesised difference between the eastern groups and the western NRM is significant (p<.02), suggesting that the western group experiences significantly less

depression attendant on life events than the eastern groups who do not differ from the control groups in this regard.

**The Rites de Passage model**

Remember in Chapter One I mentioned that conversion was most likely where there was the confluence of the two 'disruptive variables' outlined by McHugh, namely, a *disruption in routine* experienced *in isolation*. I suggested this may mean that life experiences may commence a rite of passage for the person as new ways of coping and interpreting the events are sought.

**33. RELATIVE ISOLATION: Acquaintances and Close Friends**

**33.1 The Availability of Acquaintances**

Availability scores are derived from summing the number of social provision categories for which a subject has access to someone. The nature of the social provision category specified depends on whether one is assessing *social integration*, in which case they will be acquaintance-level bonds (e.g. shared interest partners, colleagues at work, neighbours) or assessing *attachment*, in which case the categories will specify more intimate bonds (e.g. confidante, comforter, co-celebrator etc.)

The availability of acquaintance-level bonds is referred to as 'social integration' by Henderson et al (1981) in their development of the scale. By this they mean the degree of access one has to people with shared interests, people of whom small favours might be asked, work colleagues etc. It was thought that the level of community integration

might be influenced by the degree to which one's lifestyle and values were shared by those around one. If non-traditional people (which includes those approaching the eastern and therapy groups in this study) leading eventful lives are adequately contextualised in a community or subculture of people sharing similar values and activities, it is suggested there would be less need to approach organised social groups promoting problem-solving perspectives.

**Making predictions**

It was predicted that those making contact with an eastern or therapy group for the first time, would have less of a sense of social integration in terms of the perceived availability of those bonds, and reduced assessment as to their emotional adequacy.

The results support this hypothesis, in that those approaching social agencies for the first time, the Eastern NRMs and the therapy group, are those rating as lowest the perceived availability of the looser, community-level bonds which make up a sense of social integration.

**TABLE 68. AVAILABILITY OF ACQUAINTANCE-LEVEL BONDS**

Do those drawn to NRMs lack a sense of integration in the community?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: T < E < C-s < C-g < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 5.50 | 1.82 |
| Control-s | 33 | 4.06 | 3.94 |
| Control-g | 51 | 4.61 | 3.34 |
| Therapy | 13 | 3.38 | 2.24 |
| NRM–E clw | 12 | 2.83 | 3.64 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 4.44 | 1.75 |
| NRM–E satya | 28 | 3.79 | 4.60 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 4.58 | 3.74 |

**ANALAYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 6.00 | 1.71 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 2.95 | 0.84 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 15.50 | 4.42 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 13.47 | 3.84 | .01 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 28.73 | 8.19 | .005 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 8.74 | 2.49 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E clwg | 1 | 17.65 | 5.03 | .01 |
| error | 171 | 3.51 | | |

The difference between the two control groups is not significant on this comparison. The comparisons will be between the experimental groups and the general population sample due to a greater comparability of age. Table 68 and Figure 24 reveal suggestive support for hypothesis 39 a) as there is no difference between the eastern and therapy groups, as

predicted. It seems that as a group, the eastern NRMs and the therapy group are similarly isolated. Since they both endorse traditional values only to a small extent this perhaps gives these groups a sense of difference from those around them on a casual basis, a difference which may not carry through to the level of intimate bonds where values rather than contingent circumstance are part of what brings individuals together.
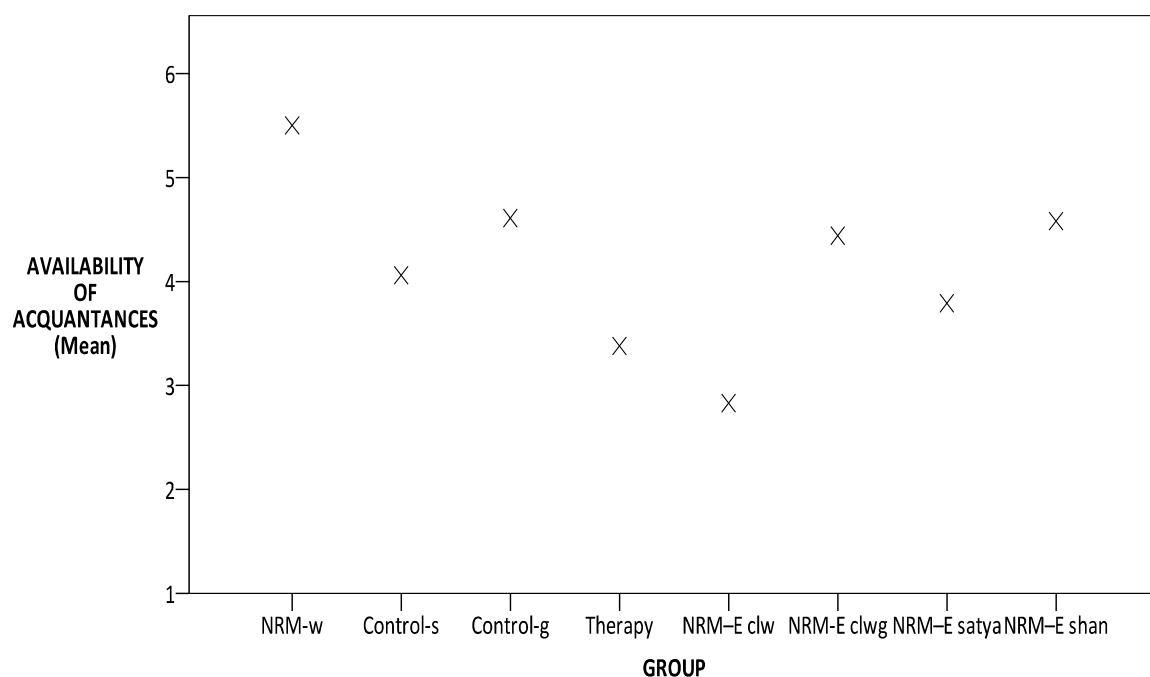


**Figure 24. AVAILABILITY OF ACQUAINTANCE-LEVEL BONDS**

In terms of the looser bonds which provide a sense of community, it is apparent from Table 68 that significant differences exist between the general population control group and the Therapy group ($p<.01$), providing support for hypothesis 39 b) and between the general population control group and the Eastern NRMs, ($p<.01$, providing

support for hypothesis 39 c). The control group in each comparison rates acquaintance bonds as significantly more available than the latter. In support of hypothesis 39 d) the difference between the Eastern NRMs and the Western NRM is highly significant (p<.001). This verifies the assumption that belonging to a religious community is associated with a sense of community integration. However, despite the privilege of the Western group relative to those drawn to therapy and to eastern NRMs they are not significantly privileged in relation to the general population control, as hypothesis 39 e) is not supported; the difference fails to achieve significance despite its being in the predicted direction. The Western NRM has the highest mean rating of availability of acquaintances (Xw=5.50).

It seems there is support for a relief effect of even short term involvement in NRMs as the predicted difference between the novice and the graduate rebirthing groups is significant and in the predicted direction, with the graduate group having more of a sense of community integration, than the novice group (X *NRM-E clw* = 2.83, X *NRM-E clwg* = 4.44, p<.01). The graduate group's sense of integration is restored to a level comparable to that of the control groups. Since involvement in a residential workshop requires a complete break with previous social networks for its duration, it is undertaken by those who, in this instance have little to lose. The novices in this group are in a position of extreme isolation relative to the other groups in the study.

## 33.2 Availability of Intimates

It was suggested above that closer bonds have an identity and value-sustaining function, and that the absence of intimates, people in whom one can confide, with whom one can speak frankly and visit unannounced, especially if that absence is felt to be a point of inadequacy by an individual, is consonant with loneliness, and may promote the undertaking of a social course of action, especially in times of stress. So, it was predicted that those non-traditional people with eventful lives who are contacting social agencies for the first time might also have deficits in this realm of their social lives. The indices of perceived availability of acquaintances and intimates were significantly, though not highly correlated (r=0.33, p<.0001) using the Pearson Product moment correlation statistic. Since the indices do reveal different patterns of perceived privilege and deficit across groups, fine distinctions will be drawn, and the results reported in detail rather than statistically collapsing the variables.

# TABLE 69. DIFFERENTIAL AVAILABILITY OF CLOSE BONDS

Do those drawn to NRMs lack intimates?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: E < C-s < C-g < T < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 6.29 | 0.92 |
| *Control-s* | 33 | 4.85 | 2.19 |
| *Control-g* | 51 | 5.02 | 2.18 |
| *Therapy* | 13 | 5.31 | 2.37 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 12 | 3.92 | 5.41 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 5.06 | 2.06 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 28 | 4.86 | 1.69 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 4.25 | 4.35 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-s vs Control-g* | 1 | 0.59 | 0.24 | ns |
| *Therapy vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 6.61 | 2.66 | ns |
| *Control-g vs Therapy* | 1 | 0.86 | 0.35 | ns |
| *Control-g vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 6.85 | 2.76 | ns |
| *NRM-w vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 35.37 | 14.25 | .0005 |
| *NRM-w vs Control-g* | 1 | 17.61 | 7.10 | .005 |
| *NRM-E clw vs NRM-E clwg* | 1 | 9.00 | 3.63 | .05 |
| error | 171 | 2.48 | | |
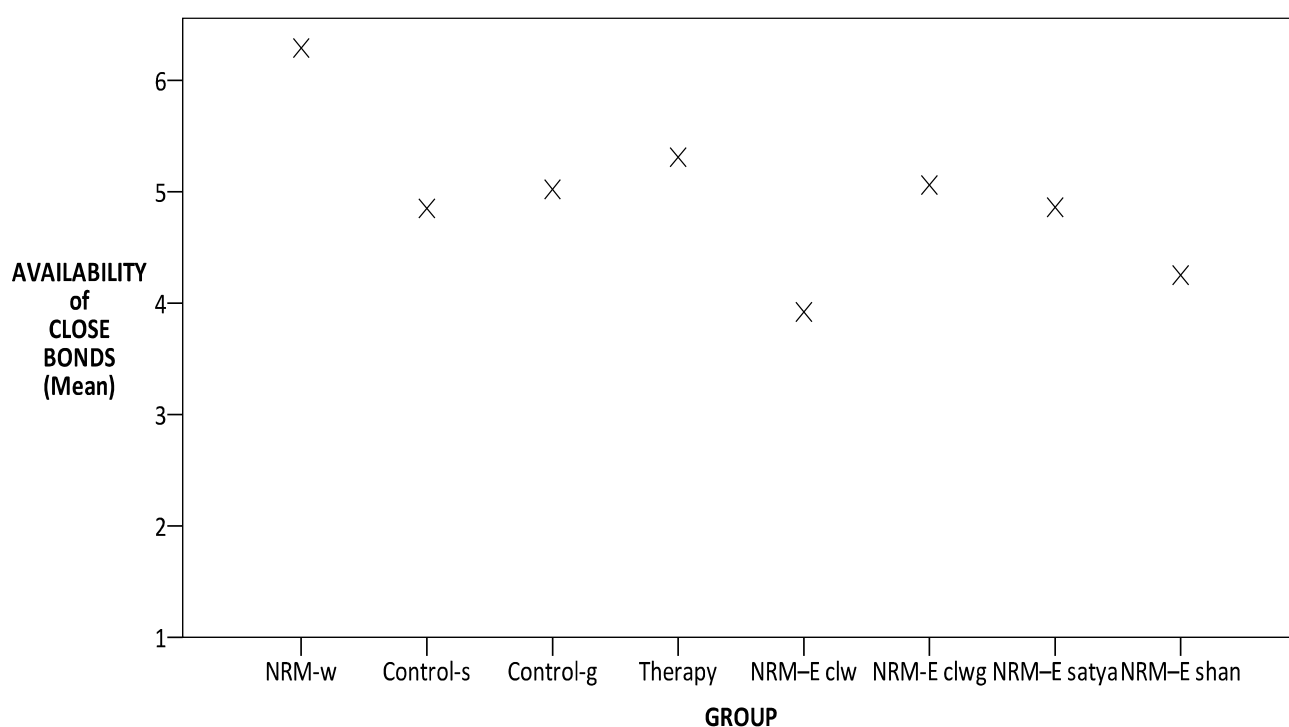
**Figure 25. AVAILABILITY OF CLOSE BONDS**

In terms of the availability of close bonds available in the social environment over the last twelve months the two control groups do not differ significantly from each other. From Table 69 it can be seen that there are no significant differences in the availability of close bonds between the eastern NRMs and the therapy group, which seems to lend credence to Hypothesis 40 a) that these groups find themselves similarly isolated.

However, in the absence of significant predicted differences between other groups, (the therapy group does not differ from the general population control group, providing no support for hypothesis 40 b), it seems that the eastern and therapy groups endure a level of isolation that, for this index at least, neither differentiates them from the student

control group nor from the general population. An absence of a significant difference in such a context must be interpreted with care (see Figure 25).

The group that does emerge as privileged in both contrasts into which it enters is the Western NRM. There are significantly higher mean ratings of availability of close bonds for the Western NRM compared to the Eastern groups (p<.0005), which provides strong support for hypothesis 40 d), and compared to the Control-g group, ($X_w$=6.29 cf $X_{c-g}$ =5.02, p< .005), which supports hypothesis 40 e). While membership with the western NRM did not provide an unusually high level of community-level bonds relative to the general population it seems that it is associated with having significantly more close bonds available. While participation in the rebirthing group did provide relief from a lack of a sense of community, (as the significant difference between graduates and novices suggested), the apparent relief effect as assessed by perceived availability of close bonds, while being in the predicted direction, does not achieve significance. Once again, involvement with this group has brought novices closer to the level of availability of bonds characteristic of the general community, but not near to the level which characterises the members of the western group.

## 34. RELATIVE LONELINESS: Adequacy of Acquaintances & Close Friends

Loneliness cannot be specified in terms of an absence or presence of acquaintances of intimates, it is not an issue of mere unavailability. It refers to a feeling, an evaluation of social contacts in terms of their

adequacy in frequency, intensity, variety and extent. It involves more psychological indices of social bonding, for example, the rated adequacy rather than the perceived availability of bonds (though of course perceived availability may be influenced by psychological state).

Adequacy scores are derived by giving one point for every social provision category (e.g. confidante, comforter) for which a subject has access to someone, where they suggest they get 'enough' of that social provision from that person (for example, they do not answer they 'would like more' or 'depends'); and one point is accorded if they do not indicate that they would 'like someone else as well', rather, that they feel the existing person is 'enough'.

In spite of the expected moderate, significant correlation found (using Pearson's Product Moment statistic) between indices of availability and adequacy of close bonds (r=0.54, p<.0001) and between measures of the adequacy of acquaintance and intimate-level bonds (r=0.57, p<.0001) the different indices reveal different patterns of privilege and deficit across groups. The adequacy measures of close bonds seem to be a particular area of deficit for those involving themselves in NRMs, and it is for this reason that, once more, fine distinctions are drawn, and results reported in detail.

As Table 70 (below) shows the two control groups do not differ significantly from each other in terms of the rated adequacy of community-level bonds. Neither do the therapy groups and eastern NRMs differ from each other, which lends credence to hypothesis 41 a),

as all are below the level of adequacy expressed by the control and western groups. These groups are all in a similar state of felt deficiency. Not so the therapy group and the general population control group, as the significant difference in Table 70 shows.

## TABLE 70. ADEQUACY OF ACQUAINTANCE-LEVEL BONDS

Do those drawn to NRMs lack a sense of social integration?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: T < E < C-s < C-g < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 5.64 | 5.94 |
| *Control-s* | 33 | 4.70 | 6.39 |
| *Control-g* | 51 | 5.37 | 5.02 |
| *Therapy* | 13 | 3.62 | 8.54 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 12 | 3.67 | 7.56 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 2.75 | 1.94 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 28 | 4.07 | 6.49 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 4.25 | 8.35 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-s **vs** Control-g* | 1 | 9.14 | 1.47 | ns |
| *Control-g **vs** Therapy* | 1 | 31.99 | 5.14 | .01 |
| *Therapy **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 0.00 | 0.00 | ns |
| *Control-g **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 78.79 | 12.65 | .0005 |
| *NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 43.60 | 7.00 | .005 |
| *NRM-w **vs** Control-g* | 1 | 0.80 | 0.13 | ns |
| *NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E clwg* | 1 | 5.76 | 0.93 | ns |
| error | 171 | 6.23 | | |
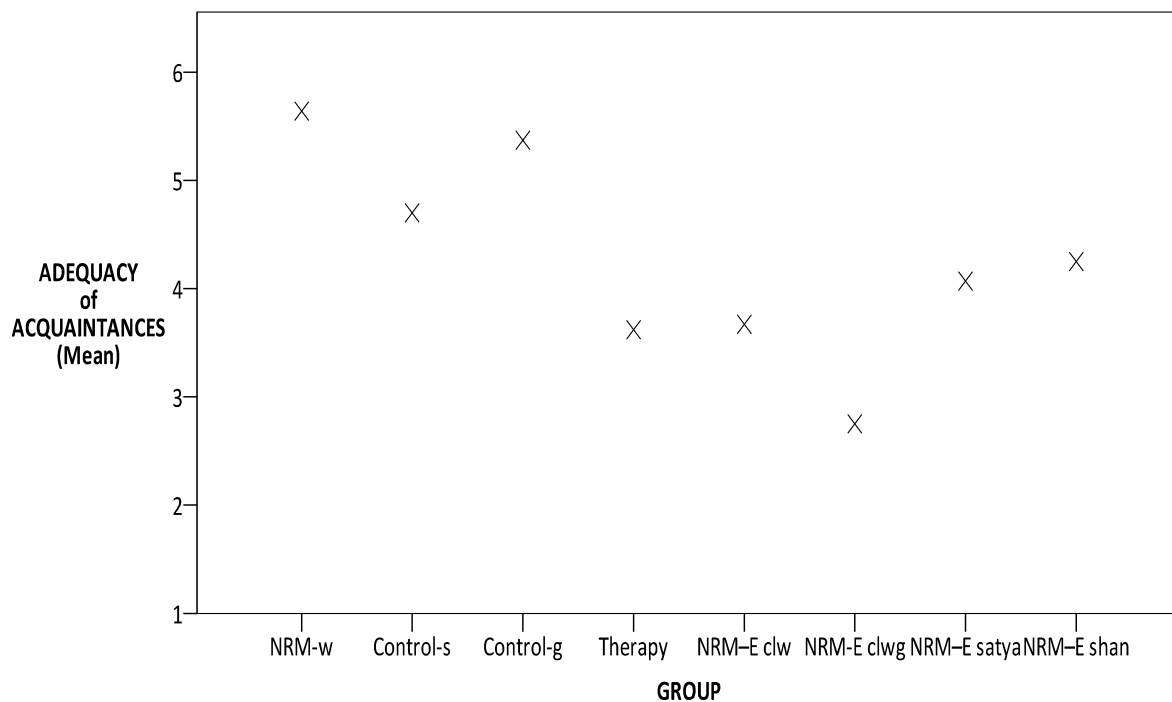
**Figure 26. THE ADEQUACY OF ACQUAINTANCE-LEVEL BONDS**

The therapy group is significantly less content with the community bonds available to them (p<.01). This supports hypothesis 41 b). From Table 70 it is apparent that there is support for hypothesis 41 c), as Eastern NRMs do differ significantly from the control group (p<.0005), the former rating their acquaintance-level bonds as significantly less adequate. The eastern groups rate their acquaintance-level bonds as significantly less adequate than those involved in the Western NRM (Xw=5.64, p<.005), providing strong support for hypothesis 41 c). While the mean level of rated adequacy is higher for the western NRM than for the control group (Xw=5.64, X Control-g =5.37, ns) this difference did not attain significance, so hypothesis 41 e) is unsupported.

The difference between the novice and graduate rebirthing groups did not attain significance, and the difference was not even in the predicted direction (X *NRM-E clw* =3.67, X *NRM-E clw-g* =2.75, ns). So, there is no support for hypothesis 41 f). Figure 26 (above) illustrates these differences.

## 34.1 Adequacy of Intimates

Since close bonds are assumed to be particularly important in maintaining personal values and a sense of identity, and the rated adequacy of bonds is presumed to reflect loneliness rather than isolation, this is an index of particular interest regarding differential recruitment to NRMs. The results demarcate those approaching Eastern NRMs and the therapy group as feeling significantly deprived in this regard. The Eastern groups feel differ significantly less supported than the western group and the control group, providing strong support for the hypotheses. Interestingly, and as predicted, it is apparent from Table 71 (below) that the therapy group does not differ significantly in terms of the rated adequacy of close bonds from the eastern NRMs, all three of these groups have the similar, relatively low mean adequacy ratings. This lends credence to hypothesis 42 a), which predicted no difference on this measure between the eastern and the therapy groups. It seems that the members of the Eastern NRMs and Therapy group are not so much in life situations where close and acquaintance bonds are seen as relatively unavailable, but where they are rated as inadequate, by a scoring system which spans both their intensity and extent. A low adequacy rating indicates that an individual would like more of a given

social provision from someone in his/her social environment, and/or that s/he would like to have an additional person in that social capacity.

## TABLE 71. ADEQUACY OF INTIMATE BONDS

Do those drawn to NRMs lack intimate bonds?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: E < T < C-s < C-g < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 5.64 | 5.80 |
| Control-s | 33 | 4.52 | 5.22 |
| Control-g | 51 | 5.59 | 6.05 |
| Therapy | 13 | 4.08 | 5.15 |
| NRM–E clw | 12 | 1.83 | 3.47 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 3.50 | 5.38 |
| NRM–E satya | 28 | 4.07 | 4.64 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 3.58 | 7.58 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 23.07 | 4.04 | .05 |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 7.37 | 1.30 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 23.66 | 4.14 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 151.57 | 26.52 | .0005 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 65.24 | 0.49 | .0005 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 3.28 | 0.00 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E clwg | 1 | 19.05 | 3.33 | .05 |
| error | 171 | 5.71 | | |
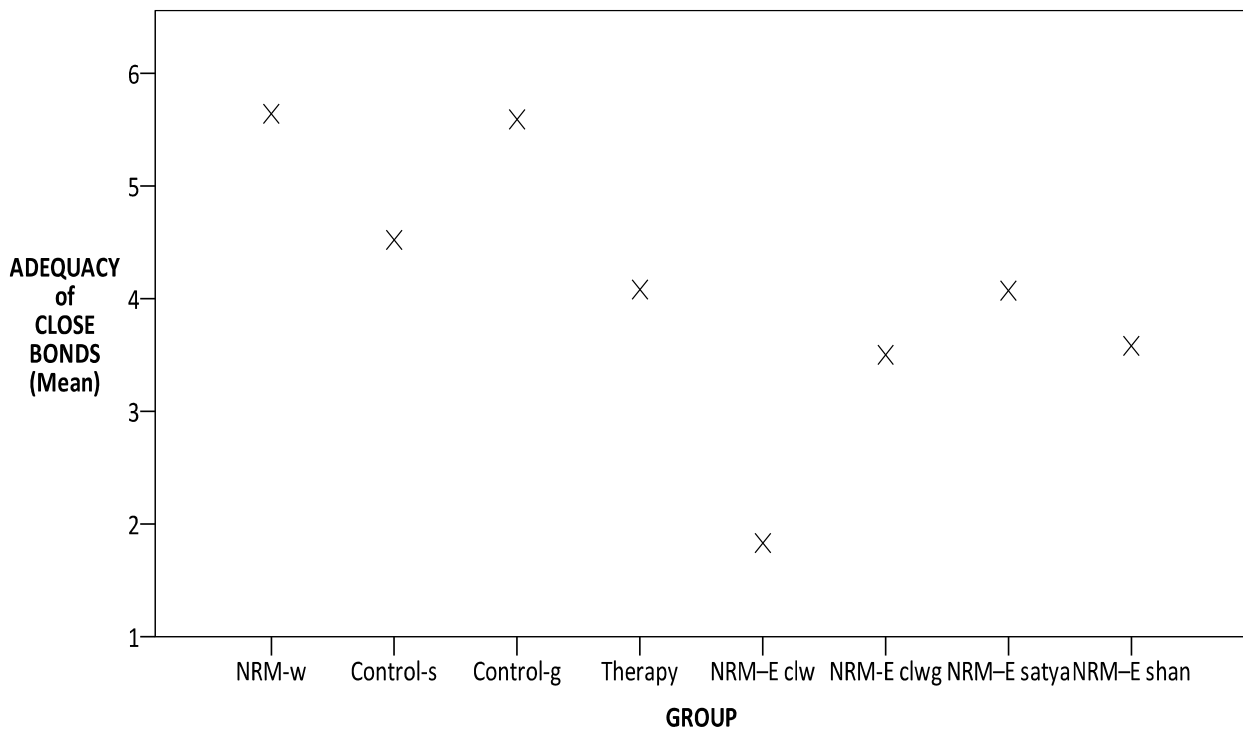
**Figure 27. ADEQUACY OF CLOSE BONDS**

These less traditional groups, the Eastern NRMs and Therapy group, are similarly lonely in terms of not having enough access of an adequate intensity to appropriate people. For the Eastern NRMs this isolation is in addition to a high level of recent stress as measured by frequency and impact of recent life events.

A significant difference occurred between the two control groups for this measure, with the student group rating their close bonds as *significantly less adequate* than did the general population control group, see Figure 27 (above). Whether this difference stems from greater need or from an actual deficiency in the provisions available in the close bonds is unknown. Either way, a discrepancy exists which perhaps leaves them motivated to alter their social environment.

The control groups rated the adequacy of close bonds significantly more highly (XcG =5.59) than any of the Eastern NRMs (X *NRM-E clw* =1.83 and X *NRM-E clw*-g = 3.50, X *NRM-E satya* = 4.07, X *NRM-E shan* =3.58). This difference is highly significant (p<.0005) which provides strong support for hypothesis 42 c). The western group has a significantly higher rated adequacy of close bonds than those approaching the eastern groups, (p<.0005), which provides strong support for hypothesis 42 d). However, despite the relative privilege of the western NRM relative to those approaching Eastern NRMs, there is no difference between the Western group and the general control group in this regard, (X Control-g =5.59, Xw=5.64), so hypothesis 42 e) remains unsupported. So while membership of a NRM is not associated with a significantly higher rated adequacy of intimate bonds than the control group, the western group mean adequacy rating shows them to be in a more socially supported position than those who have not joined a NRM.

Involvement over three months in a rebirthing group seems to ameliorate the felt deficiency of close bonds, as the difference between the novice group and the graduate group attains significance and provides support for hypothesis 42 f).

## 35. MENTAL HEALTH

A number of researchers have shown that those drawn to NRMs have had a hectic existence in the recent past, and some have had a history of hospitalisation. The results of this study certainly support the suggestion that many disruptive life events have occurred in the recent past, which might tax a person's coping resources, and might conceivably diminish

his/her *joie de vivre.* Marc Galanter developed scales specifically for study of charismatic groups which addressed the level of wellbeing and neurotic distress.

The following statistics are calculated by a programme which uses the UNIX* data manipulation developed by Perlam (1983) at the University of California, San Diego. The output for the ANOVA is in terms of the F statistic (Scheffe') and variance is cited rather than standard deviation. This format will be retained throughout the thesis where the F statistic is used rather than the t statistic of the SPSS-X analysis.

This index of general wellbeing was developed by Marc Galanter using as a sample group, the Unification Church, and has been used in his studies, where it proved a useful measure of the relative wellbeing of those drawn to that movement. It has generalised discriminating power in that significant differences occur within this broad range of NRMs.

**TABLE 72. GENERAL WELLBEING: Marc Galanter's scale**

Do those drawn to NRMs have less wellbeing?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: C-s = T < E < C-g =W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 6.43 | 3.09 |
| *Control-s* | 30 | 5.64 | 4.08 |
| *Control-g* | 13 | 6.40 | 3.66 |
| *Therapy* | 8 | 5.85 | 3.41 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 18 | 5.81 | 3.47 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 29 | 5.56 | 3.50 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 5.70 | 3.67 |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-g **vs** Control-s* | 1 | 47.73 | 13.11 | .001 |
| *Therapy **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 1.52 | 0.42 | ns |
| *Therapy **vs** Control-g* | 1 | 13.70 | 3.76 | .05 |
| *Control-g **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 47.21 | 12.97 | .0001 |
| *NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 53.93 | 14.81 | .0001 |
| *NRM-w **vs** Control-g* | 1 | 1.20 | 0.00 | ns |

The extremely significant difference between the student control sample and the general control groups ($p < .001$) suggests that the student group have considerably less wellbeing than the general population (see Table 72). Descriptively, the student group has a wellbeing level comparable to those drawn to therapy and eastern NRMs.

There is not a significant difference between the eastern NRMs and the therapy group, which lends credence to hypothesis 43 a). It seems that both have a similarly relatively low level of wellbeing. Since religion is more of a generalised compensator than therapy, it was thought possible that the level of suffering would be higher in those drawn to NRMs than to therapy. This is not the case. The therapy group is significantly lower in wellbeing than the general population, supporting hypothesis 43 b). Extremely significant differences in wellbeing do occur, as predicted by hypotheses 43 c) and d), between the Eastern NRMs and the general population control group, and the Eastern NRMs and the Western NRM respectively. These highly significant differences (p<.0005) support hypotheses 43 c) and d), and suggest that the Eastern NRMs are in a position of relative suffering at the time of contacting the movements, relative to the general population, and to those already involved in a western NRM. The privilege of the Western group relative to the eastern groups in terms of wellbeing does not carry through in the comparison between this group and the general control group. There is no support for hypothesis 43 f) as the difference did not achieve significance. Had the comparison group been the student sample, it is likely that this difference would have been highly significant, but the general population sample is more comparable in terms of age.

The pattern of results is quite reversed when Tellegen's measure of wellbeing is considered as Table 73 shows. In this case, it is the eastern NRMs who seem to be in fine fettle, as do the western NRM members and the student group which is shown in Figure 28 (below). It is the

general population control and the therapy group who are characterised by a low level of wellbeing for these measures.

## TABLE 73. WELLBEING: Tellegen's Subscale of the MPQ

Are those drawn to NRMs seeking solace from unhappiness?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: T < C-g < E < C-s < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|-------|----|------|----------|
| NRM-w | 14 | 8.86 | 5.27 |
| Control-s | 39 | 8.49 | 6.97 |
| Control-g | 17 | 6.82 | 9.20 |
| Therapy | 10 | 6.20 | 5.96 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 8.15 | 9.53 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 8.23 | 6.38 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 8.42 | 7.91 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|----------|-----|-------|------|--------------|
| Control-g *vs* Control-s | 1 | 32.77 | 4.26 | .05 |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 36.04 | 4.69 | .05 |
| Therapy *vs* Control-g | 1 | 2.44 | 0.31 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 26.93 | 3.50 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 3.88 | 0.50 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 31.75 | 4.13 | .01 |
| error | 135 | 7.69 | | |

The student sample has significantly greater wellbeing than the general population group, (p<.05). The eastern groups have a significantly higher level of wellbeing than the therapy group, (p<.05) which provides no

support for hypothesis 44 a), as the difference is in the opposite direction to that predicted.
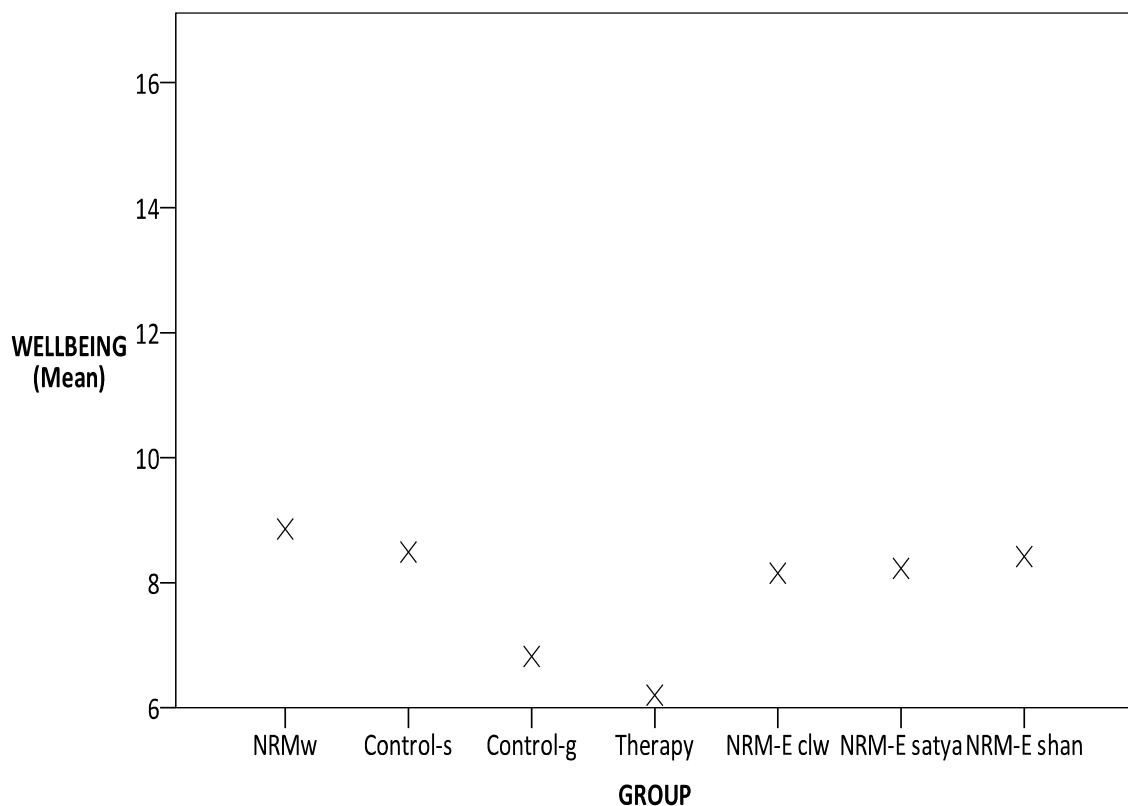


**Figure 28. WELLBEING**

There is no support for hypothesis 44 b) as the difference between the general control group and the therapy group does not attain significance, with a similar lack of difference occurring between the general control group and the eastern NRMs which provides no support for hypothesis 44 c), and the apparent difference is in the opposite direction to that predicted. The eastern and western NRMs are similarly filled with wellbeing, so the difference does not attain significance, and there is no support for hypothesis 44 d). There is a significant difference between the western NRM and the general control group which provides support for hypothesis 44 e), (p<.01) that those who are long

term members of a new religious movement will experience higher level of wellbeing than those without this commitment and support.

On the neurotic distress scale developed by Marc Galanter, a high score means that an individual is relatively distressed in terms of having concerns about bodily health, anxiety or tension, much time spent depressed and little time spent feeling that life was filled with interesting events.

### TABLE 74. Marc Galanter's Neurotic Distress Scale

Are those drawn to NRMs more distressed?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: C-s > T > E > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|-------|---|------|----------|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 4.61 | 5.24 |
| *Control-s* | 30 | 5.60 | 3.31 |
| *Control-g* | 13 | 5.10 | 5.85 |
| *Therapy* | 8 | 5.51 | 4.03 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 18 | 5.35 | 4.93 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 29 | 5.43 | 3.69 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 5.43 | 4.67 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|----------|----|----|----|--------------|
| *Control-s vs Control-g* | 1 | 20.50 | 4.74 | .01 |
| *Therapy vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 0.78 | 0.18 | ns |
| *Control-g vs Therapy* | 1 | 7.54 | 1.74 | ns |
| *Control-g vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 8.41 | 1.94 | ns |
| *NRM-w vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 62.12 | 14.37 | .0001 |
| *NRM-w vs Control-g* | 1 | 14.65 | 3.39 | .05 |
| error | 1109 | 4.32 | | |

The results from Table 74 show that most of the groups are in a highly comparable state, with few significant differences emerging. The major findings relate to the higher level of neurotic distress experienced by the student control group, which is significantly different from the general population group, and the relatively symptom-free status of the western NRM on this measure. The western group has significantly less neurotic distress than the eastern NRMs which provides strong support for hypothesis 45 e) that there is a relief effect experienced upon membership of a NRM, evidenced by a diminished level of neurotic distress, and an enhanced level of wellbeing. Regardless of how the concept of mental health has been operationalised, be it as wellbeing, or as an absence of neurotic symptoms of distress, the western group has emerged as privileged and robust on these dimensions relative to those approaching NRMs of an eastern nature. It seems that those approaching movements are not in a position of suffering relative to the general control group, but they have not achieved the levels of wellbeing and ease which are avowed by religious group members.

## 36. FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND NRM INVOLVEMENT

It was suggested above that there are attributes which characterise individuals who are prone to the appeal of charismatic leaders, and who, long after the turbulence of adolescence retain a need receive insightful and compassionate feedback from others, (which Kohut terms "mirroring") and a longing to find someone who embodies a way of life and a perspective on it which they can admiringly emulate, (which Kohut terms idealisation).

**Appraisal of Parents: devising a measure assessing a range of attributes**

Ullman's (1982) study went some way towards an outline of some of those attributes, which she located in troubled early life experiences with the parents, more especially, with the father. For this reason, an attempt was made to find something out about how affiliates and members of NRMs recalled their parents, in contrast to the feelings and memories retained by those involved in therapy, and by the two control groups, the students and the general population. These data are derived from the summation of twelve 10-point Likert scales, anchored by adjectives which derived from Ullman's in-depth interviews with devotees, items which distinguished 'cult' members from devotees of more traditional religions. This is the data base of the items which refer to the 'appraisal' of mother or father in childhood or adolescence.

**Satisfaction with Parents: a single identification item measure**

To capture the extent to which a parent embodied a person's ideal, albeit in retrospect, an item developed by the author was used which asked each subject to indicate on a 10-point Likert scale the degree to which they completely agree or completely disagree with the following statement:

*If I could rewrite my childhood/adolescence I would choose a mother/father exactly like my own.*

This forms the basis for four indicators of satisfaction with *mother* or *father* in *childhood* or *adolescence*.

# TABLE 75. POSITIVE APPRAISAL OF MOTHER IN CHILDHOOD [0-12yrs]

Do those drawn to NRMs recall her as less satisfactory?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < W < T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: E < W < C-g < C-s < T

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 10 | 6.04 | 7.39 |
| *Control-s* | 33 | 7.18 | 5.59 |
| *Control-g* | 13 | 6.65 | 5.58 |
| *Therapy* | 10 | 7.36 | 3.56 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 19 | 5.45 | 9.18 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 5.92 | 12.86 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 29 | 6.50 | 6.44 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 5.73 | 7.59 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-s vs Control-g* | 1 | 34.48 | 4.77 | .05 |
| *NRM-w vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 2.13 | 0.29 | ns |
| *Therapy vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 261.00 | 36.15 | .01 |
| *Control-g vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 79.81 | 11.05 | .01 |
| *Control-s vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 476.74 | 66.03 | .001 |
| *NRM-w vs Control-s* | 1 | 130.95 | 18.14 | .001 |
| *NRM-E clw vs NRM-E clwg* | 1 | 24.90 | 3.45 | ns |
| error | 1851 | 7.22 | | |

Because the study is primarily concerned with the NRMs here, and there is a discrepancy of sample size and a significant difference (p<.05) between the two control groups, the majority of the *a priori* contrasts concern the NRMs and the two control groups, though difference is established between the eastern NRMs and the therapy group.
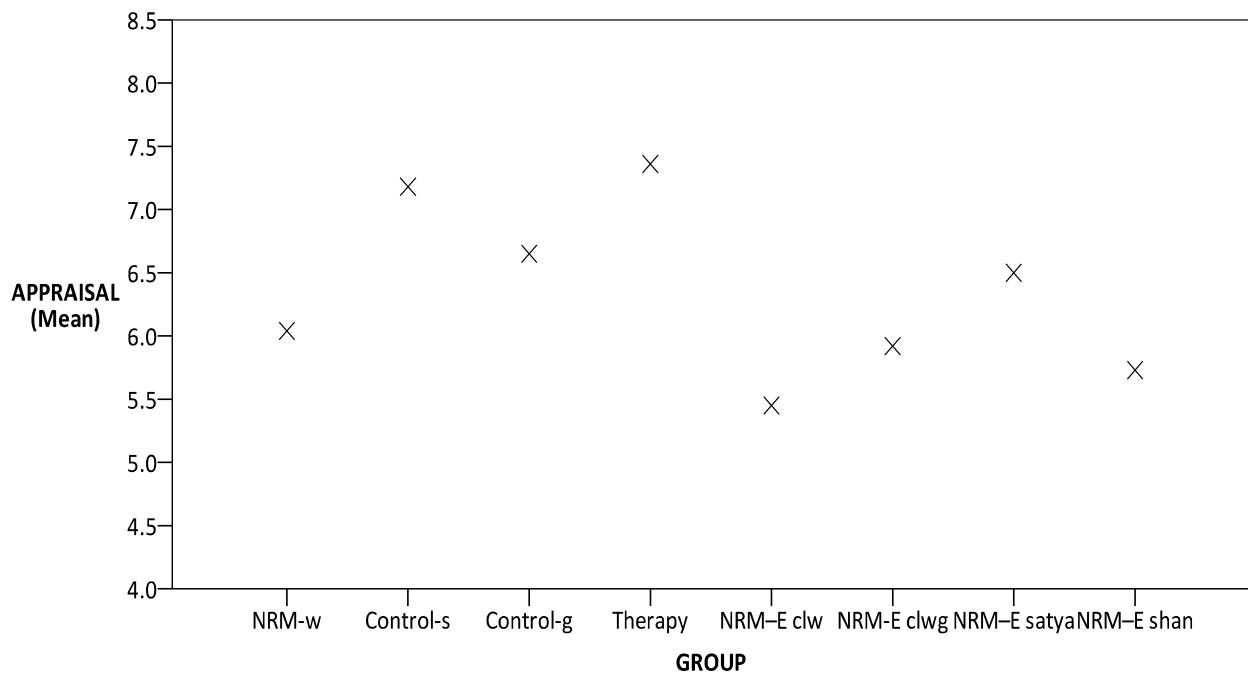
**Figure 29. APPRAISAL OF MOTHER IN CHILDHOOD**

This measure assessed the degree to which a subject's mother was rated as having certain positive and negative qualities. Some striking differences emerge: see Figure 29.

Perhaps the most important contrast concerns the eastern and western groups on this measure. For the first time, there is no significant difference between these groups, who have been virtually diametrically opposed on all other measures. They are united in their relatively negative appraisal of their mother in childhood. It was expected that those drawn to NRMs, the eastern groups, who have just experienced much life turmoil, and are relatively lonely, might have a more negative appraisal of their parents, more so than those who view their past from the stability of a religious community, and who might have achieved Freud's dictum that the first task of growing up is to forgive our parents. The absence of a significant difference does not support this hypothesis 46 a).

Table 75 reveals strong support provided for hypothesis 46 b) whereby a highly significant difference (p<.001) exists between the relatively appreciative therapy group (who rate their mother quite positively during childhood), and the troubled eastern groups (who view her much more negatively), suggests that those drawn to NRMs do have a stronger sense of the negative qualities of their mother during childhood.

Given the absence of a significant difference between the eastern and western groups in this regard, it seems that whether members of a NRM or not, and whether compared to the therapy group, student group or general control group, the more negative appraisal of mother is a robust item which differentiates NRM affiliates and members from all other groups. There is strong support for hypotheses 46 c) and d), that affiliates to eastern groups view her more negatively than is the case for the general and student control groups, (p<.05 and p<.001, respectively). There is also strong support for the hypothesised difference between the western NRM and the student control group, which supports hypothesis 46 d) (p<.001), as the former rate her more harshly than the latter. The expected difference between the novice rebirthing group *[NRMEclw]* and the graduate group *[NRMEclw-g]* in terms of the appraisal of mother, did not attain significance, so hypothesis 46 e) is unsupported, though the difference is in the predicted direction. A three month intensive course seems insufficient for this group to come to resemble the control groups on this measure.

# TABLE 76. SATISFACTION WITH MOTHER IN CHILDHOOD

The single identification question

EXPECTED ORDER: E < W < T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: E < W < C-g < T < C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 10 | 5.70 | 5.81 |
| Control-s | 33 | 8.39 | 2.97 |
| Control-g | 13 | 6.62 | 7.32 |
| Therapy | 10 | 8.09 | 3.17 |
| NRM–E clw | 19 | 4.37 | 9.29 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 5.50 | 2.50 |
| NRM–E satya | 29 | 6.17 | 8.90 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 4.17 | 12.14 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 29.50 | 4.39 | .05 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 3.67 | 0.55 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 87.57 | 13.05 | .001 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-s | 1 | 55.70 | 8.30 | .01 |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 248.97 | 37.09 | .001 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 26.72 | 3.98 | .05 |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E clwg | 1 | 11.12 | 1.66 | ns |
| error | 135 | 6.71 | | |
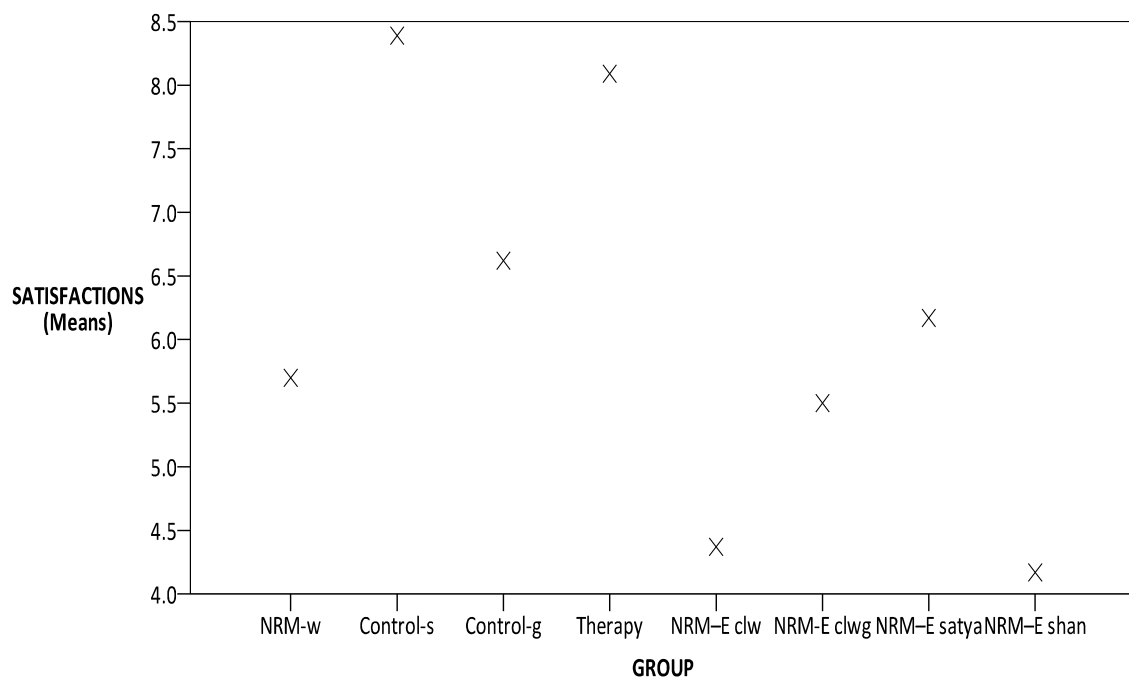
**Figure 30. SATISFACTION WITH MOTHER IN CHILDHOOD**

This measure considered the degree to which a subject's mother fulfilled the needs and ideals of the subject. It explicitly allows expression of the shortfall between her abilities and deficits and an individual's requirements. Despite the extreme brevity of this measure, a single question, it shows remarkable power to distinguish the groups, in a manner similar to the more composite ratings reported above in Table 76 and compare Figure 30.

Once again the western NRM and the Eastern NRMs are united in their dissatisfaction with the mother. In retrospect these groups seem to find her far from ideal. There is no support for the greater degree of dissatisfaction expected of the eastern groups relative to the western group, so hypothesis 47 a) is unsupported.

The therapy group is even more adulatory of mother relative to the other groups than for the composite ratings of appraisal displayed in Table 75 above. This group differs significantly from the eastern groups (p<.001) so much so that it is not in the expected position in the ordering specified in the hypotheses, having a much higher rated satisfaction than *any* other groups. There is thus strong support for hypothesis 47 b).

The eastern groups differ significantly from both of the control groups, hypothesis 47 c) regarding the difference between the eastern and the general control groups being supported at the .001 level of significance, and hypothesis 47 d) regarding the difference between them and the general population group being supported at the .05 level. In support of hypothesis 47 e), the western NRM also differs significantly from the student control group (p<.01) which suggests that, like the eastern groups, they are significantly less content with the mother of their childhood than the control groups.

There is no difference between the novice and the graduate rebirthing group, which means that hypothesis 47 f) is unsupported, and there is no evidence for a difference in appraisal of mother after a three month intensive rebirthing group, in comparison to those who have not undergone this experience.

In summary then, it seems evident that those drawn to NRMs and who belong to NRMs have a similar dissatisfaction with the mother that they recall from their childhood days, and are more likely to select a mother with different attributes if they were able somehow to rewrite that past than any other groups in this study.

**TABLE 77. APPRAISAL OF FATHER IN CHILDHOOD [0-12 years]**

Do those involved in NRMs recall him as less satisfactory?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < W < T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: T < E = W < C-g < C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 10 | 6.05 | 6.32 |
| *Control-s* | 31 | 6.83 | 5.28 |
| *Control-g* | 13 | 6.21 | 7.04 |
| *Therapy* | 9 | 5.78 | 7.78 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 17 | 5.52 | 8.61 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 14 | 5.63 | 11.41 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 28 | 6.38 | 7.55 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 6.47 | 6.52 |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-s **vs** Control-g* | 1 | 44.78 | 6.07 | .025 |
| *NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 0.23 | 0.00 | ns |
| *Therapy **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 5.13 | 0.70 | ns |
| *NRM-w **vs** Control-s* | 1 | 6.29 | 0.85 | ns |
| *Control-s **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 59.82 | 8.11 | .005 |
| *Control-g **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 184.60 | 25.03 | .0005 |
| *NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E clwg* | 1 | 1.24 | 0.17 | ns |
| error | 1721 | 7.38 | | |

How is father viewed? The eastern and western NRMs are not as impressed with him as the student sample seem to be: see Figure 31 (below). There is a significant difference between the student control group and the general control group (p<.025; see Table 77).
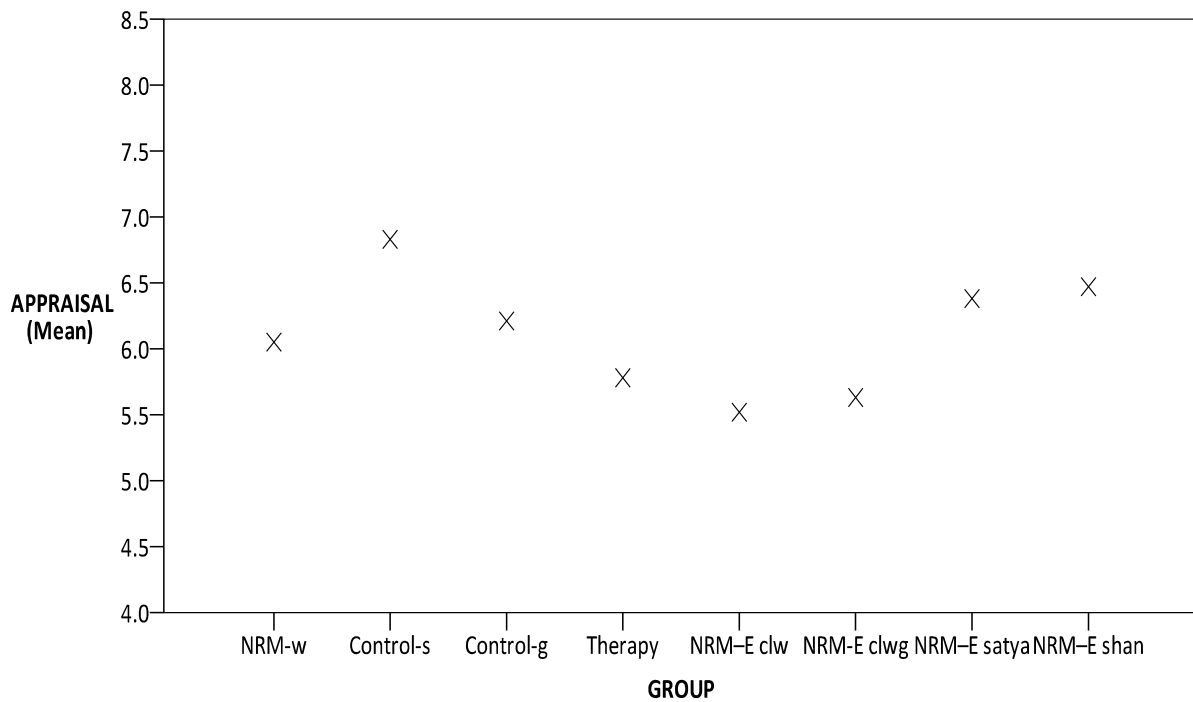
**Figure 31. APPRAISAL OF FATHER IN CHILDHOOD**

While hypothesis 48 a) is not supported due to a lack of a significant difference between the eastern and western groups, unlike the measures which looked at mother's desirability, the level of positive appraisal is not so low as to distinguish these groups from the therapy group on this measure, providing no support for hypothesis 48 b).

There is strong support for hypotheses 48 c) as the eastern groups have a much lower appraisal of father than the student control group, a difference which is highly significant (p<.0005). The difference between the eastern groups and the general control group does not attain significance however, providing no support for hypothesis 48 d). It seems that childhood dissatisfaction with father is not as significant as dissatisfaction with mother during this epoch, for those involved in NRMs as they are not distinguishable from the therapy group or from the general population control group, though they differ markedly from

the student control group on this measure. The western group is significantly less admiring of the father of childhood than is the student control group, (p<.005) which provides strong support for hypothesis 48 e).

There is no significant difference between the novice and graduate rebirthing groups in how father is viewed. Once again the prediction that those who have graduated, would have a significantly more positive appraisal of their father, is unsupported, and thus hypothesis 33 f) also has no support.

As Table 78 shows, only one of the hypotheses receives any support for the measure of paternal satisfaction in childhood, and that is the difference between the eastern NRMs and the student control group (p<.01), since the students have a relatively high level of satisfaction with father in childhood. The two groups which differed from the other eastern group with regard to measures of disruption, the rebirthing groups, seem to have the lowest level of satisfaction on this measure, see Figure 32. Their results will be analysed separately for the next measure of appraisal and satisfaction with the father in adolescence to see if they differ from the yoga *(NRM–E satya)* and theosophy *(NRM–E shan)* eastern groups. Thus, only hypothesis 49 d) is supported for this measure.

# TABLE 78. SATISFACTION WITH FATHER IN CHILDHOOD

The single identification question

EXPECTED ORDER: E < W < T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: T < E < C-g < W < C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 10 | 6.30 | 9.01 |
| Control-s | 31 | 6.87 | 5.66 |
| Control-g | 13 | 6.15 | 8.75 |
| Therapy | 9 | 5.00 | 8.89 |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 4.41 | 9.54 |
| NRM-E clwg | 14 | 4.79 | 1.17 |
| NRM–E satya | 28 | 6.30 | 7.62 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 6.83 | 9.64 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 4.71 | 0.61 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 4.46 | 0.58 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 2.67 | 0.35 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 3.53 | 0.46 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 34.68 | 4.52 | .01 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-s | 1 | 2.46 | 0.32 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E clwg | 1 | 1.07 | 0.14 | ns |
| error | 125 | 7.67 | | |
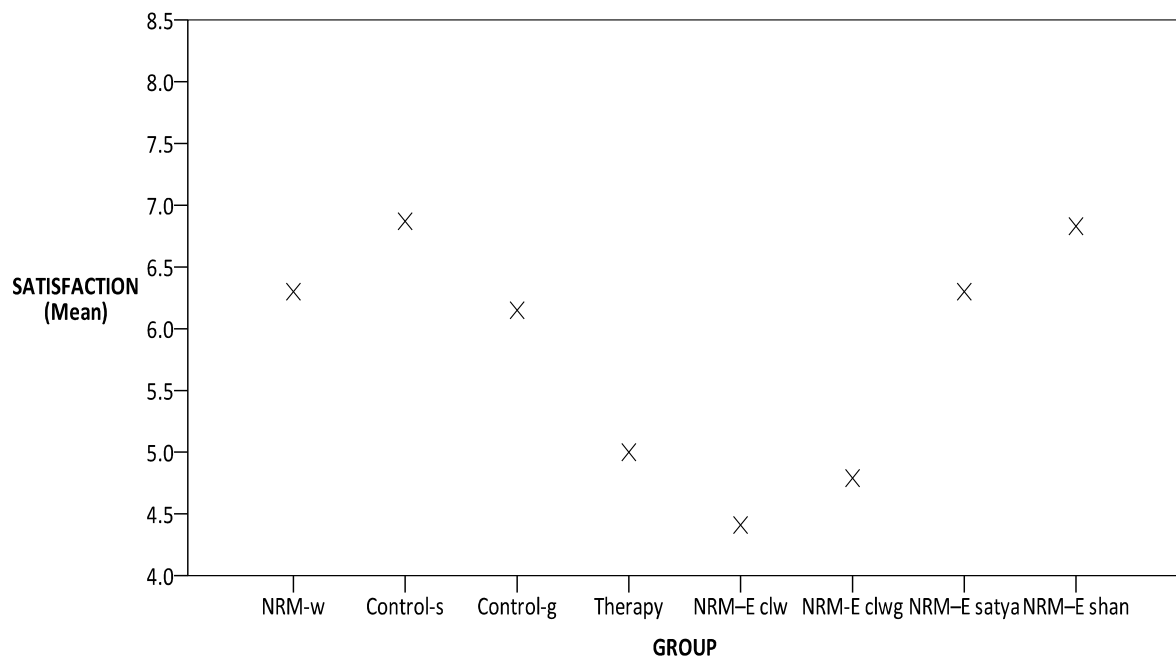
**Figure 32. SATISFACTION WITH FATHER IN CHILDHOOD**

**Recollecting adolescence: How was mother recalled?**

The results for different groups' appraisal of mother during adolescence bring forth some undeniable differences, if size of F ratio is considered, see Table 79. There is no difference between the student and general control groups, see Figure 33. The eastern and western NRMs retain their united low appraisal of mother, which characterised their view of her in childhood, and which leaves hypothesis 50 a) unsupported.

However, the difference between the therapy group and the eastern groups is highly significant, the therapy group has a significantly higher appraisal of mother than the eastern groups (p<.0005) which gives strong support to hypothesis 50 b). The eastern groups are similarly significantly different from the general control group (p<.0005) supporting hypothesis 50 c) strongly, and hypothesis d) receives extremely high support from the significant difference between the eastern groups and the student sample, p<.0001). The western group are also well below the student sample in terms of the favourability of

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their rating of their mother, and this significant difference provides strong support for hypothesis 50 e), (p<.005). It seems that those drawn to NRMs or who are already members of a western movement have a more negative appraisal of mother in childhood and adolescence than any of the other groups, and the differences are highly significant.

## TABLE 79. APPRAISAL OF MOTHER DURING ADOLESCENCE [13-19 years]

Do those drawn to NRMs recall her as less satisfactory?"

EXPECTED ORDER: E < W < T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: E < W < C-g < T = C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 10 | 6.02 | 7.68 |
| Control-s | 33 | 6.96 | 6.26 |
| Control-g | 13 | 6.78 | 5.52 |
| Therapy | 10 | 6.95 | 4.74 |
| NRM–E clw | 19 | 4.86 | 9.36 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 5.63 | 17.70 |
| NRM–E satya | 29 | 6.19 | 7.23 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 5.68 | 6.51 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s **vs** Control-g | 1 | 4.26 | 0.52 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 1 | 20.45 | 2.51 | ns |
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 1 | 208.44 | 25.59 | .0005 |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 1 | 199.31 | 24.47 | .0005 |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 1 | 545.36 | 66.96 | .0001 |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-s | 1 | 89.53 | 10.99 | .0005 |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E clwg | 1 | 68.05 | 8.36 | .005 |
| error | 1838 | 8.14 | | |
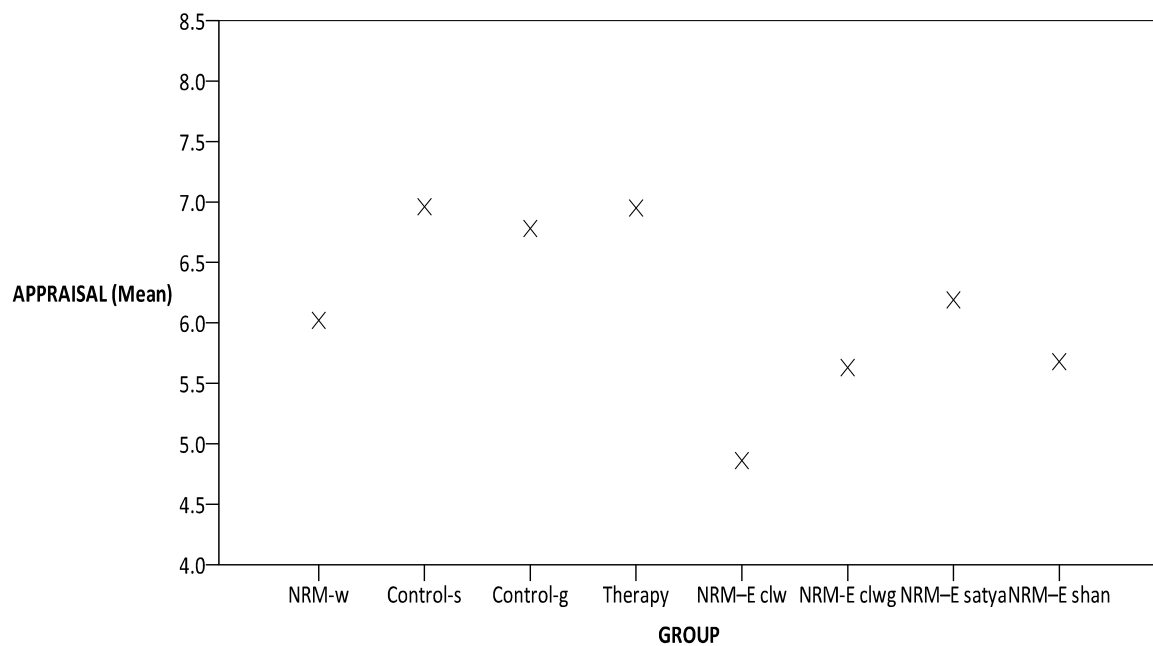
**Figure 33. APPRAISAL OF MOTHER DURING ADOLESCENCE**

The single question regarding the mother's approximation to the subjects' ideal reveals strong differences in the predicted direction when the NRMs are compared to the therapy group or to the control groups, see Table 80 (below). The NRMs are the least satisfied with mother in adolescence of all the groups, see Figure 34 (below). The by now familiar pattern of differences includes a lack of difference between the Eastern and Western groups (leaving hypothesis 51 a) unsupported), and a strong difference between the therapy group and the eastern NRMs which provides significant support for hypothesis 51 b) (p<.005). In comparison, the therapy group recall mother as much more satisfying in that phase of life. The eastern groups are less satisfied than the general control (p<.01, supporting hypothesis 51 c)), and the student control (p<.0005, supporting hypothesis 51 d)). The western group is similarly significantly more dissatisfied (p<.01) than the student control group, which supports hypothesis 51 e).

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Once again there is no support for any difference between the novice and graduate rebirthing groups, and hypothesis 51 f) is unsupported.

## TABLE 80. SATISFACTION WITH MOTHER DURING ADOLESCENCE

The single identification question

EXPECTED ORDER: E < W < T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: E < W < C-g < T < C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 10 | 5.90 | 5.29 |
| Control-s | 33 | 7.91 | 4.63 |
| Control-g | 13 | 6.92 | 6.69 |
| Therapy | 10 | 7.30 | 6.21 |
| NRM–E clw | 19 | 4.00 | 9.05 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 4.63 | 1.48 |
| NRM–E satya | 29 | 6.28 | 8.06 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 4.83 | 9.31 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 9.07 | 1.36 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 8.15 | 1.22 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 48.88 | 7.31 | .005 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 43.27 | 6.47 | .01 |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 197.36 | 29.52 | .0005 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-s | 1 | 30.98 | 4.63 | .01 |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E clwg | 1 | 3.39 | 0.51 | ns |
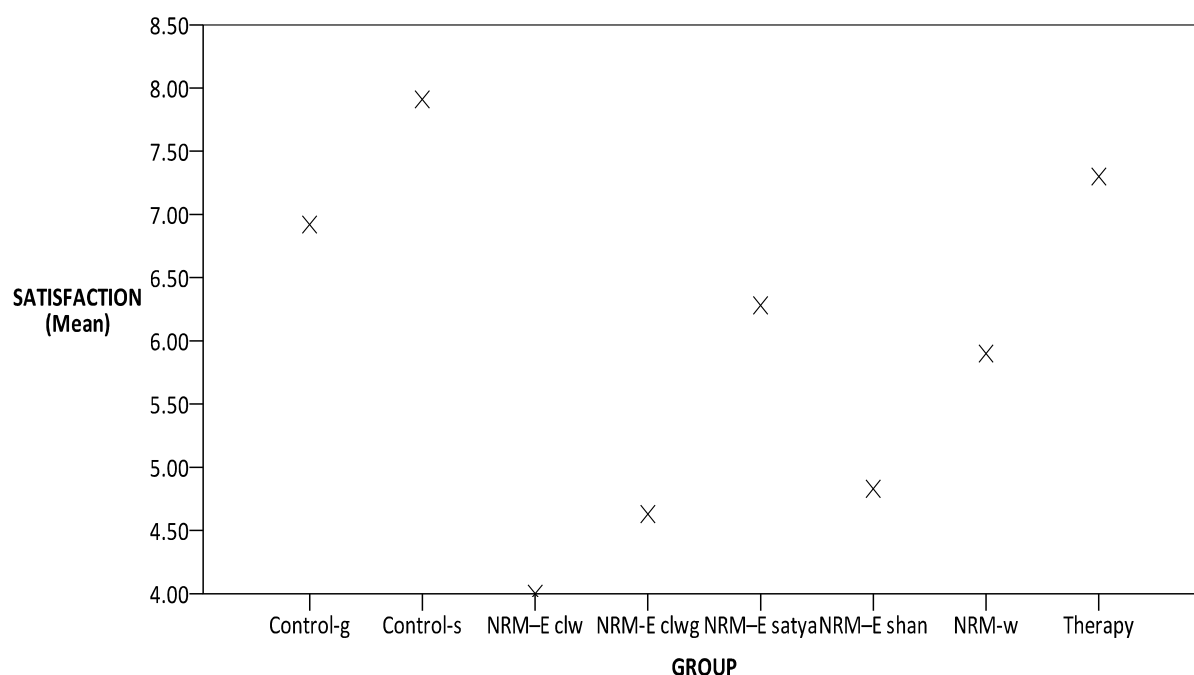
Figure 34. SATISFACTION WITH MOTHER IN ADOLESCENCE

**Satisfaction with Father in Adolescence**

It can be seen from Table 81 (below) that there is no significant difference between the general control group and the student control group in terms of how father is appraised in adolescence. The highly favourable view of the father of childhood which characterised the student group is tempered by their appraisal of him in adolescence. The student group still has the highest positive appraisal of any group. The difference between the eastern NRMs and the western group is significant on this measure, distinguishing these groups for the first time. The significant difference (p<.01) provides strong support for hypothesis 52 a). The source of the difference seems to be the extremely low scores of the rebirthing groups, as with the data regarding childhood appraisal of the father, both the novice and graduate groups have extremely low ratings of the father at this time in their lives, see Figure 35. There is no

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difference between the therapy group and the eastern NRMs, which provides no support for hypothesis 52 b) that those drawn to religious groups have experienced even more disruption in early bonding than those who are drawn to therapy. However, the therapy group is midway between the extremely dissatisfied rebirthing groups, and the more positively inclined yoga and theosophist groups.

## TABLE 81. APPRAISAL OF FATHER IN ADOLESCENCE

Do those drawn to NRMs recall him as less satisfactory?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < W < T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: T < E < C-g < W < C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 10 | 6.25 | 6.59 |
| *Control-s* | 31 | 6.53 | 7.32 |
| *Control-g* | 13 | 6.10 | 9.31 |
| *Therapy* | 9 | 5.35 | 7.83 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 17 | 4.95 | 8.29 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 14 | 4.72 | 11.38 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 28 | 6.06 | 6.65 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 6.49 | 6.66 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-s* **vs** *Control-g* | 1 | 22.08 | 2.77 | ns |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 1 | 44.62 | 5.59 | .01 |
| *Therapy* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 1 | 4.23 | 0.53 | ns |
| *Control-g* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 1 | 252.08 | 31.60 | .0005 |
| *Control-s* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 1 | 41.74 | 5.23 | .01 |
| *NRM-E clw* **vs** *NRM-E clwg* | 1 | 5.13 | 0.64 | ns |
| *NRMs-clw* **vs** *NRMs-satya shan* | 1 | 417.37 | 52.32 | .0005 |
| error | 1643 | 7.98 | | |
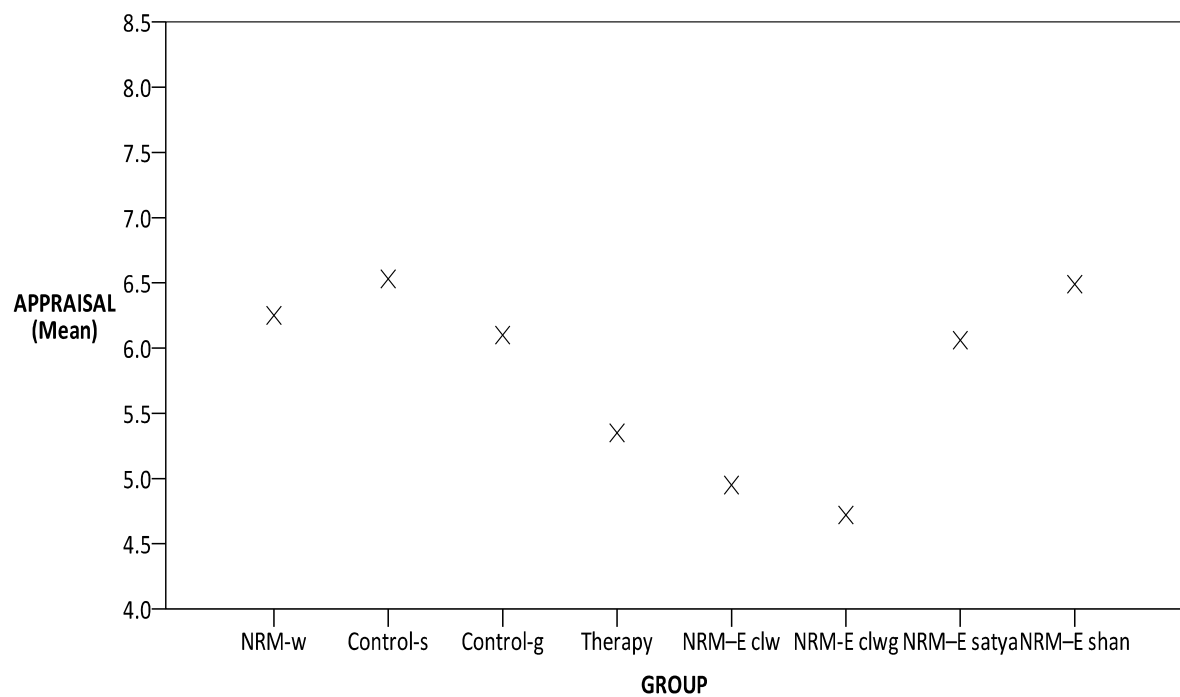
**Figure 35. APPRAISAL OF FATHER IN ADOLESCENCE**

Given the depressed appraisal ratings that the rebirthing groups gave the father of their childhood, it was decided for this analysis to include as a planned contrast, a comparison between the rebirthing groups and the other two eastern NRMs hypothesising that these two subgroups of eastern groups might differ significantly from each other. It was suggested that the rebirthing groups might have a significantly lower mean appraisal than the yoga and theosophist groups. In fact when the two rebirthing groups were compared to the other groups, an extremely significant difference was found. The scores are more extremely negative and the disparity larger than in childhood, and the difference was significant at the .0005 level. It seems that those who are drawn to a NRM with a specific focus on rebirthing have especially problematic family relationships, which cannot be attributed to a consequence of

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movement participation as the difference between the novice and the graduate groups is not significant, (providing no support for hypothesis 52 d)), suggesting that such an appraisal is a pre-existing feature of participation, and not the product of the encounter with the ideology of the movement.

## TABLE 82. SATISFACTION WITH FATHER IN ADOLESCENCE

The single identification question

EXPECTED ORDER: E < W < T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: T < E < C-g < C-s < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 10 | 6.75 | 5.94 |
| Control-s | 31 | 6.63 | 7.97 |
| Control-g | 13 | 5.38 | 10.85 |
| Therapy | 9 | 4.56 | 7.14 |
| NRM–E clw | 17 | 3.24 | 7.71 |
| NRM-E clwg | 14 | 4.27 | 2.46 |
| NRM–E satya | 28 | 5.42 | 6.00 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 6.09 | 10.26 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s vs Control-g | 1 | 14.14 | 1.84 | ns |
| NRM-w vs NRMs-E | 1 | 28.28 | 3.67 | .05 |
| Therapy vs NRMs-E | 1 | 0.30 | 0.00 | |
| Control-g vs NRMs-E | 1 | 71.53 | 9.29 | .005 |
| Control-s vs NRMs-E | 1 | 4.30 | 0.56 | ns |
| NRM-E clw vs NRM-E clwg | 1 | 8.48 | 1.11 | ns |
| NRMs-clw vs NRMs-satya shan | 1 | 62.17 | 8.07 | .005 |
| error | 119 | 7.70 | | |
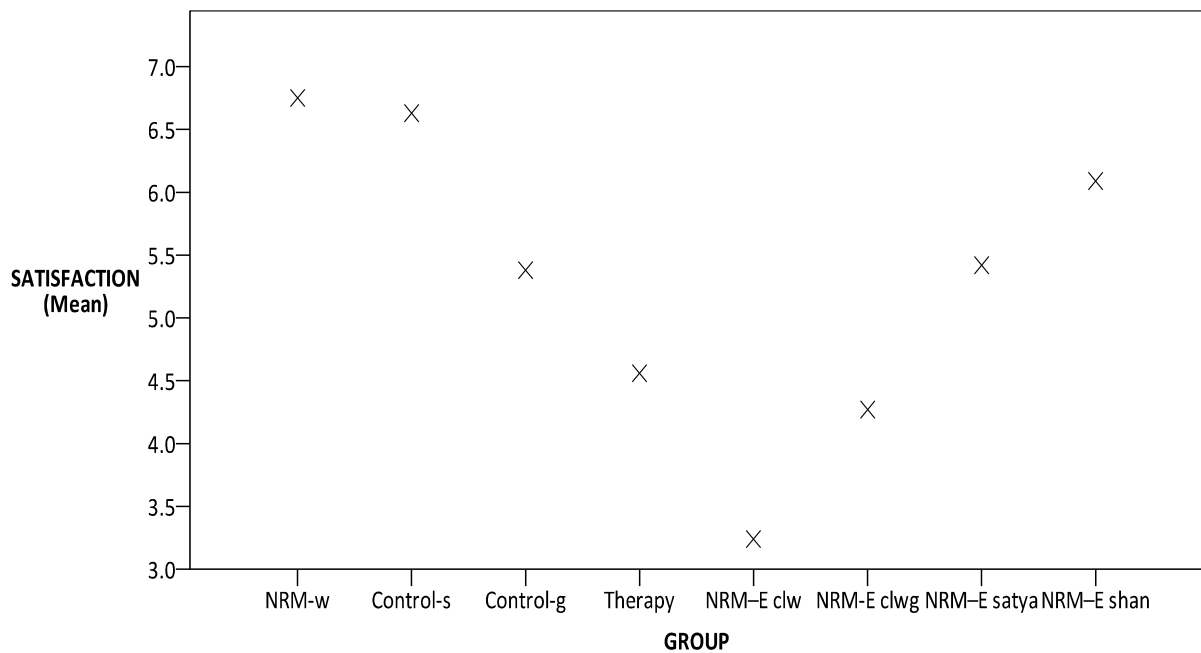
**Figure 36. SATISFACTION WITH FATHER IN ADOLESCENCE**

The single item results reflect a similar pattern to the full range of Likert rating scales. Table 82 reveals no difference between the two control groups, and, in support of the prediction made in hypothesis 53 a), a significant difference (p<.05) between the eastern and western NRMs. The therapy group is similarly dissatisfied to the eastern groups with the father of their adolescence. Once again there is no support for the relatively greater disruption of family relations for the religious groups, so hypothesis 53 b) rests unsupported. The expected difference between the eastern groups and the control groups is quite significant for the comparison with the student group only. So hypothesis 53 c) is unsupported, but hypothesis 53 d) is extremely significant (p<.005).

It seems that participation in the workshop has left the graduates at a similar level of discontent to the novice rebirthing group, hypothesis 53

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e) is unsupported though the difference is in the predicted direction, and the variance for the graduate group's more positive appraisal is smaller than that of the novice group, see Figure 36. Once more, the difference between the rebirthing groups and the other eastern groups is highly significant (p<.005), which supports hypothesis 53 f).


## 37. SUBMISSION TO TRADITIONAL AUTHORITY

Adorno (1970, cited in Kreml, 1977) views authoritarian submission as a generalised attitude which might apply to a variety of authority figures, and even supernatural powers, and as a defence against oedipal hatred deriving from excessively strict parental styles of upbringing. While we have no data on oedipal hatred, and certainly no claim is made that self-report data ever could assess such a tendency, a number of results have been presented which suggest that there are troubled family histories behind involvement in NRMs. Simply moving from this data, to expectations regarding submission to authority might support predictions of high submissiveness for all NRM affiliates and members. However, a closer look at the data on family relations precludes such a blanket expectation. While it is true that the eastern and western groups are similarly dissatisfied with mother during childhood and adolescence, and similarly dissatisfied with father in childhood, in adolescence, the western group does not express as much relative dissatisfaction with dad. The eastern groups, especially the rebirthing groups, are much more overtly discontented with him.

The need for defensive submission when discontent is quite consciously expressed is not apparent. Further, these people were expected to be,

and were shown to be quite critical of conventionality, and emerged as the least traditional of any group. The subscale which was used in this study refers to one of the nine categories sampled by the F scale: Authoritarian Submission, or the tendency to take a submissive, uncritical attitude toward idealised moral authorities of the in-group. It is not expected that the unconventional, unconstrained eastern affiliates will score highly in this scale. Neither is it expected that these people will be anti-authoritarian however, as their involvement in a community oriented towards the exploration of their own needs, and the provision of guidance in so doing does not have the flavour of a suppression of one's dependency needs which both Kreml (1977) and Bay (1968) suggest are defining features of the anti-authoritarian person. The eastern affiliates seem able to accept leadership and guidance by a guru, or special leader figure, even if it is a highly specific relationship for them. Perhaps the style of leadership that is informed by eastern principles whereby a person's own life experiences and sufferings are shown to be interpretable *by them* as to what issues are problematic for them, the guru may be seen to be directing them to an 'inner awareness' and to search for a personal locus for causes and solutions to their problems. This is a markedly different presentation of authority. As such it may not evoke a defiant or critical response, because such leaders are likely to explicitly deny that they have the answers or are the source of knowledge.

Given the more traditional focus of the western NRM, it was assumed that a high level of submission to traditional authority might characterise this group, and the predominant concordance of views held by this

genre of group, the importance of the nuclear family, the intolerance of permissiveness and such like, with those accepted in the wider community as desirable ideals. Despite the fact that the eastern groups, by their behavioural affiliation in charismatic groups might be viewed as having a significant tendency towards submission to leaders, it is suggested that the F-scale used here assumes a highly traditional conception of authority which these groups are *unlikely* to endorse, especially those involved in the rebirthing movement, where it is suggested there is little unquestioning admiration for father figures, and those in authority. They have, by their actions expressed a desire to achieve some kind of rebirth, suggesting the circumstances they found themselves in after the first was less than desirable. Their actions suggest that they wish to explicitly work through the emotional repercussions of their experiences of authority, and so there will be little suppression or modified expression of their challenge to traditional authority such as might be required for the exaggerated submission of the authoritarian attitude.

A similar, though less intense challenging of traditional authority is expected of the therapy group. As the student group has only recently gained independence from the family environment, and that independence might only be partial, it is likely that they will have a high level of submission to authority, despite their intellectual occupation which might be assumed to promote critical appraisal of traditions.

# TABLE 83. THE SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY SUBSCALE

Are those drawn to eastern NRMs less likely to submit to traditional authority?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: E = T < C-g < C-s < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 4.65 | 4.45 |
| Control-s | 32 | 4.47 | 4.94 |
| Control-g | 12 | 4.13 | 4.84 |
| Therapy | 10 | 3.44 | 5.76 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 2.81 | 3.08 |
| NRM–E satya | 24 | 3.91 | 14.64 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 3.73 | 5.84 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 9.22 | 1.39 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 0.11 | 0.00 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* Control-g | 1 | 23.05 | 3.47 | .05 |
| NRMs-E *vs* Control-g | 1 | 36.58 | 5.50 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* NRM-w | 1 | 15.80 | 2.38 | ns |
| NRMs-E *vs* NRM-w | 1 | 134.99 | 20.31 | .0001 |
| error | 1109 | 6.65 | | |

There is no support for the hypothesised difference between the therapy group and the eastern groups, as both of these groups have a low tendency to submit to traditional moral authority. Hypothesis 54 a)

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receives no support. Table 83 reveals a reduced tendency towards submission distinguishes the therapy group from the control group as the difference is significant and in the predicted direction, providing support for hypothesis 54 b), (p<.05). The eastern groups are significantly less open to submission to authority than the general control group *(XE= 3.48, Control-g= 4.13, p<.01)* which provides strong support for hypothesis 54 c). The western NRM are not especially more submissive towards authority than the general control group, as, though the difference is in the expected direction, it does not attain significance. There is thus no support for hypothesis 54 d). The support for hypothesis 54 e) is overwhelmingly significant (p<.0001), it seems that the eastern and western NRMs have radically different levels of assent to traditional authority.

There are differences between the eastern NRMs which are worthy of comment. The speculation that the rebirthing group would be especially low on this measure was well-founded, the group score is extremely low, and the small variance suggests concordance on this measure. The yoga group *(NRM–E satya)* has the highest submission of any of the eastern groups, but more notably, a slightly larger variance relative to the other groups, suggesting that this group is less homogeneous regarding this attribute.

The lie scale in psychological research is no longer merely a way of establishing a tendency to 'fake good' it has become a personality dimension in its own right. Francis (1985, cited in Gorsuch, 1988:216) notes a positive correlation between religiousness and the **MMPI** lie

scale, which consists in the number of pecadillos that everyone is likely to have engaged in (as Gorsuch, 1988: 216, so charmingly terms them), and will report if they are honest. However, Richardson (1985) reports that Wolfgang Kuner (who replicated this correlation) concluded that it is appropriate for religious people to have a higher lie-scale score than other people, because they control their behaviour more than other do. They may genuinely commit fewer of these moral *faux pas,* and Gorsuch (1988:216) suggests that it is premature to assume they have a higher score because they lie or repress memories of what they have done.

Interest in the 'unlikely virtues' subscale of Tellegen's MPQ is pertinent to concerns regarding submission to conventional moral authority on the part of religious people, because most of his items tap a "tendency to disclaim common frailties" (Tellegen, 1982:4), for example, "at times I have been envious of someone". It is suggested that these questions address even finer points of conventional morality than the authoritarian scale discussed above, and that there will be an extremely low level of endorsement of these items on the part of the therapy group and the eastern groups, though the level of assent is expected to be relatively high for the western NRM.

Table 84 (below) reveals a dramatic difference in level of assent to these improbable virtues between the student group, which endorses very few, and the general population group which endorses the highest number of any group in the study. This difference could not have been predicted. There is no support for the lower level of assent predicted in

hypothesis 55 a) to characterise the eastern groups relative to the therapy group, as the difference is not even in the predicted direction.

## TABLE 84. UNLIKELY VIRTUES

The new-look lie scale

EXPECTED ORDER: E < T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: T < E = C-s < W < C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 3.57 | 5.82 |
| Control-s | 39 | 2.82 | 1.94 |
| Control-g | 17 | 4.12 | 5.87 |
| Therapy | 10 | 2.10 | 0.89 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 2.60 | 4.44 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 2.93 | 3.20 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 2.92 | 1.08 |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s vs Control-g | 1 | 19.92 | 5.80 | .025 |
| Control-g vs Therapy | 1 | 25.63 | 7.47 | .005 |
| Therapy vs NRMs-E | 1 | 4.33 | 1.26 | ns |
| Control-g vs NRMs-E | 1 | 21.88 | 6.38 | .01 |
| NRM-w vs Control-g | 1 | 2.29 | 0.67 | ns |
| NRM-w vs NRMs-E | 1 | 6.33 | 1.84 | ns |
| error | 135 | 3.43 | | |

The therapy group are fairly forthright it seems about their participation in human frailty, and have the lowest score of any group. They are certainly significantly more willing to admit to frailty than is the general

population control group (p<.005), which supports hypothesis 55 b). The eastern groups are significantly more willing and able to admit to such items, than the general population group, (p<.01) which provides strong support for hypothesis 55 c).

There is no support for the hypothesis that the western religious group would score higher on this scale than the general population, the difference is not in the predicted direction, and not significant. Hypothesis 55 d} is not supported. While the difference between the eastern groups and the western group is in the predicted direction *(XE= 2.87, Xw=* 3.57) it does not attain significance. So there is no difference between the eastern and western groups in terms of their admission of unlikely virtues, hypothesis 55 e) is not supported. There are differences in variance among the groups, with the therapy and theosophist groups *(NRM–E shan)* being quite united in their frankness, and with the western group, the yoga group *(NRM–E shan)* and the general control showing greater variability of response.

## 38. IMPATIENT FOR PARADISE - PERSONALITY VARIABLES INFLUENCING DIFFERENTIAL RECRUITMENT

It was suggested that a feature of eastern spiritual groups was an orientation which privileged 'the moment' over renunciation for the future. There is an emphasis within these traditions of immanence rather than transcendence, the mysticism of the moment rather than the martyrdom for the remote past or future. In addition to this traditional difference in ideological focus between east and western traditions, there is an eclecticism characteristic of the belief systems of

the NRMs which has lead to a blurring of alternative therapies and modern religious movements. Further, it has been suggested in the literature that those drawn to NRMs are those who were previously drawn to the Human Potential Movement.

For these reasons, there are a number of personality attributes which are predicted to distinguish those drawn to eastern NRMs from the other groups in this study, and to contribute to an understanding of why some people take social action to resolve a life crisis, and further, why some are drawn to movements of a new spiritual orientation.

## 38.1 Constraint

Constraint is a concept allied to self-control, ego-strength and strength of character in folk psychology in the west. There has been in western religion a positive valuing of restraint, postponement and renunciation, such that those more capable in this regard are somehow better people.

As outlined by Tellegen and as assessed by his MPQ, it is a less unambiguously positive attribute to be high on constraint. In Tellegen's (1985) description of the scale he notes that it is a higher order factor, which he terms a 'trait dimension' which is characterised by salient loadings on the control vs impulsiveness, harm avoidance vs danger-seeking, and traditionalism subscales of his questionnaire. A high score indicates a description of oneself as cautious, restrained, as refraining from risky ventures and as accepting the strictures of conventional morality. High constraint persons, in other words, tend to consider large areas of action and experience as "off-limits" and dangerous. A high

score may be associated with avoidant, timid, and obsessive-compulsive-phobic patterns of behaviour (Tellegen, 1985). A low constraint score reflects appraisals of oneself as relatively impulsive, adventurous, and inclined to reject conventional restrictions on behaviour. To quote Tellegen (1985) directly:

> Constraint...is not directly correlated with mood, it too may be an affect-relevant indicator of a person's "preparedness" to respond to a range of emotion-related circumstances (impulse, physical danger, adventure, authority, taboos) with either; caution, timidity, and respect or with recklessness, boldness and defiance (p. 697).

Given this outline of the nature of constraint as assessed within this study at least, it was hypothesised that those most likely to take up an option available in their 'opportunity structure' I.e. the options suggested by friends and acquaintances, or contacted through media channels, would be more impulsive, less constrained individuals. Tellegen's (1982) constraint subscale of the MPQ assesses a person's overall pleasure-pain regulatory style; a high scorer being self-restrictive and cautious, and a low scorer being self-indulgent and impulsive. Tellegen noted that while stress might have greater impact on a low scorer, this may be compensated for by the fact that a high scorer is likely to have more 'flirtations with disaster'. It was hypothesised that the least constrained people would be those who were 'flirting' with the most societally radical option; the eastern NRMs. They were expected to differ significantly from the therapy group, but it was predicted that the therapy group would be less constrained than the general population. It was predicted that the most constrained group would be the Western

NRM, and that they would be significantly more constrained than the general population. The results provide strong support for all but the last of these hypotheses.

## TABLE 85. CONSTRAINT

Are those drawn to NRMs less constrained?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: E < C-s < T = C-g < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 165.96 | 10481.24 |
| Control-s | 39 | 152.75 | 28327.71 |
| Control-g | 17 | 157.76 | 27907.29 |
| Therapy | 10 | 157.59 | 24208.68 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 144.13 | 26069.07 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 146.53 | 9725.63 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 155.10 | 10548.25 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 29775.98 | 1.38 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 68447.57 | 3.18 | .05 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 17.97 | 0.00 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 108860.37 | 5.05 | .01 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 335575.23 | 15.58 | .0001 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 51594.93 | 2.40 | ns |
| error | 135 | 21538.95 | | |

Table 85 reveals that the predicted difference between the therapy group and the Eastern NRMs is supported by the data. The eastern

groups are significantly less constrained than the therapy group (XT =157.59, *XE*= 148.58, p<.05), supporting hypothesis 56 a).
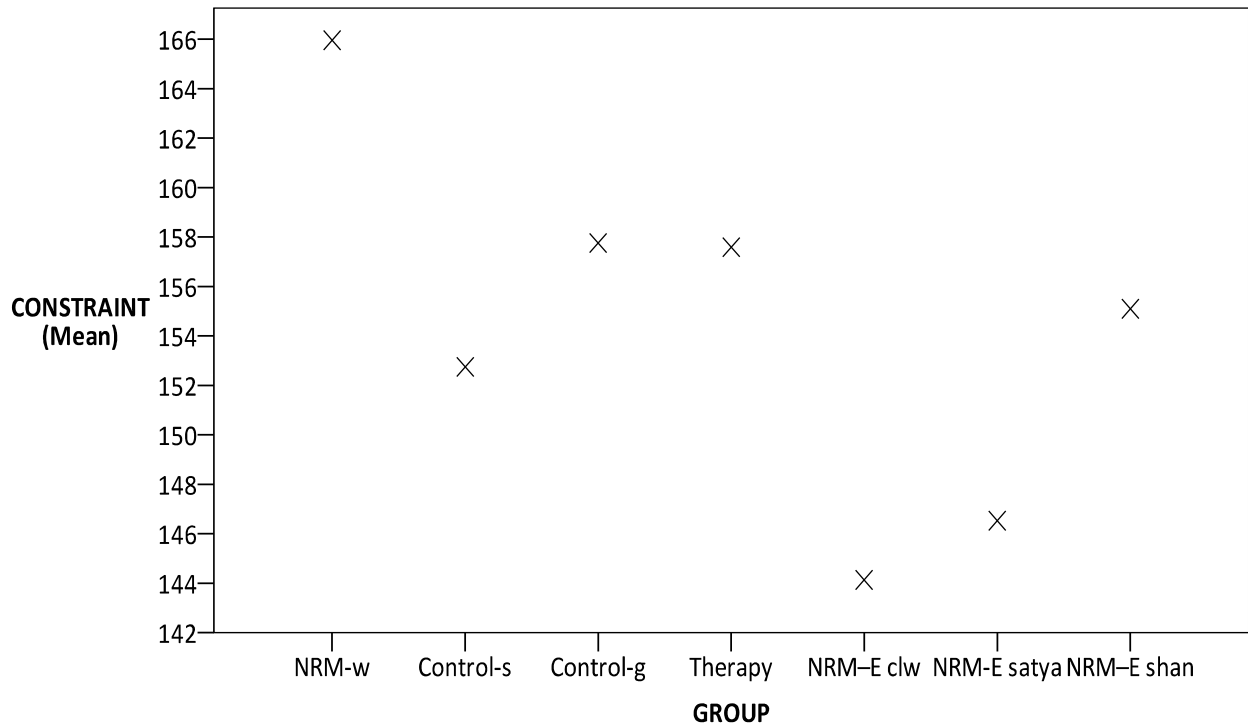


**Figure 37. CONSTRAINT**

The suggestion that those getting involved in social options might be less constrained only holds true for those approaching Eastern groups, as the therapy group is not significantly less constrained than the control group. Hypothesis 56 b) is not supported by the data, as the groups have almost identical mean scores. From Table 85 (above) it can be seen that the eastern groups are significantly less constrained than the general control group *(XE*= 148.58, *XControl -g* = 157.76, p<.01), which supports hypothesis 56 c). The Eastern groups are extremely different from the western group on this measure (at opposite ends of the range across groups) and this difference is highly significant (Xw=165.96, p<.0001), supporting hypothesis 56 d) strongly. The western NRM, who are not

more significantly constrained than the general control group (Xw=165.96,) have the highest mean constraint of all groups sampled. There is no support for hypothesis 56 e), but the means are in the predicted direction. There is a difference in level of constraint between the student control group and the general population control group, and while this does not attain significance, comparisons relative to the student sample was thought unadvisable given the youthfulness of this group. It seems that this measure does capture something of the impetuosity of youth, but even they are somewhat more constrained than the rebirthing group and the yoga group, see Figure 37.

Between the measures of traditionalism and constraint there is a high correlation (r=0.74, p<.0001), but this may be due, in part, to the fact that the constraint measure is a higher order factor, whose weighted score includes the traditionalism scale (among others, mentioned above). However, this may contribute to the low constraint score found for the eastern NRMs which were also the least traditional groups.

Since constraint may relate to the capacity to inhibit emotional responses, the pattern of differences found between the groups is not surprising, given the elevated emotionality in response to life events found to characterise those drawn to eastern NRMs.

## 38.2 A MYSTICAL PERCEPTUAL STYLE - Absorption

This is a crucial moment for the *Rites de Passage* model, as, up until now, the indices demarcating those drawn to eastern NRMs have been attributes of the existential life situation of these people, or personality

measures directly relevant to involvement with *any kind of remedial social agency*, such as a history of felt deprivation in parental relationships, degree of mental health, distress, loneliness and so on, and only indirectly relevant to religious involvement. It is only at this point, that features of an individual's worldview which directly pertain to what might be termed his or her 'religious impulse' are considered.

Tellegen had great optimism that he had found a measure which might distinguish those with a mystical propensity, though he had not tested it in an appropriate context. Consideration of this measure marks the culmination of all of the predispositions assessed so far, (which might have resulted in any remedial course of action), and the influencing of the direction in which satisfaction for these felt needs is sought, by an experiential variable which is both cognitive and emotional in content. Within the value-added model proposed in this study, it is suggested that this attribute of perceptual style and the acceptance of beliefs of an eastern spiritual nature are powerful determinants of the manner in which resolution of an existential predicament is sought.

**The Rites de Passage Model – the picture so far**

Up to this point, while many indices considered have distinguished recent NRM affiliates from the control group and those already members of a religious movement, fewer have differentiated those approaching NRMs for the first time, from those approaching the secular agency of personal change; the therapy group. The value-added form of the model is important at this point. The variables considered below are critical to the account proposed of differential involvement in NRMs.

They demarcate parameters of a spiritual worldview, with particular emphasis on an eastern spiritual orientation. They are suggested as potential predictors as to whether someone who is somewhat untraditional, with a great deal of recent life stress and who is relatively isolated, and feels that isolation as an inadequate or lonely state is likely to be open to the appeal of NRMs, and to involvement. It is suggested that those open to mystical experience, a sense of union, or 'oneness' with objects of perception or recollected experience will be drawn to Eastern NRMs. It is hypothesised that the eastern groups will score highest on this variable. While gestalt therapy shares certain dimensions of an eastern worldview, it is predicted that the eastern groups will differ significantly from the therapy group on this variable. The therapy group is predicted to be more open to this type of experience than the control group, and the western group predicted to be significantly less open to this type of experience than the control group. It is hypothesised that the western NRM would score lowest of all groups on this variable. The results provide strong support for all of these hypotheses.

# TABLE 86. ABSORPTION

Do those drawn to NRMs sense an emotional fusion with objects of perception?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > Cs-s> T > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 16.00 | 78.71 |
| *Control-s* | 39 | 21.54 | 37.12 |
| *Control-g* | 17 | 16.41 | 54.48 |
| *Therapy* | 10 | 18.40 | 63.44 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 20 | 24.70 | 36.61 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 30 | 25.20 | 28.76 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 25.83 | 27.81 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-s* **vs** *Control-g* | 1 | 311.17 | 6.96 | .01 |
| *Therapy* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 1 | 395.27 | 8.84 | .005 |
| *Therapy* **vs** *Control-g* | 1 | 24.89 | 0.56 | ns |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *Control-g* | 1 | 1.30 | 0.00 | ns |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *Control-s* | 1 | 316.01 | 7.36 | .005 |
| *NRMs-E* **vs** *Control-g* | 1 | 1008.72 | 22.55 | .0001 |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 1 | 950.11 | 21.24 | .0001 |
| error | 135 | 44.73 | | |

As predicted, Table 86 shows that the Absorption subscale of Tellegen's MPQ reveals the Eastern groups to have significantly higher mean than all other groups, and it strongly differentiates those drawn to eastern and western groups. The difference between the student control and the general population is significant. There is quite an age difference between these groups, which was one consideration which informed the

selection of the general control group as a comparison group for most of the following contrasts. The eastern groups differed significantly from the therapy group, *(XE= 25.24, XT=18.40,* p<.005), providing strong support for hypothesis 57 a), see Figure 38.
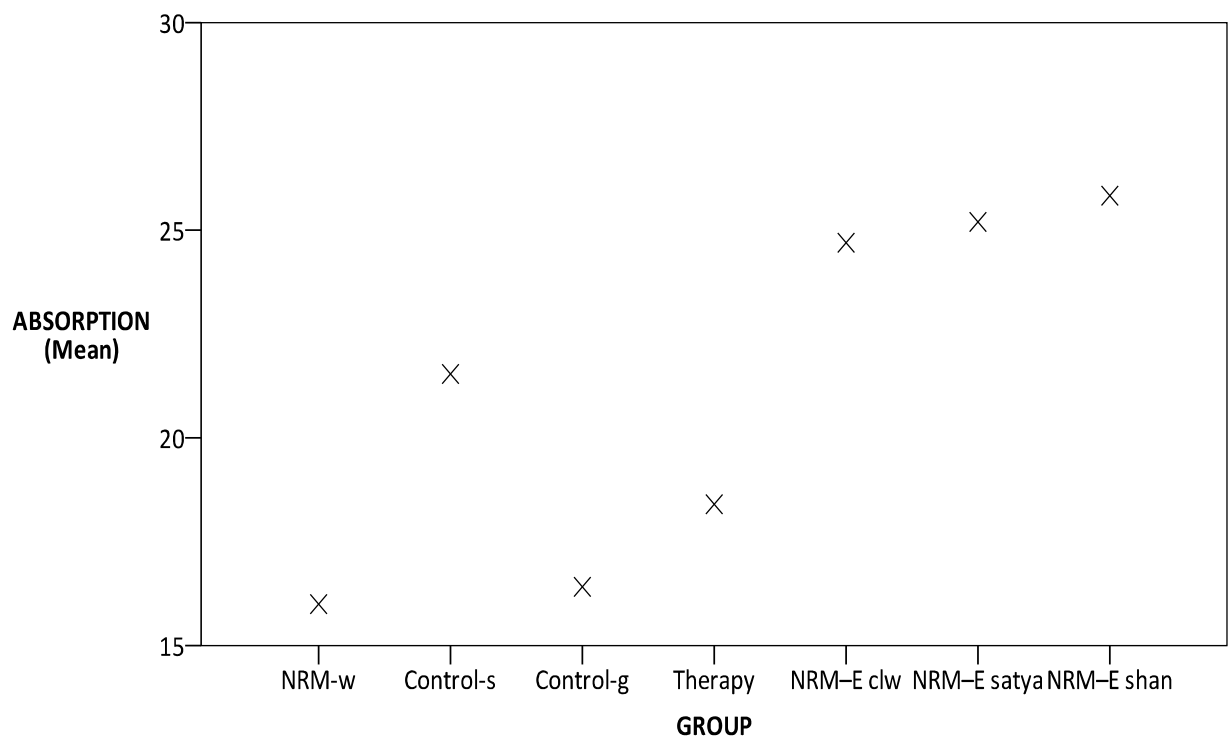


**Figure 38. ABSORPTION**

The therapy group was not significantly more open to a sense of fusion with the objects of perception or recollected memories than were the general control group, leaving hypothesis 57 b) unsupported. In comparison to the absorptive perceptual style of the general control group (of a comparable age range), the eastern groups had a significantly greater propensity to experience this kind of perceptual phenomenon *(Xcs =16.41, XE = 25.24,* p<.0001) providing strong support for hypothesis 57 c). The western group is significantly less open to

absorptive perceptual experiences that the eastern groups *(Xw=16.00, p<.0001),* which provides strong support for hypothesis 57 d). The western group is singled out by the extremely low mean attained (suggesting a very low openness to absorption), although the high variance suggests that there are large individual differences within this group (as within the therapy group) on this measure. They differ significantly from the student control group on this measure,(p<.005) but then, as does the general population (p<.05) whom the western group more closely resembles. Not surprisingly, the western group does not differ significantly from the general control group. So, it is suggested that there is no real support for the difference postulated in hypothesis 57 e) to exist between the western group and the control group, though, the results are equivocal.

In the spirit of speculation, it was suggested that if a high level of constraint were a loose operationalisation of the diversely defined notion of 'ego-strength' and if having a high degree of absorptive perceptual style were an indicator of 'ego-permeability' then an inverse relation might obtain between these two measures. There is a significant though moderate negative correlation between absorption and constraint (r= -0.31, p<.0001). The evidence is at best suggestive.

## 39. THE DETERMINING ROLE OF EASTERN AND WESTERN SPIRITUAL ORIENTATIONS - The Spiritual Orientation Survey

The focus of this study is on the degree to which there is a consonance between the explanatory belief system of a NRM and the personal belief system of the person drawn within the ambit of such a movement. This

is portrayed as an important feature of the movement's appeal, and the differential plausibility of the interpretations and solutions offered by the movement for the individual. Not only was there an effort to capture in detail the explanatory parameters of an individual's worldview, but in the development of the Spiritual Orientation Survey [the SOS] belief systems, and the structure of movement activities and practice were taken very seriously by the researcher, and an attempt was made to define a scale which addressed the explanatory and consolatory features of religious belief, while retaining, as far as possible the concepts and the language of the groups themselves.

While the other individual differences assessed by indices of recent life stress, isolation, and loneliness were assumed to differentiate those drawn to NRMs for the first time from the general population, and from those already involved in a religious movement, they were not expected to differentiate those contacting NRMs from those approaching secular agencies of personal change like a therapy group. So far, the results have substantiated those assumptions, and in so doing have given some support to the *Rites de Passage* model outlined. A point of difference between these two *genres* of social, self-help movement emerges when the trait of an absorptive perceptual style is considered. That emerging difference is further accentuated, or reinforced by the results of the SOS.

**The Empirical view so far**

To summarise the empirical picture so far: we have looked at disruptive indices, which form a basis for suboptimal daily living experiences, and which are suggested to have a disruptive effect on coping styles. We

have examined satisfaction with one's method of dealing with potentially disturbing life events. These events in themselves might well set in motion a *rite of passage* whereby coping techniques, mental health, and satisfaction with one's personality and one's associates are put to the test or diminished. Such disruption is likely to motivate some attempt to change, especially in less constrained individual's, as we have demonstrated those drawn to eastern NRMs are. The direction of efforts to achieve a change of lifestyle, personal appraisal or the nature and content of interpersonal networks and relationships is determined in part, but not totally by the social isolation and the loneliness these individual's claim to experience. They are relatively non-traditional people, who, *in general*, lack a sense of social integration and who lack a social network which adequately provides them with required social provisions. To this extent it is likely that the remedial option involved in will be a social one.

The course of action embarked upon is likely to be the one that defines most meaningfully the subject's predicament, and provides the most plausible and desirable solutions. Existing beliefs are assumed to determine which of an array of explanatory systems is most relevant, and therefore to determine, in part, the manner in which remediation is sought for the aversive impact of life events, social deficit and dissatisfaction. It is predicted that an individual drawn to a movement, is not merely spiritually intense in a general, unspecified manner, but has already a spiritual orientation consonant with the movement to which they are drawn; be it eastern or western in orientation.

It is important to note that the direction of scoring for the subscales of the SOS is reversed. The *lower the score* for the General subscale of the SOS *the greater the assent* to the items, and the more intense the degree of spirituality evidenced. The possible range of scores for the General Subscale is 3 to 56.75.

## TABLE 87. DIFFERENTIAL ASSENT TO GENERAL SPIRITUAL TENETS

Are those involved in and drawn to NRMs more intensely spiritual?

EXPECTED ORDER: W = E > T = C

OBSERVED ORDER: W > T > E > C-s > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 13.38 | 1564.06 |
| Control-s | 50 | 28.57 | 11739.34 |
| Control-g | 13 | 33.94 | 20084.76 |
| Therapy | 9 | 16.14 | 1375.15 |
| NRM–E clw | 15 | 19.85 | 2544.83 |
| NRM-E clwg | 17 | 16.04 | 4896.50 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 20.50 | 6658.78 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 17.08 | 5473.26 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 29808.98 | 3.57 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 28827.03 | 3.45 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 285142.87 | 34.15 | .0001 |
| NRMs-E *vs* Control-s | 1 | 295933.03 | 35.44 | .0001 |
| NRMs-E *vs* Therapy | 1 | 3944.27 | 0.47 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 168566.01 | 20.19 | .0001 |
| NRM-E clwg *vs* NRM-E clw | 1 | 11542.53 | 1.38 | ns |
| error | 152 | 8349.99 | | |
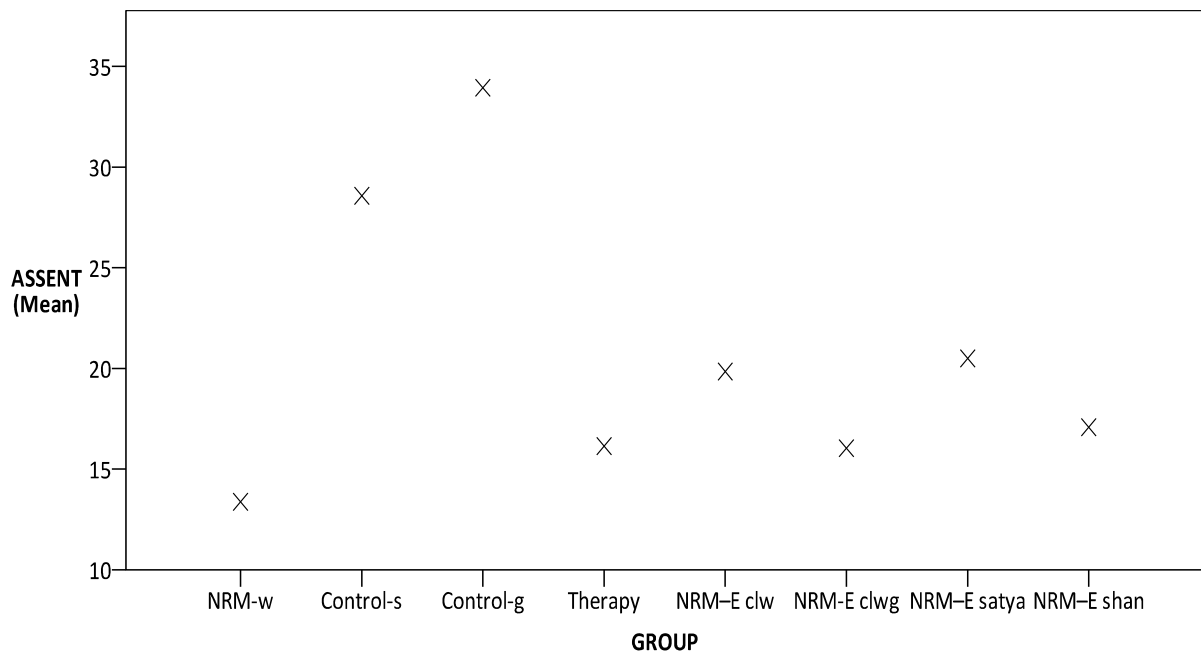
**Figure 39. GENERAL SPIRITUAL TENETS**

Are those drawn to NRMs more spiritually intense? In a word, yes. As predicted, no difference occurred between the intensity of belief between the eastern NRMs and the western NRM, though a glance at Table 87 (above) reveals that the apparent greater spiritual intensity of the western NRM almost attained significance (F=3.45). The western group of committed members is highest of all on this measure, significantly higher than the general control group by far, see Figure 39, since the latter was the least spiritual of all the groups, gaining the highest score on this subscale. Thus hypothesis 58 b) that the Western NRM will endorse spiritual tenets central to a religious worldview to a significantly greater degree than the general population control group, receives strong support from the highly significant difference between these two groups *(Xw=13.38, XControl -g=33.94,* p<.0001). The Eastern groups differ significantly from the student control group, and in the predicted direction (which justifies a one-tailed test) providing strong support for hypothesis 58 c), *(X NRM-E clw =19.85, X NRM-E clwg*

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*=16.04, NRM–E satya =20.50, p<.0001).* The decision was made on an *a priori* basis, to compare the eastern groups to the student control group as the sample sizes involved are more similar. The student group has provided a more stringent comparison criterion, as the mean level of spirituality for this group is higher than the control group (a difference that does not quite attain significance, F= 3.57). Surprisingly, the therapy group is not significantly less spiritual than the Eastern NRMs, (X]"=16.l4), so hypothesis 58 d) is unsupported.

Despite the apparent difference shown in Figure 39 in the predicted direction between the naive and graduate rebirthing groups *(X NRM-E clw = 19.85, X NRM-E clwg = 16.04)* it does not achieve significance. So, there is no support for the hypothesised increase in spiritual intensity of the graduate group compared to the novice group (Hypothesis 57 f)). It seems that those who have had three months intensive work are not more intensely spiritual in terms of the general item subscale than those making first contact with that movement. It must be noted however, that these data are not longitudinal. Intergroup differences (which would be avoided by a diachronic study of the same group) might mask a change in the intensity with which these beliefs are held.

It seems then, that all of those approaching social agencies, be they NRMs or therapy, are significantly more spiritual than the control groups, in so far as they endorse to a greater degree, items central to a spiritual worldview. The therapy group is notably linked with the NRMs on this measure, having a level of intensity of belief comparable to the already committed western group which is highest on this measure.

The eastern groups are lower in assent than these two groups, with only one eastern group (the graduate rebirthing group *NRM-E clwg)* coming close to the level of spiritual intensity evinced by the therapy group. The student sample was not intensely spiritual, as assessed by this measure, but is apparently though not significantly more spiritual than the general population which is by far the lowest on this measure.

Intensity of spiritual assent to general religious items is not sufficient to differentiate eastern affiliates from western members, nor members of NRMs from this Methodist run therapy group. Interesting differences to this pattern emerge when the particular eastern or western spiritual orientation is considered. The eastern and western subscales are powerful discriminators of those drawn to movements of different orientation.

**39.2 Eastern Spiritual Tenets**

The degree to which spiritual items of an eastern orientation are endorsed as true by the subject might be a crucial predictor variable of movement involvement, as, within this study it is strongly indicative of an openness to the appeal of NRMs of an eastern orientation. It is a possible determinant of involvement within the wider causal form of the model outlined above, that is when such beliefs are held by a non-traditional, unconstrained person who has a family history of poor relations to parents in childhood and adolescence who has recently undergone many disruptive life events, which they rate as having had great impact upon them, and were endured in relative isolation.

Those approaching Eastern NRMs for the first time are predicted to score very highly on this index, and to differ significantly from all other

groups, including the gestalt therapy group. The results are consonant with these predictions. The Western NRM was expected to show very little assent on this scale, and they do, gaining the highest score (indicative of least assent) of any group. Even the control group is more open to eastern spiritual tenets than is the Western NRM.

**TABLE 88. DIFFERENTIAL ASSENT TO EASTERN SPIRITUAL TENETS**

Do those drawn to Eastern NRMs already have a consonant worldview?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > C-s > C-g > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 83.89 | 19221.92 |
| *Control-s* | 49 | 68.55 | 30197.33 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 75.16 | 44060.60 |
| *Therapy* | 9 | 59.37 | 54278.89 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 12 | 29.40 | 2970.96 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 17 | 31.13 | 8461.85 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 30 | 36.74 | 16815.11 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 11.44 | 2206.38 |

**ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE**

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-s* **vs** *Control-g* | 1 | 42094.87 | 1.78 | ns |
| *NRMs-E* **vs** *Therapy* | 1 | 813967.50 | 34.33 | .0005 |
| *Control-g* **vs** *Therapy* | 1 | 128111.06 | 5.40 | .01 |
| *Control-s* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 1 | 4676531.36 | 197.24 | .0001 |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *NRMs-E* | 1 | 3230678.85 | 136.26 | .0001 |
| *NRM-w* **vs** *Control-g* | 1 | 45710.28 | 1.93 | ns |
| *NRM-E clwg* **vs** *NRM-E clw* | 1 | 2020.68 | 0.00 | ns |
| error | 145 | 23710.36 | | |
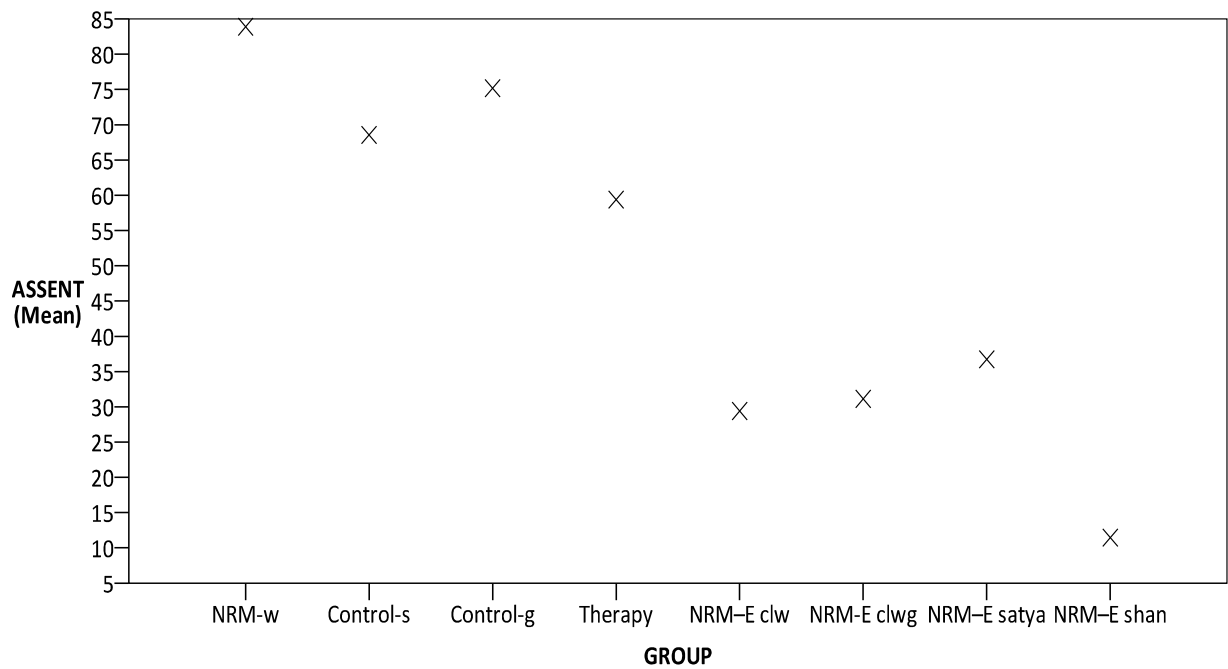
**Figure 40. EASTERN SPIRITUAL TENETS**

It is important to note that the direction of scoring for the subscales of the SOS is reversed. The *lower the score* for the Eastern subscale of the 80S *the greater the assent* to the items, and the more intense the degree of spirituality evidenced. The Eastern subscale of the SOS has a range of possible scores from 5.90 to 121.75. As with the other subscales of the SOS, the lower the score, the higher the level of assent in this case indicative of assent to items of an eastern spiritual orientation. There is much support for hypothesis 59 a) suggesting that those drawn to a social agency of a eastern spiritual kind will have personal beliefs more consonant with that movement's ideology than the level of assent to those beliefs which characterises those involved in therapy. The significance level is convincing at .0005, and provides support for the most finely discriminating hypothesis which differentiates two groups who have been linked in the study so far, as having a similar recent history of disruption and loneliness. This difference occurs in spite of the possible overlap between the explanatory parameters of gestalt therapy and those of eastern spiritual orientations. The second hypothesis in this

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group addresses the extent to which the therapy group is more open to such spiritual notions than the general population. The difference is in the predicted direction which with a one-tailed test makes it significant at the .01 level of significance. This supports hypothesis 59 b).

The third hypothesis addresses the extent to which the eastern groups differ from the control group. This hypothesis was included lest the previous differences, between eastern groups and therapy, and therapy groups and control group, should prove insignificant. It therefore provides the redundant information that the eastern groups do indeed differ from the control group (F=197.24, p<.0001). Hypothesis 38 c) is comfortably supported.

From Table 88 it can be seen that the eastern NRMs *(XE=* 27.18) show significantly greater assent than the Western NRM *(NRM–E shan =*11.44, *X NRM–E clw =* 29.40, *X NRM–E clwg =31.13, X NRM–E satya = 36.74, Xw=83.88,* p< .0001).

The difference between the Western NRM and the Control group does not attain significance *(Xw=83.89, X control-g=75.16),* despite the difference being in the predicted direction, with the general control group showing a higher level of assent to eastern items than the western NRM. Despite the spiritual orientation of the western NRM, evidenced by their high level of assent on the spiritual items of a general nature, this credence does not extend to items eastern in orientation.
As is made abundantly clear by these results, see Figure 40 (above), the eastern groups are remarkably distinct from all other groups in terms of

this measure. The overall significance of these results need not blind us to differences occurring among the eastern NRMs however. Evidence shows that the mean score of spiritual theosophist group *[NRM–E shan]* is not far above the lowest possible score (5.90) for this measure, indicating a remarkable intensity of belief in eastern spiritual items. A high level of group concordance in this intensity of belief is indicated by the relatively low variance for this group. This group has a higher level of belief than any of the other eastern groups, though the small variance is a characteristic shared by all of the eastern NRMs bar the yoga group *[NRM–E satya]* suggesting, in general, a congruence of beliefs among the different individuals. If these individuals lack a sense of social integration, and have lower levels of assent to values which would mark them as traditional, it seems they have found a community of like minds here, with similar rugged paths to these moments of reflection and contemplation.

It seems that at point of first contact, those approaching an Eastern NRM have beliefs highly consonant with the orientation of that movement. The results support the empirical validity of the SOS, as only those drawn to the Eastern groups, show highest assent to items of an eastern spiritual orientation, significantly higher than the group expected to have most conceptual overlap, the gestalt therapy group.

This eastern spiritual orientation on the part of these affiliates to eastern groups significantly differentiates them from the general population, and from those who have similarly disrupted lives but who approach a secular helping agency. The results for the Western NRM are markedly

different. Even the control group, though it differed extremely from the eastern groups, was closer in level of assent than was the western group. The western group diverges markedly from an eastern spiritual focus, a divergence not significantly further from an eastern orientation than that of the control group, however.

## 39.3 Western Spiritual Tenets

It was predicted that those involved in the western group would have beliefs consonant with that orientation. In this case the consonance is not claimed to be a precursor of movement involvement, as the subjects are members of the group for some years. The responses of this group have added relevance in that membership is treated as an external criterion point against which to test the empirical validity of the SOS.

It is important to note that the direction of scoring for the subscales of the SOS is reversed. The *lower the score* for the Western subscale of the SOS *the greater the assent* to the items, and the more intense the degree of spirituality evidenced. The Western subscale of the SOS has a possible range from 6.25 to 111.25, with a low score indicating a high level of assent, as is the case with all of the subscales of the SOS.

From Table 89 it can be seen that the western NRM has the highest assent to these items of any group. It also has the smallest variance, suggesting the highest homogeneity of belief for any group. The homogeneity of the scores perhaps reflects the fact that these people are already members of the religious group. The western NRM differs significantly from the control group *(Xw=9.84, XControl-g=58.94,*

p<.0001) which provides strong support for hypothesis 60 a), see Figure 41.

## TABLE 89. DIFFERENTIAL ASSENT TO WESTERN SPIRITUAL TENETS

Differential assent to western spiritual notions

EXPECTED ORDER: W > T > C > E

OBSERVED ORDER: W > T > E > C-s > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 9.84 | 1058.58 |
| *Control-s* | 49 | 46.54 | 48256.87 |
| *Control-g* | 13 | 58.94 | 71719.49 |
| *Therapy* | 9 | 21.58 | 13000.00 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 11 | 41.57 | 14288.74 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 17 | 38.79 | 11708.72 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 29 | 41.99 | 26813.49 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 32.96 | 8480.03 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Control-s **vs** Control-g* | 1 | 157938.40 | 4.94 | .05 |
| *NRM-w **vs** Control-g* | 1 | 1625162.72 | 50.87 | .0001 |
| *Control-g **vs** Therapy* | 1 | 742193.76 | 23.23 | .0001 |
| *Control-s **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 160356.65 | 5.02 | .01 |
| *Therapy **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 232576.83 | 7.28 | .001 |
| *NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E* | 1 | 953178.00 | 29.84 | .0001 |
| *NRM-E clwg **vs** NRM-E clw* | 1 | 5167.82 | 0.16 | ns |
| error | 146 | 31947.51 | | |
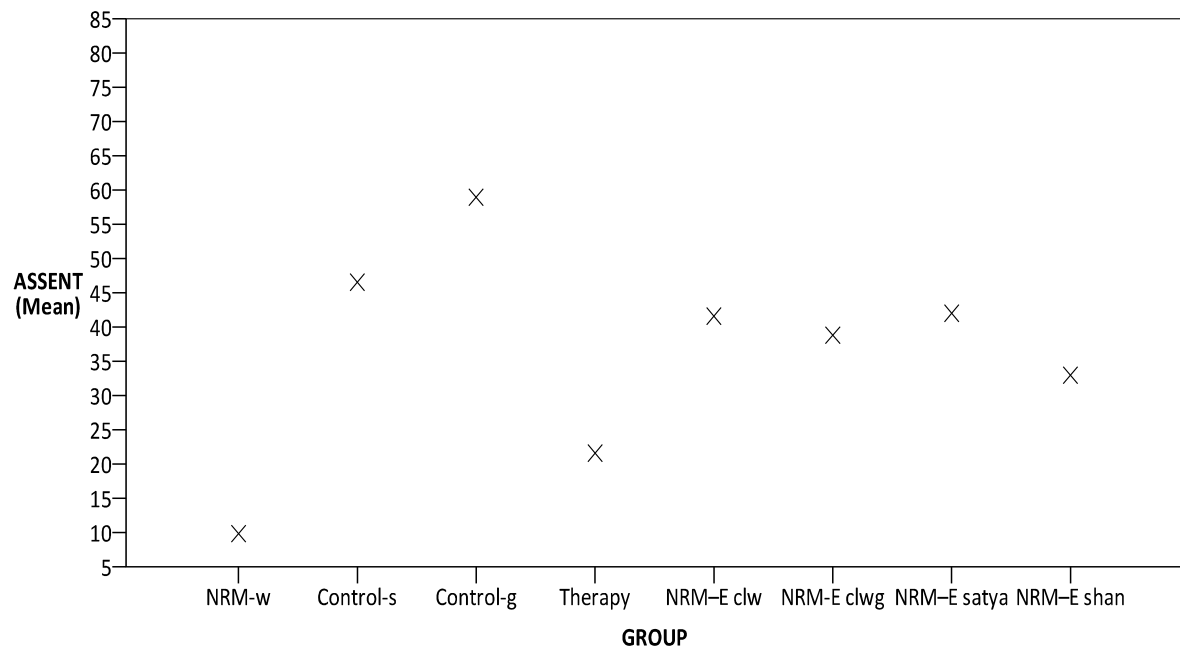
**Figure 41. WESTERN SPIRITUAL TENETS**

However, despite their greater uniformity in terms of spiritual assent and ritual commitment than the control group, it is evident from their low assent to Eastern spiritual tenets above, that the Western NRM is not only united in their assent to western items, but in their failure to endorse eastern spiritual tenets. This group is most definitely not indiscriminately pro-religious, nor even eclectic.

Given the fact that the therapy group was run by a Methodist church group, it was hypothesised that those involved in this option, despite its secular focus, would have higher levels of assent to western spiritual items. This proved to be the case, and the difference which supports hypothesis 60 b) is highly significant at the .0001 level, as its being in the predicted direction permitted the use of a one-tailed test. Those involved are more open to western spiritual beliefs. There was also a significantly higher level of belief among the student population than among the general control group on this measure, a difference

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significant at the .05 level (two-tailed test). This difference was not predicted.

In line with Needleman's reasoning that those drawn to eastern spiritual orientations were those disaffected with western orthodox religion, it was predicted in hypothesis 60 c) that those drawn to Eastern NRMs would be show less assent to western spiritual tenets than the control group. The prediction was not supported by the results at all. The exclusiveness of orientation which characterised the western group is not a feature of those drawn to eastern groups. These people are far more eclectic than was expected, embracing disparate conceptions of spirituality. It is not suggested that they are indiscriminately pro-religious, as their assent is more moderate to western religious items than that of the eastern groups. The nature of the belief items means that this lower level of assent is not merely the assignation of a lower numerical score to a single wording of a Likert-style item, but does reflect the endorsement of a different level of acceptance of differently worded and conceptually related items, as being more representative of each individual's position. The interested reader is referred to the SOS scale in Appendix 11.

There was a significant difference between the eastern groups and the control group, but not in the expected direction. The eastern groups differ significantly from the student control group *(XE= 38.83, Cs= 46.54, p<.01, two-tailed test)*, but the eastern groups show a *higher* level of assent to items of a western spiritual orientation than is evidenced by the student control group *(X NRM–E clw=41.57, X NRM–E clwg = 38.97,*

*X NRM–E satya* =41.99, *X NRM–E shan* = 32.96, *XControl-s=46.54,* p<.01). Hypothesis 60 c) is thus not supported. It seems that while the eastern groups were expected to be disaffected with western orthodox *institutions,* this disaffection, if it exists, does not extend to a negation of the worth of western spiritual *conceptions.* Their pattern of belief seems to be one of *adhesion*, where different religious beliefs are added on to an already engaged religious mental life. These individuals do not seem to have an either/or approach to eastern and western spiritual traditions. This is supported by a consideration of individual items in the SOS scale. The fact that two philosophically mutually exclusive items, the monist conception of the universe, which suggests that spiritual forces operate *through* the natural world and are not separate from it, and the dualist notion of there being a separate spiritual realm, did not load differently on the two clearly different factors (east and west respectively) suggests that there is devotional intensity, but the theological implications are not yet highly discerned by those approaching these groups for the first time. This is not a surprising finding, as the level of belief that these people have attained is for most, not the result of long-term *membership* of eastern movements, but a more casual seekership (as discussed in the section above on the descriptive characteristics of the sample. During the pilot study phase of the development of this scale, the religious experts of the NRMs had no difficulty whatsoever in responding in a highly discriminating manner to these two items. The same was not the case for the affiliates.

It is interesting to note that while for the Eastern scale the eastern and western NRMs were at opposite ends of the continuum of assent, this

ordering is not repeated with the Western scale, as the Eastern NRMs are closer to the Western group than is the Control group. It can be seen from Table 89 that while the eastern religious groups do not endorse the western items as highly as do the Western religious group, or as highly as the Therapy group, they still agree with them to a significantly greater extent than the control group (p<.01).

Hypothesis 60 d) is supported in that the difference between the therapy group and the affiliates of the Eastern NRMs is significant and in the expected direction, *(XT=21.58,* p<.001). The therapy group shows a surprising high level of assent to these items, perhaps reflecting (as expected) the fact that this group was run by an orthodox Methodist group.

It was suggested that those who approach NRMs would have a pre-existing spiritual orientation consonant with the ideological focus of the movement. This is powerfully supported by the results. Needleman's suggestion that those drawn to eastern conceptions of the spiritual are those for whom western forms of worship have proven unsatisfactory, formed the basis of an additional hypothesis, that a high eastern orientation would be coupled with a low western orientation, i.e. that spiritual orientation would be exclusive. This is the case for the Western NRM, but not for the Eastern NRMs. The eastern groups are more open to western spiritual notions than are the control group, suggesting a more eclectically religious stance than the western group, and a more intense spiritual orientation than the control group. The western group is the only group which shows such large variations in the level of assent

across SOS eastern and western subscales. The strong western spiritual orientation is matched by a strong turning away from eastern spiritual tenets. This pattern is echoed to a lesser extent for the Therapy group. This group, is more eastern in orientation than the student control group, *(XT=59.37,* Xcontrol-s=68.55), (and numerically more than the general population *(Xcontrol-g=* 75.16)), is significantly more western in orientation than the general population control group *(XT= 21.58, Xcontrol-g =58.94,* p<.001).

In conclusion, the empirical validity of the SOS is beyond doubt. The Pentecostal group and the therapy group run under the auspices of a Methodist church group have the highest levels of assent on the Western subscale. The Pentecostal group shows dramatically less variance than all other groups on this measure. The discriminating capacity of the subscales is evident most clearly for the western NRM for whom a high level of assent to Western items if coupled with a low level of assent to eastern items.

The eastern affiliates, while not being members of the group they have approached, have the highest levels of assent on this measure than any other group. For these groups it is a high eastern spiritual orientation *relative* to the level of assent to the western subscale distinguishes those drawn to Eastern NRMs from all other groups.

The discriminating capacity for the eastern and western subscales is not in doubt given the clear delineation for the western group, but the degree of distinction is present but reduced for the eastern groups

suggesting that these items are linked for this group of subjects. Factor analysis revealed that the factors themselves are uncorrelated (r= .09). However, when the scores of the religious groups are considered individually e.g. when only the eastern groups are considered, the eastern subscale correlates extremely highly with the western subscale (r=.76, p<.0001). When only the Pentecostal group is considered *[NRMw]* the correlation is tiny, negative and drops to insignificance (r= -.19, p<.5l).

The general spiritual items are quite effective discriminators of those who are open to spiritual involvement, although, in this study, the therapy group also scores extremely highly on this scale which is likely to be due to the church-based therapy course.

## 40. SUBSIDIARY HYPOTHESES· Life Affirming Experiences

The following statistics explore the extent to which those drawn to eastern NRMs have similar opportunities for affirming their sense of productive self-worth in life arena, regarding holidays and promotions, and in the social arena regarding new relationships, and an improvement in interpersonal relationships.

# TABLE 90. TOTAL INCIDENCE OF POSITIVE LIFE EVENTS

Have fewer positive life events occurred for those drawn to NRMs?

EXPECTED ORDER: E =T < C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: T < C-g < W < E < C-s

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 0.78 | 0.70 |
| Control-s | 35 | 1.66 | 1.08 |
| Control-g | 12 | 0.50 | 0.52 |
| Therapy | 11 | 0.45 | 0.52 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 1.54 | 1.13 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 0.94 | 1.12 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 0.72 | 0.94 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 1.00 | 1.05 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD.ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 2.38 | 0.85 | 2.80 | .01 |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 2.43 | 0.93 | 2.63 | .01 |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 2.2 | 0.83 | 2.65 | .01 |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 0.29 | 0.24 | 1.19 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 0.05 | 0.22 | 0.21 | ns |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan satya | 0.76 | 0.57 | 1.33 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 1.05 | 0.94 | 1.12 | ns |

There are no specific hypotheses regarding the incidence of positive life events. Hypothesis 61 addresses the group order in general, and the contrasts tested will be commented upon, but formal hypotheses-testing is not attempted as there were few theoretical reasons to expect the results to differentiate the groups.

Overall, as Table 90 shows, the eastern groups are not disadvantaged relative to the Western NRM, the therapy group or the general control group. The eastern groups have a higher mean total incidence *(XE =* 1.05) of positive life events than the therapy group (p<.01) and the general control group (p<.01). The student group is most rewarded by life, gaining the highest score of all the groups, significantly higher than the eastern groups (p<.01). The western NRM is not visited by significantly more fortunate life events than the general control group. Descriptively, it shares much with the graduate rebirthing group *(NRM–E clwg)* and the Yoga group *(NRM–E satya)* in this regard.

Once again, there are no formal specific hypotheses for this measure, but the specific contrast will be commented upon. From Table 91 it is apparent that there is a low incidence of positive life experiences for the general population. This group has significantly fewer positive life events than the eastern NRMs (p<.05). None of the other groups differs significantly from any other. There are some differences within the cluster of the eastern NRMs. While the overall mean for these groups is .72, the rebirthing groups seem to have an elevated incidence of positive social experiences relative to the other eastern groups. It seems that overall, the eastern groups are not characterised by a significant lack of life-affirming experiences. Rather, they are somewhat besieged by negative life events and by the psychological impact of even these positive life events.

# TABLE 91. TOTAL INCIDENCE OF POSITIVE SOCIAL EVENTS

Have those drawn to NRMs had fewer positive social experiences?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = T < C = W

OBSERVED ORDER: C-g < C-s = T < W < E

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 0.71 | 0.73 |
| Control-s | 35 | 0.63 | 0.65 |
| Control-g | 12 | 0.33 | 0.65 |
| Therapy | 11 | 0.64 | 0.67 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 0.85 | 1.14 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 0.94 | 0.85 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 0.60 | 0.58 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 0.50 | 0.71 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD.ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy **vs** NRMs-E | 0.33 | 0.93 | 0.36 | ns |
| Control-s **vs** NRMs-E | 0.37 | 0.63 | 0.58 | ns |
| Control-g **vs** NRMs-E | 1.55 | 0.88 | 1.76 | .05 |
| Control-g **vs** Therapy | 0.38 | 0.27 | 1.41 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** Control-g | 0.30 | 0.27 | 1.09 | ns |
| NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan satya | 0.68 | 0.46 | 1.49 | ns |
| NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E | 0.03 | 0.90 | 0.03 | ns |

## 41. SUBSIDIARY HYPOTHESES - ASOCIAL ATTRIBUTES

**Alienation**

There are no significant differences in terms of alienation between the eastern groups and the control groups as can be seen from Table 92. The results support the hypotheses regarding the significantly lower level of alienation characteristic of those who are members of a NRM consonant

in orientation with the dominant cultural values. The Western NRM is significantly *less* alienated than the rest of the general population in this study. They are significantly less alienated than the general control group. This provides support for hypothesis 63 e), (p <.01). They are also less alienated than the eastern NRM affiliates who do not differ from the control groups in this regard.

## TABLE 92. ALIENATION

Is religious affiliation a response to alienation?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER:

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|-------|---|------|----------|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 1.14 | 2.12 |
| *Control-s* | 39 | 3.69 | 7.55 |
| *Control-g* | 17 | 4.12 | 18.46 |
| *Therapy* | 10 | 2.40 | 6.24 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 20 | 2.45 | 16.55 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 30 | 3.77 | 17.31 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 12 | 2.67 | 11.06 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|----------|----|----|---|--------------|
| *Control-s vs Control-g* | 1 | 2.14 | 0.17 | ns |
| *NRM-w vs Control-g* | 1 | 67.97 | 5.45 | .01 |
| *Control-g vs Therapy* | 1 | 18.57 | 1.48 | ns |
| *Therapy vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 2.66 | 0.21 | ns |
| *Control-g vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 17.29 | 1.39 | ns |
| *NRM-w vs NRMs-E* | 1 | 36.76 | 2.95 | .05 |
| error | 135 | 12.47 | | |

## TABLE 93. AGGRESSION

Are those drawn to NRMs more aggressive?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: C-s > E > C-g > T > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 1.43 | 2.82 |
| Control-s | 39 | 6.21 | 20.68 |
| Control-g | 17 | 4.29 | 12.21 |
| Therapy | 10 | 3.50 | 5.85 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 4.70 | 10.81 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 5.47 | 11.92 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 2.92 | 12.41 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 43.24 | 3.18 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 63.04 | 4.64 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 3.97 | 0.29 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 6.26 | 0.46 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 5.80 | 0.00 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 95.61 | 7.04 | .001 |
| error | 135 | 13.59 | | |

Table 93 reveals little support for these subsidiary hypotheses. The significant differences to emerge support the hypotheses that the western NRM show less aggression than the general control group, which provides significant support for hypothesis 64 c) and than the eastern groups which supports hypothesis 64 d).

## 42. SUBSIDIARY HYPOTHESES - Social Competency

The historical carryover of the counter-culture from the 1960s and from the tendency noted by numerous researchers for those who have a history of drug abuse and emotional problems to become involved in NRMs has lead some to assume that those so involved have been removed from productive career paths. While not directly relevant to the model being tested in this study, data was available from the MPQ regarding the comparative social competency of those involved in NRMs. It is suggested that regarding the current profile of affiliates quite a reversal has occurred in those involved, and that the image which has been portrayed in recent years of college educated, capable participants in NRMs applies to these groups studied in Australia.

Table 94 (below) and Figure 42 reveal no significant differences whatsoever in the level of achievement orientation among the groups. Involvement in NRMs is neither the refuge of the socially incompetent, nor that of the self-driven who have pushed themselves to breaking point. The theosophist NRM and the therapy group have the highest apparent achievement levels but there are no statistically significant results.

# TABLE 94. ACHIEVEMENT

Are those involved with NRMs achievement-oriented?

EXPECTED ORDER: W = E = T > C

OBSERVED ORDER: T> E = C-s = C-g = W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 10.43 | 20.39 |
| Control-s | 39 | 10.67 | 26.53 |
| Control-g | 17 | 10.47 | 24.25 |
| Therapy | 10 | 11.50 | 18.25 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 10.30 | 27.71 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 10.70 | 14.34 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 12.58 | 12.91 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s vs Control-g | 1 | 0.46 | 0.00 | ns |
| NRM-w vs Control-g | 1 | 1.36 | 0.00 | ns |
| Control-g vs Therapy | 1 | 6.67 | 0.29 | ns |
| Therapy vs NRMs-E | 1 | 6.31 | 0.28 | ns |
| Control-g vs NRMs-E | 1 | 6.77 | 0.30 | ns |
| NRM-w vs NRMs-E | 1 | 22.74 | 1.02 | ns |
| error | 135 | 22.62 | | |
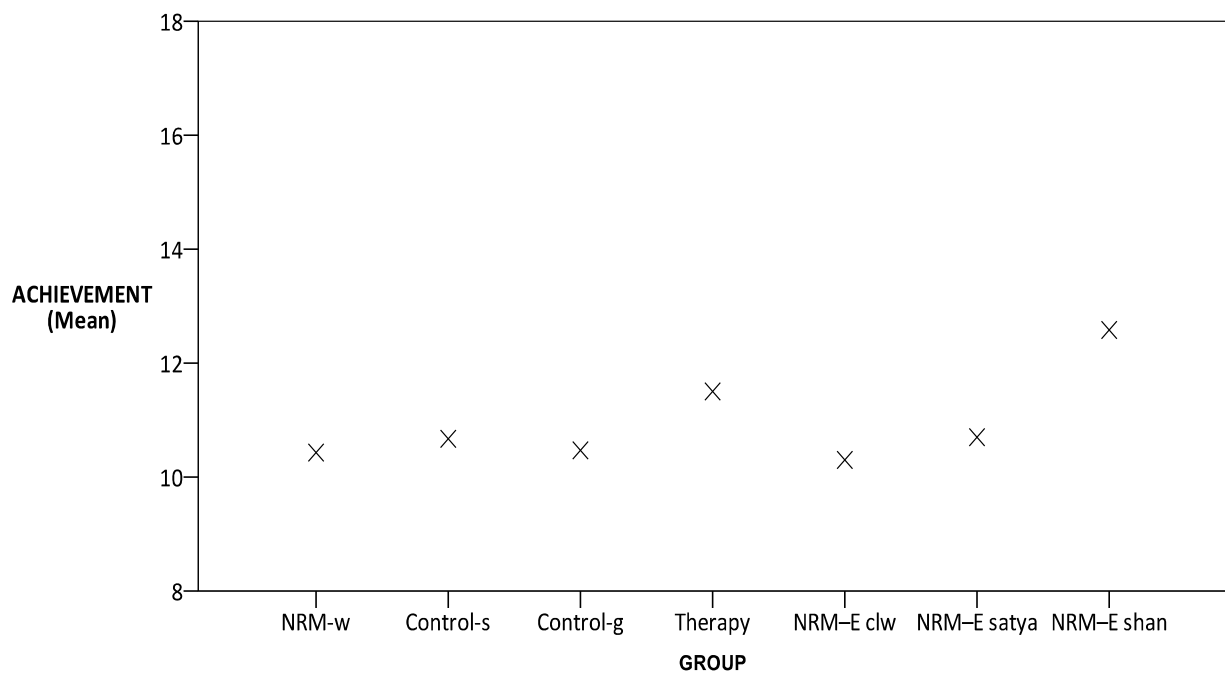
**Figure 42. ACHIEVEMENT**

From Table 95 it is apparent that the only statistically significant difference for this measure is the evident social vigour which characterises the western NRM, rendering it significantly more socially potent than the general control group. Two of the three eastern NRMs do have a relatively low level of social potency, but this in no way distinguishes them from the general population, rather, it distinguishes them from different NRMs and from the student control group. So it seems there is no uniform lack of social potency as a characteristic of movement affiliates, or those drawn to therapy, see Figure 43.

Since the eastern affiliates are considered as a group, the high mean of the yoga group (*NRM–E satya*) brings the average up to a level which is not characteristic of the other two groups.

# TABLE 95. SOCIAL POTENCY

Is a spiritual way of life a retreat from social ineptitude?

EXPECTED ORDER: W =E = T > C

OBSERVED ORDER:

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 13.57 | 31.82 |
| Control-s | 39 | 12.67 | 46.22 |
| Control-g | 17 | 9.88 | 66.57 |
| Therapy | 10 | 10.50 | 27.25 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 9.95 | 25.35 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 12.37 | 28.37 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 9.92 | 25.41 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 91.78 | 2.33 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 79.74 | 4.31 | .05 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 0.59 | 0.00 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 0.50 | 0.00 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 0.62 | 0.00 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 88.85 | 2.26 | ns |
| error | 135 | 39.37 | | |
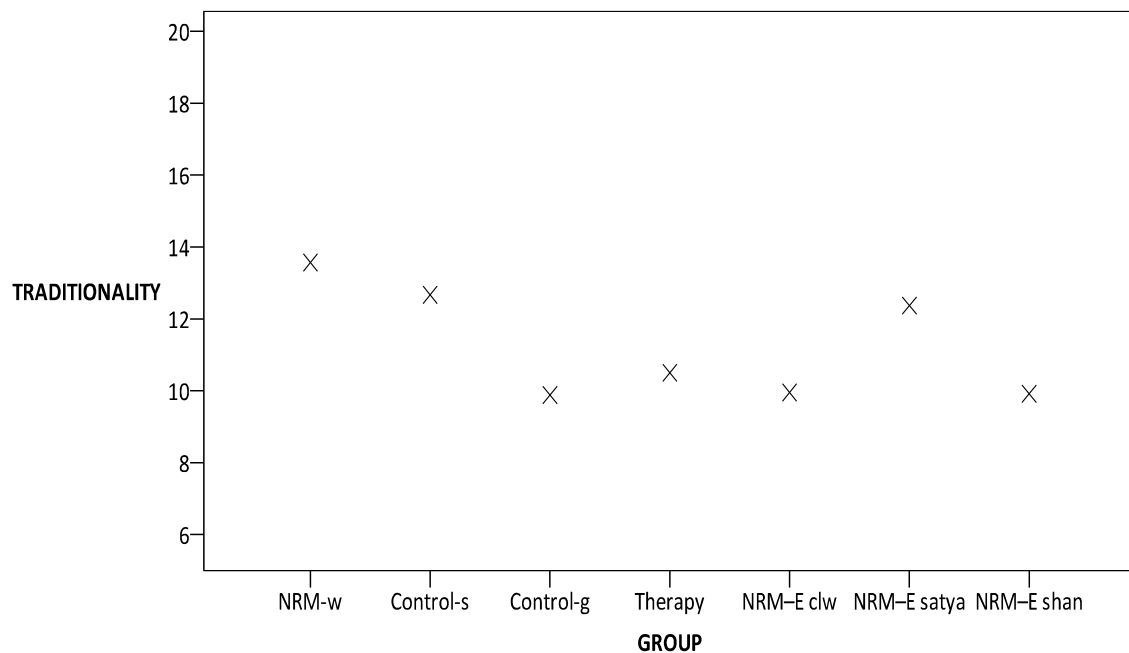
**Figure 43. SOCIAL POTENCY**

## 43. SUBSIDIARY HYPOTHESES - Habitual Modes of Engagement

The following results refer to indicators which span both the mood and trait dimension. They reflect habitual tendencies in one's manner of engaging with the world, and of viewing one's place in that world. Since the focus of the *Rites de Passage* model spans the interplay of features of the life environment which require dynamic adaption and their impact on an individual with certain features of response style, these dimensions are indirectly of interest to the study. Negative affectivity is akin unpleasureable engagement, subjective distress, a tendency to dwell upon and magnify mistakes, and selectivity of analysis regarding thought and feeling biased towards the negative. If the 'plight' of those drawn to eastern NRMs is due to the manner of engagement evidenced by these people, rather than or in addition to, the product of an

existential life situation which leaves much to be desired, then these groups will be revealed to have a higher level of negative affectivity.

## TABLE 96. NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY

Do those drawn to NRMs experience more negative affectivity?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: E = C-s> C-g > T > W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 119.60 | 11053.35 |
| Control-s | 39 | 136.16 | 16056.57 |
| Control-g | 17 | 131.77 | 21429.61 |
| Therapy | 10 | 128.73 | 14914.99 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 128.22 | 31479.08 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 136.24 | 22654.72 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 130.45 | 11024.97 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s *vs* Control-g | 1 | 22841.25 | 1.13 | ns |
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 7122.61 | 0.35 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1 | 5805.96 | 0.28 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 22.26 | 0.00 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1 | 161010.67 | 7.94 | .005 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1 | 113625.42 | 5.61 | .01 |
| error | 135 | 20266.14 | | |

The difference between the student and general control groups is not significant. There is no support for hypotheses 67 a), b), or c) as the differences between the therapy group, eastern NRMs and general control group are not significant. The only group which differs from any

other is the Western NRM which is significantly different from the eastern groups supporting hypothesis 67 d) at the .005 level, and significantly different from the general control group (p<.01), which provides support for hypothesis 67 e). It seems that this measure, which has been demonstrated to be a good indicator of mood, self-esteem and negative engagement, does not reveal heightened negative affect and self-deprecation to be a characteristic of those who are viewed within this model as currently being in a state of transition.
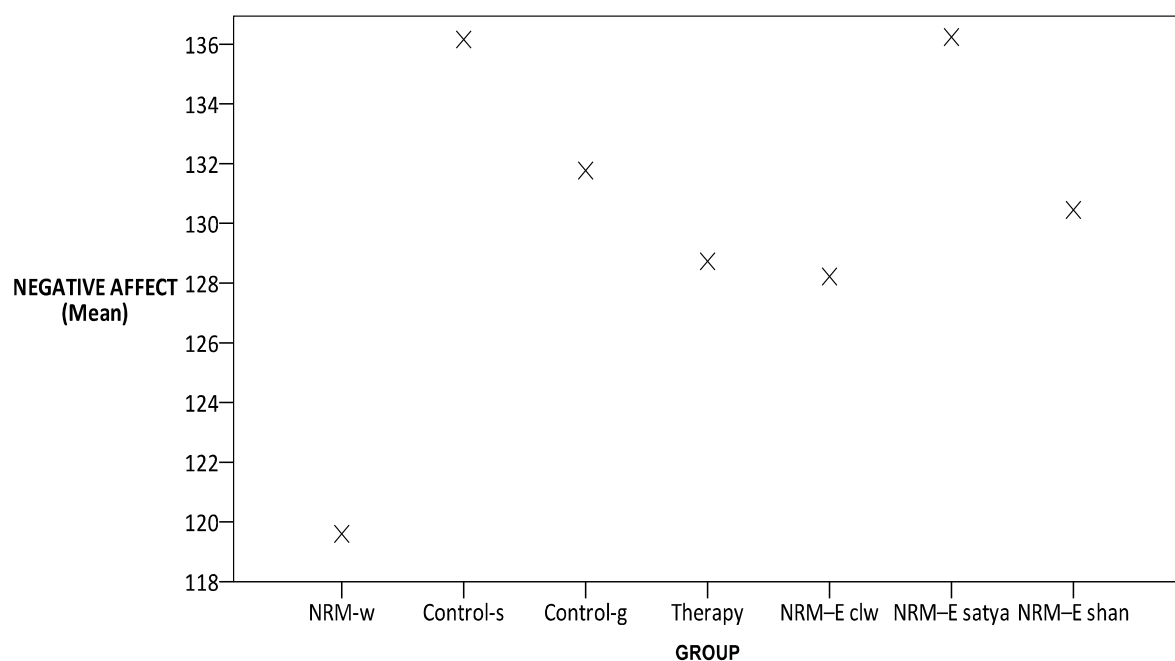


**Figure 44. NEGATIVE AFFECTIVITY**

The eastern groups are certainly in a heightened state of negative engagement relative to the committed members of a western NRM (see Figure 44), but not in relation to the general population, or in comparison to the student control group.

# TABLE 97. POSITIVE AFFECTIVITY

Do those drawn to NRMs experience less positive affectivity?

EXPECTED ORDER: E < T < C < W

OBSERVED ORDER: C-g < T < E < C-s < W

| GROUP | N | MEAN | VARIANCE |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 153.80 | 20491.25 |
| Control-s | 39 | 152.27 | 15862.26 |
| Control-g | 17 | 143.75 | 22194.46 |
| Therapy | 10 | 144.50 | 6445.71 |
| NRM–E clw | 20 | 147.42 | 11974.93 |
| NRM–E satya | 30 | 150.75 | 11281.42 |
| NRM–E shan | 12 | 152.58 | 9232.50 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | DF | MS | F | SIGNIFICANCE |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Control-s vs Control-g | 1 | 86019.46 | 5.70 | .05 |
| Therapy vs NRMs-E | 1 | 27916.97 | 1.85 | ns |
| Control-g vs Therapy | 1 | 354.16 | 0.00 | ns |
| Control-g vs NRMs-E | 1 | 54662.99 | 3.62 | ns |
| NRM-w vs NRMs-E | 1 | 13999.99 | 0.93 | ns |
| NRM-w vs Control-g | 1 | 77554.88 | 5.14 | .05 |
| error | 135 | 15081.48 | | |

One of the significant differences to emerge with this measure is the difference between the student control group and the general population, which reveals the younger student population to have more positive engagement than the general population, a difference which is significant to the .05 level, see Table 97.
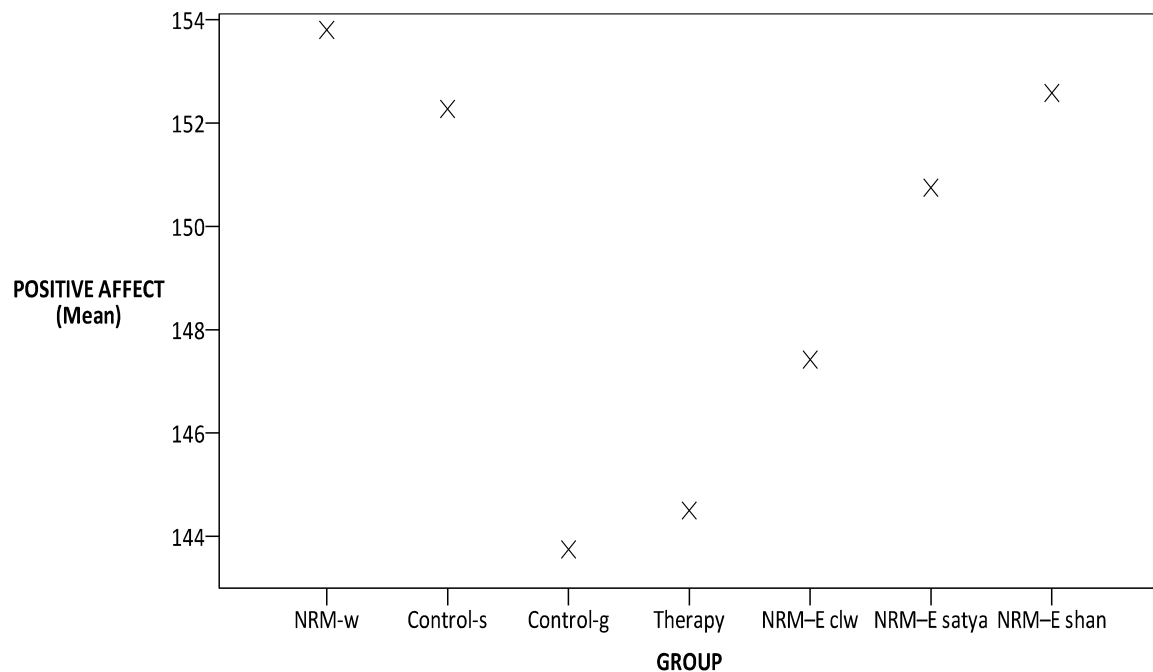
**Figure 45. POSITIVE AFFECTIVITY**

There is no significant difference between the eastern NRMs and the therapy group on this measure and the apparent difference is in the opposite direction to that predicted by hypothesis 68 a). The difference predicted between the therapy group and the control group is also in the opposite direction to that predicted and does not support hypothesis 68 b). The western NRM has a highly comparable level of positive engagement to some of the eastern NRMs (see Figure 45): no significant difference emerges between these groups. The western group is also characterised as having more positive engagement than the control group, (p<.OI) which provides support for hypothesis 68 e). The differences which surprisingly do not emerge are the lower habitual levels of positive engagement relative to the control group for those who are drawn to therapy (see Figure 45), and those drawn to eastern NRM involvement. It seems that there is little support for the idea that

there is a reduced positive and enthusiastic engagement with life events on the part of these groups.

## 44. SUBSIDIARY HYPOTHESES· The Attribution of Responsibility for Life Events

One of the subsidiary hypotheses concerned the extent to which a person assumed personal responsibility for life events. There are a number of explanatory perspectives, for example determinism, which might lead a person to attribute more responsibility to the interpersonal world rather than to chance. In this study, the particular focus is on those drawn to eastern NRMs who, it is predicted, are likely to endorse the notion of Karma, an modern extension of which is to view suffering as having something to teach us, as having occurred for a reason pertinent to our own existence. Stone (1978:130) notes Karma assigns responsibility without blame or guilt. For this reason it was predicted that those who would assign most personal responsibility for life events would be those drawn to eastern movements. If the therapy group has focused on an understanding of how personal actions influence events, then it is likely that they will assume more responsibility than the control groups. It was thought that if the western group assigns life events to part of God's plan, then they might assume least responsibility of all of the groups. Thus, the groups were predictively arrayed in terms of the degree to which they might assume personal responsibility, though the reasons for each set of people are perhaps markedly different.

# TABLE 98. PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY ATTRIBUTED

Do those drawn to eastern NRMs claim more personal responsibility?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: E> C-s > W > T > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 38.07 | 17.41 |
| Control-s | 35 | 42.40 | 28.53 |
| Control-g | 12 | 31.58 | 15.02 |
| Therapy | 11 | 34.55 | 20.63 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 84.77 | 50.05 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 62.69 | 31.40 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 47.28 | 25.15 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 49.70 | 32.85 |

## ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 106.25 | 31.93 | 3.35 | .002 |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 74.84 | 27.56 | 2.71 | .004 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 118.10 | 26.24 | 4.50 | .0005 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 6.49 | 6.36 | 1.02 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 2.96 | 7.58 | 0.39 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 50.48 | 19.68 | 2.56 | .008 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 92.15 | 27.09 | 3.40 | .001 |
| df | 128 | | | |

As can be seen from the Table 98, there is strong support for hypothesis 69 a) that the eastern groups claim more personal responsibility for the events which occur than the therapy group, *(XE= 61.11, XT= 34.55, p<.002)*. Further the eastern groups differ significantly from both control groups providing support for hypothesis 69 c) (p<.004, p<.0005,

respectively). The therapy group does not assume significantly more responsibility for life events than the control group, and neither does the western group assume more control than the control group, so there is no support for either hypotheses 69 b) and 69 d).

While the western NRM did not differ from the general control groups, (providing no support for hypothesis 69 e») it does seem that they differ markedly from the eastern groups since they assume much less responsibility for the events which occur, having a mean of only 38.07, compared to the eastern groups' mean of 61.11. This provides strong support for a difference in emphasis of the two spiritual orientations interpretation of life events.

Of the eastern groups, the rebirthing groups assume a much greater amount of personal responsibility than the other eastern groups which provides strong support (p<.001) for hypothesis 69 f).

From Table 99 it is apparent that when the mean amount of responsibility attributed to oneself in response to life events is considered there is support for hypothesis 70 a) in that the members of the therapy group attributes significantly less responsibility to themselves per life event than the eastern NRM affiliates do (p<.005). They do not, however, attribute more responsibility than the general control group, as the significant difference (not in predicted direction* two-tailed test) is not in the predicted direction.

It seems the therapy group attributes significantly less responsibility to themselves than does the general control group. There is support for

hypothesis 70 c) in that the eastern NRM affiliates attribute significantly more responsibility to themselves than do the general control group. None of the other hypotheses gain support from the measure of the mean responsibility claimed per event.

## TABLE 99. MEAN ATTRIBUTION OF PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

Do those drawn to NRMs claim more responsibility per event?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > W > C-s > C-g > T

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NRM-w* | 14 | 5.97 | 1.87 |
| *Control-s* | 35 | 5.92 | 1.97 |
| *Control-g* | 12 | 5.01 | 0.84 |
| *Therapy* | 11 | 4.63 | 1.66 |
| *NRM–E clw* | 13 | 6.68 | 2.35 |
| *NRM-E clwg* | 16 | 6.35 | 1.50 |
| *NRM–E satya* | 25 | 6.14 | 2.14 |
| *NRM–E shan* | 10 | 5.92 | 2.56 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Therapy **vs** NRMs-E* | 6.58 | 2.33 | 2.82 | .005 |
| *Control-s **vs** NRMs-E* | 1.41 | 1.78 | 0.79 | ns |
| *Control-g **vs** NRMs-E* | 5.04 | 1.53 | 3.29 | .001 |
| *Control-g **vs** Therapy* | 0.96 | 0.55 | 1.74 | .05* |
| *NRM-w **vs** Control-g* | 0.38 | 0.56 | 0.69 | ns |
| *NRM-E clw **vs** NRM-E shan-satya* | 0.97 | 1.18 | 0.82 | ns |
| *NRM-w **vs** NRMs-E* | 1.19 | 2.32 | 0.51 | ns |
| *df* | 128 | | | |

For this sample the salience of the interpersonal environment means that there is no dichotomous expectation that if someone attributes a great deal of responsibility to him/herself, that s/he might not also see others as responsible: personal responsibility versus other persons' responsibility is not a true dichotomy. Someone who had a particular focus on, or particular difficulties with the social environment might form the bulk of causal attributions within this domain. All that is unlikely of such a person is that they would attribute much to chance in the social realm, thought they may well make attributions to chance regarding other life events. The issue of the locus of control attributed to life events is salient in the life stress literature, though adjacent to the dominant concerns of this model. It was that predicted that if life events were seen as requiring self-change, as the model suggests (it is after all a *personal* turning point that has been arrived at), then there would be higher attributions of personal responsibility for those who were seeking personal change. This proved to be the case for those drawn to eastern NRMs, but not the case regarding those drawn to therapy. Since those drawn to eastern NRMs are predicted to have had an historical and recent tendency to experience difficulties with the social environment, it is predicted that they will attribute much more responsibility to those in their environment for life events.

From Table 100 (below) it can be seen that the eastern groups are distinguished by a high tendency to attribute responsibility to others, higher even than the therapy group. Though this does not attain significance, and therefore does not support hypothesis 71a). There is support for hypothesis 71 c) in that the eastern groups attribute more

responsibility to others than do the student control sample, and not more than the general control group. The western NRM and the therapy group do not differ significantly from the control group, so there is no support for hypotheses 71 b) and e). Neither do the eastern and western NRMs differ, so hypothesis 71 d) is not supported.

## TABLE 100. RESPONSIBILITY ATTRIBUTED TO OTHERS

Do those drawn to eastern NRMs attribute more responsibility to others?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: E > T > W > C-s > C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 30.36 | 28.47 |
| Control-s | 35 | 29.83 | 18.85 |
| Control-g | 12 | 24.42 | 11.38 |
| Therapy | 11 | 31.73 | 18.99 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 52.85 | 50.25 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 47.69 | 31.14 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 31.88 | 22.55 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 29.90 | 31.61 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 35.40 | 29.99 | 1.18 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 43.00 | 23.18 | 1.86 | .05 |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 64.65 | 23.40 | 2.76 | .009 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 5.94 | 8.29 | 0.72 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 7.31 | 6.60 | 1.11 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 38.75 | 19.37 | 2.00 | .05 |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 40.89 | 36.07 | 1.13 | ns |
| df | 128 | | | |

There is a difference in the predicted direction between the rebirthing groups, whom, it was postulated, would have most interpersonal difficulty out of the eastern NRMs, and this difference, in being significant at the .05 level, provides support for hypothesis 71 f).

## TABLE 101. MEAN RESPONSIBILITY ATTRIBUTED TO OTHERS

Do those drawn to NRMs attribute more responsibility to others per event?

EXPECTED ORDER: E > T > C > W

OBSERVED ORDER: T > W > C-g > C-s > E

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 4.23 | 2.79 |
| Control-s | 35 | 3.92 | 2.14 |
| Control-g | 12 | 4.10 | 1.67 |
| Therapy | 11 | 4.44 | 1.45 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 3.62 | 1.86 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 4.82 | 1.85 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 3.87 | 1.66 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 3.21 | 2.16 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 2.24 | 2.02 | 1.11 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 0.15 | 1.77 | 0.08 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 0.87 | 2.19 | 0.40 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 0.13 | 0.89 | 0.15 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 0.34 | 0.65 | 0.53 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 1.36 | 1.03 | 1.32 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1.39 | 3.16 | 0.44 | ns |
| df | 128 | | | |

It seems from Table 101 (above) that when the average number of attributions to others *per event* is considered there is a change in the attributional patterns of the groups. There are no longer any significant differences among the groups, so it seems that the differences in attributional style regarding the responsibility attributed to others were a function of the differential incidence of events.

## TABLE 102. ATTRIBUTIONS TO CHANCE

Do those drawn to NRMs attribute life events less to chance?

EXPECTED ORDER: E = W = T < C

OBSERVED ORDER: W < C-s < T < E < C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 15.71 | 26.97 |
| Control-s | 35 | 17.77 | 14.72 |
| Control-g | 12 | 22.42 | 15.96 |
| Therapy | 11 | 18.82 | 20.28 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 24.08 | 22.93 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 17.87 | 22.18 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 22.04 | 16.00 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 18.30 | 19.47 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 19.43 | 30.83 | 0.63 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 7.02 | 26.78 | 0.26 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 11.20 | 14.78 | 0.76 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 7.37 | 21.43 | 0.34 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 6.70 | 8.55 | 0.78 | ns |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 3.60 | 7.66 | 47.00 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1.61 | 10.92 | 0.15 | ns |
| *df* | 128 | | | |

It is apparent from Table 102 that there are no differences among the groups regarding the degree to which they attribute life events to chance.

## TABLE 103. MEAN ATTRIBUTIONS TO CHANCE

Do those drawn to NRMs regard each life event as less a matter of chance?

EXPECTED ORDER: E =W = T > C

OBSERVED ORDER: W < E < T < C-s < C-g

| GROUP | N | MEAN | STD. DEVIATION |
|---|---|---|---|
| NRM-w | 14 | 1.78 | 2.02 |
| Control-s | 35 | 2.33 | 1.60 |
| Control-g | 12 | 3.61 | 1.90 |
| Therapy | 11 | 2.15 | 1.78 |
| NRM–E clw | 13 | 1.87 | 1.54 |
| NRM-E clwg | 16 | 1.78 | 1.40 |
| NRM–E satya | 25 | 2.93 | 1.97 |
| NRM–E shan | 10 | 1.97 | 1.89 |

### ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLE

| CONTRAST | VALUE | STD. ERROR | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Therapy *vs* NRMs-E | 0.03 | 2.32 | 0.01 | ns |
| Control-s *vs* NRMs-E | 0.76 | 1.40 | 0.54 | ns |
| Control-g *vs* NRMs-E | 5.90 | 2.37 | 2.49 | .01 |
| Control-g *vs* Therapy | 1.84 | 0.77 | 2.39 | .01 |
| NRM-w *vs* Control-g | 1.47 | 0.77 | 1.91 | .04 |
| NRM-E clw *vs* NRM-E shan-satya | 1.25 | 0.89 | 1.39 | ns |
| NRM-w *vs* NRMs-E | 1.45 | 2.33 | 0.62 | ns |
| df | 128 | | | |

While it cannot be asserted from Table 103 that due to a reduced attribution to chance on the part of the western NRM it can be asserted

that these people see life events as part of God's plan, and that because all bar the graduate rebirthing group *(NRM-E clwg)* among the eastern groups have a reduced level of attributions to chance per item, that they endorse principles of Karma. However, the results do support a diminished tendency on the part of those drawn to movements with explanatory belief systems to attribute very much to chance when the differential incidence of life events across these groups is taken into account. The results for the eastern groups would be much more remarkable but for the anomalous group of graduate rebirthers. Relative to the general control group, there is a dramatically lower level of attribution to chance for the eastern NRMs (supporting Hypothesis 74 d) at the .01 level), a lower tendency on the part of the therapy group, supporting hypothesis 74 c) at the .01 level, and a lower tendency to attribute events to chance on the part of the western group, supporting hypothesis 74 e) at the .04 level. It seems that chance does not figure highly in the causal attributions of those drawn to explanatory systems. The mysterious exception to this is the graduate rebirthing group.

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## Support for the *Rites de Passage* model

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**Returning by an unused path… violets**

*Bakusui*

### 45. THE RITES DE PASSAGE MODEL: DO THE DATA FIT?

Lofland and Stark's (1965) model was worthy of modified application, as all major predictions of the *Rites de Passage* model were supported with regard to the focus of this study: the Eastern NRMs. They are the only groups who fulfil the selection criteria, the most important of which is their being *affiliates* rather than *members* of groups formed around living leaders who claim special spiritual status and abilities, and where membership of the groups entails assent to a belief system that is innovative relative to the dominant Australian culture.

The significance of their being affiliates lies in the prospective nature of the study, which did not aim to study those who are already members of NRMs, but to study recent affiliates so that distinctions could be drawn between the *sequelae* and the precursors of movement membership. This was not possible in the case of the highly committed long-term members of the Western NRM. For this reason, the discussion will focus on the Eastern NRMs and will consider the Western NRM and the Therapy group where relevant.

Affiliation to the eastern groups forms the discriminating variable which is the conceptual and empirical focal point of the other postulated differences between the groups. The support for the model lies in the degree to which the differences predicted by the model reliably distinguish the eastern groups from the control groups, and in some instances, from the therapy group.

The *Rites de Passage* Model tested in this study established that of all the groups, only those who were affiliates to eastern NRMs fulfilled all of the predictions of the model, which taken together present as possible determinants of movement involvement.

## 46. THE *RITES DE PASSAGE* MODEL

This model predicts that the following conditions must apply for eastern spiritual affiliation to occur:

1. Unconventional people

2. who have recently endured disruptive and aversive life events, especially those concerning social-exits,

3. which they appraise as having had intense and aversive psychological impact,

4. endured in the absence of adequate acquaintances and friends,

5. for those who have a history (subjectively viewed) of suboptimal experience of their parents, in childhood and adolescence,

6. and diminished wellbeing and increased distress in the recent past,

7. who have a tendency to oppose traditional conceptions of authority

8. who are somewhat impulsive or unconstrained

9. who have an absorptive, mystical perceptual style

10. and are generally spiritually intense

11. with an orientation towards eastern conceptions of the sacred will be drawn towards NRMs of an eastern nature.

## 46.1 Unconventionality

The new features of the model which were not included in the Lofland and Stark (1965) model were especially relevant. The first stage, predicting unconventionality distinguished the eastern groups from all others. Given that eastern NRMs are portrayed as non-normative spiritual options, then the high level of conventionality which characterised the western NRM meant that in spite of their spiritual orientation, they held worldviews as far away from the eastern affiliates as those of any in the sample. The differences continued from there with that group.

## 46.2 Disruptive Life Events

The eastern groups had had the greatest number of life events, the greatest impact felt of those life events and the greatest emotional response indicative of disruption, a need for adjustment, and emotions which have the character of a strong personal turning point.

## 46.3 Aversive and Intense Psychological Impact

It is here that the psychometric sophistication of Henderson et al's (981) Recent Life Events Inventory revealed its merits. It was possible to document, using ratings by the subjects themselves, regarding their own recent life experiences, the emotional impact, and to quantify those

differences. The data could be analysed in terms of overall incidence to see if these people just had more happen to them, total impact to see the total cumulative stress impact which formed the backdrop to their day to day coping, and average impact per event. This enabled us to explore whether there was greater reactivity to life events. This may be due to cumulative impact, or possibly a temperamental feature or a personality trait.

The items regarding anxiety, disruption, anger and helplessness certainly indicated that personal coping resources had been exceeded. The eastern affiliates were also those most likely to have endured recent loss, and to view their close social bonds as inadequate to their needs. The additional impact items regarding personality discontent also proved useful indicators of a possible turning point, in that these items distinguished the eastern affiliates, from the other groups.

## 46.4 The Absence of Adequate Close Bonds

It was not possible to retain an analytic separateness of life events and social supports, as they were extremely confounded in this situation, (Thoits, 1982). Not only were a high proportion of the life events which occurred to do with social exits, and recent losses (with attendant implications for identity maintenance, Duck and Lea, 1983; Oreil, 1977; McHugh, 1972; Schein, 1957) but the social domain was such an area of difficulty for those drawn to eastern NRMs that even positive life events had differentially greater disruptive impact on them.

**46.5 Poor Family Relations**

If, as Ullman (1982) suggests, converts experience a re-evocation of early life problems prior to conversion, then the eastern groups are certainly those who feel they had a less ideal pair of parents than any other group.

**46.6 Diminished Wellbeing**

The eastern groups were also those who had the lowest wellbeing assessed in terms of dysphoria and accompanying bodily responses (Galanter, 1980), though they did not evidence a higher incidence of a trait-like operationalisation of stress such as Tellegen's (1982).

**46.7 Opposition to Traditional Moral Authority**

They also had a lower tendency to submit to traditional authorities, which is perhaps a further reflection of their unconventionality. It may also reflect dimensions of value which also find expression in their eastern orientation, whereby the contingencies of the moment might be more pertinent to determining a course of action than moral absolutes or allowed traditions. Since a number of these items from Ray's (1971) scale also refer to parental respect and since the affiliates have a rather poor appraisal of them, this might have contributed to their extremely low scores.

**46.8 Lack of Constraint**

The eastern affiliates do not seem to endorse control and constraint as being characteristic of coping and responding styles. They are the least

constrained of all groups. It is at this point of the model that they become most readily distinguishable from the therapy group.

## 46.9 Absorptive Perceptual Style

Tellegen's (1982) speculation regarding the discriminant validity of the absorption subscale was empirically supported by this study, as the eastern groups were highest of all on this measure, and the western group lowest of all. The young student sample also had a high score which suggests that absorptive perceptual styles may be a feature of youth, and when carried through to later years may be a more significant demarcating variable of a mystical propensity. More testing on wider age ranges and religious affiliations is required to answer this question.

## 46.10 Generally Spiritually Intense

The SOS scale definitely distinguished between those drawn one genre of movement activity and another, in this case between those drawn to therapy and those drawn to NRMs of an eastern nature. Regarding the general belief items, it seems that it can be assumed with some confidence that the scale is worded in such a way as to gain assent from a cross-section of denominations. It is sensitive enough to detect differences in spiritual intensity in those in this sample drawn actively to new religions, and those who practise the religion into which they were socialised, or have lapsed into non-practising status.

## 46.11 An Eastern Conception of the Sacred

It is the eastern items which really differentiate the groups. Only those drawn to eastern NRMs scored highly on this scale. The nature of the items is such that they are candidates for a spiritual Problem-Solving Perspective. Only a longitudinal study could tell if believers came to experience a reduced level of stress in response to life events. In the light of the data which suggested that in addition to a greater response to life events, more events actually happened to these eastern affiliates, it may be their lack of constraint, as Tellegen (1982) suggested which is responsible for the life stress.

If as Kohut (1971, 1977) suggests there is something which drives those drawn to charismatic leaders to seek others with an addiction-like intensity, it may be that there are wider theoretical ramifications for the concurrence of a lack of constraint, a tendency towards absorption and an eastern worldview in those who have had parental relations which they rate relatively negatively.

## 46.12 The Importance of Psychological Predispositions

This model has demonstrated that affiliates arrive at NRMs with many needs unmet and with a number of intensely-held beliefs which are likely to have contributed strongly to movement appeal. This suggests that a psychological level of analysis is important in explaining differential openness to movement involvement, and is in fact crucial for differentiating why one person rather than another joins one movement rather than another. Structural features like having movement contacts in one's social networks, and enough time on one's hands just will not do

the explanatory task set them. They cannot account for what has been termed Type Two Differential Openness above. The affiliates in this study have more than time on their hands, they are lonely and stressed and angry, and they have some ideas of a spiritual nature as to how all these events might be interpreted.

This study does not address the degree of linkage between the beliefs endorsed, or whether they operate as an explanatory perspective. It is assumed, rather weakly, that the beliefs are not enough in themselves, as the guidance of a leader is still sought, and it was shown that of all the groups it was the eastern groups which had the greatest discrepancy in number who sought a leader and number who had found a leader.

The western items of the SOS were the source of the empirical validation of the scale, along with the discriminant validity demonstrated in the co-occurrence of a low level of belief in the eastern items by the western group. The western items were also the occasion for some surprise regarding the degree of eclecticism which characterised the eastern affiliates. Their disaffection with western religion does not extend to its beliefs, though their behavioural involvement evidences very little experimentation with western options by any of the eastern groups other than the Theosophist group.

With more extensive validation the scale itself could assess the degree of syncretism which characterised a given movement.

This is a brief outline of the essential features of the *Rites de Passage* model. It differs from the Lofland and Stark (1965) model in its emphasis

on the quality of life events, specifically the difficulties in the social domain which seems to characterise the affiliates, and in the psychometric detail with which these are assessed. It also attempts to provide data by which it can be established that a personal turning point has been reached rather than inferring it, or merely asking the subjects. It does not assume that the seekers need be self-reflexive of their status, but views them as rather impelled by needs only a fraction of which they may be aware of or give voice to themselves.

It does not assume that these people have a functioning problem-solving perspective, but shows that they have a perceptual style which lends itself to eastern forms of spirituality. They seem to have distaste for conventional religious moral absolutes and traditional institutionalised forms of that religion. The beliefs they endorse are akin to a coping perspective, sharing many features of a perspective which would enable a 'hardy' response to stress. From their recent past it seems they need it. These people do not emerge as socially handicapped, or lacking in achievement. They do not have habitually negative styles of engagement with life events, and they attribute much to themselves and to others in the interpersonal world, and little to chance.

A profile emerges, which is neatly supported by the data. It begs the question of the ontogeny of religious beliefs, and traits like constraint, and an absorptive perceptual style, but the model links well with many of the findings in the literature, and it asks more questions than it can answer.

## 47. GROUP AFFILIATION AS FOCAL POINT OF DIFFERENCES

By and large these measures do reliably distinguish the eastern groups, with an astonishing consistency and clarity. Complexities emerged at times due to complicating features of having used as an 'active control group' a therapy group run under the auspices of a Methodist church. They proved to be more spiritual than expected, for example, given the irrelevance of spiritual belief to eligibility for the therapy group course. In some instances the data was better than had been hoped.

For example, it was suggested in the introduction that religion was more of a generalised compensator than therapy, addressing as it does both daily and ultimate concerns, and therefore it is highly probable that those experiencing the maximum level of stress and loneliness would be those drawn to this option for guidance and affiliation with others in a similar situation. However, in terms of the value added form of the model, it was not necessary to assume that there would be greater disruption in terms of life event incidence and impact. So a conservative expectation of 'no difference' between the therapy group and the eastern NRMs informed the hypotheses. This proved advised for all of the qualitative subcategories of life events, and for the impact attendant on those qualitative groups of events. However, in terms of total incidence of recent life events, the eastern groups had experienced significantly more events than the therapy group. It does seem that overall the eastern groups have had more happening in the recent past than the therapy group, even if that overall difference in incidence is not reflected when the events are analysed in terms of qualitative event categories.

In terms of the qualitative subcategories of life events, it seems these two genres of group are in similar life circumstances in terms of incidence and impact of disruptive life events. If these events endured in relative isolation and loneliness have been causal contributors to the openness to involvement or the decision to take a social remedial course of action, (called Type One Differential Openness above), then the remaining postulates of the model are called upon to provide a reason why one set of people had become involved in eastern NRMs (to a limited degree) and the others in a therapy group, (Type Two Differential Openness, above), and distinguish them it does.

While the model presented has a broad focus in assessing transitions occurring in the human life cycle which require a major departure from existing life practices, the data that has been presented is very detailed. For this reason, there will at times be a return to the larger picture and a sketching of the broad parameters of interest which may seem to entail a wide departure from the data, but there will be a return to a detailed consideration of the support provided for each segment of the model below.

Discussions are always an admixture of restricted optimism about the applications and implications of the findings, and a regretful if advised acknowledgement of the limitations of the study with suggestions as to possible future modifications, especially in the light of recent developments of adjoining fields of research, which have often developed in the interim.

**47.1 Influences and Contributions**

This study is virtually land-locked in that it borders on a number of fascinating fields of research, and as an exploratory, pragmatic endeavour has attempted to acknowledge, and allow its methodology to be informed by the important issues in each of those fields. Naturally it has not done justice to the methodological complexities of them all, because it has attempted to *use* assessment techniques to measure theoretically relevant attributes of the life situations and personalities of an unusual subset of the population, rather than explore the intricacies of these techniques in their own right.

Nonetheless, assessment procedures and measures, as operationalisations of theoretical constructs, were not made arbitrarily and the interplay between theory and practice is such that even this practical piece of research has implications for some of the issues currently enlivening adjacent areas of research.

It has something to contribute to possible models of life stress, the role that social supports play in the stress and coping process, and issues regarding the assessment of their impact. When the complexities of measuring something as complex as life stress were appreciated, it became a fascinating domain of research in its own right. As with so many dimensions of this study, practicality was the priority, in the face of the exigencies of field research, achieving a high level of subject compliance, and the fact that (as was demonstrated) the sample contains unconventional people without a high regard for traditional authorities, who might not have been sympathetic to the rigours of

social science. Hence, despite the acknowledged superiority of interview techniques in assessing recent life events (Brown & Harris, 1978), self-report data was used. The instrument itself was sophisticated: it covered a broad range of topics, and had detailed provision for assessment of psychological impact which was central to the research interests of this study. Assessing the nature, extent and psychological impact of the disruption attendant on life events provides important information regarding the domains of felt difficulty.

## 47.2 Group Ideology and Individual Motivations and Beliefs

The study also contributes to the debate regarding the importance of psychological domains such as individual motivation, values, and beliefs in rendering more probable movement contact. The emphasis here is on an interactional and dynamic analysis of the interplay between the structural features of life situation and their functional impact in the light of certain attributes and beliefs of the person involved. In this way the study escapes the criticisms of Zurcher and Snow (1981) of a too purely intrapsychic focus regarding the explanation of movement involvement.

## 47.3 The Role of Beliefs

This study may seem to the reader to take a very cognitive stance on affiliation, emphasising the directive role of beliefs in influencing the nature of the course of action taken when a turning point was reached. However, it must be acknowledged that while this study is not taking a generalist position by suggesting that these individuals are ripe for any movement, it does seem plausible that the relative lack of integration of

therapy and Eastern affiliates, and their relative loneliness, coupled with a recent history of a high incidence of social exits from their social networks, and their avowed distress might render differentially appealing a *social* course of action, and be a response to emotional features like loneliness. In this sense, the *nature* of the life events is also important, in addition to the disruption attendant on their occurrence, in determining the nature of the course of action embarked upon. The psychological "relief' attendant on participating in a community of people who share a worldview, and who might also be in a similar state of questioning, and transition is not emphasised within this study, (but see Galanter, 1989). However, the emotional impact of social departures and the absence of adequate social contacts is a central concern, redressing perhaps the overly cognitive emphasis on the directive function of beliefs.

## 47.4 Ideology and the individual: surrender and capture

The study has demonstrated a link existing between group ideology and the worldview and needs of the individual who is drawn within a NRM's ambit, as suggested by Toch (1965) and Zygmunt (1972). There is definitely a conjunction of individual and collective worldview, and this emphasis on individuals' differential openness to movement appeal shifts the recruitment debate beyond surrender *or* capture to the seemingly paradoxical surrender *and* capture, whereby there is an alignment of individual needs and the operational requirements of the movement which is the essence of commitment, as Kanter (1968) notes.

**47.5 Development of the SOS**

Far from ignoring group ideology in favour of an intrapsychic focus, an emphasis criticised by those who favour a more sociological consideration of movement involvement, this study has the beliefs of the groups studied centre stage. Some compromise was attempted between a nomothetic versus an ideographic approach in the portrayal of each eastern movement's ideology, treating each movement as an individual entity for the idiographic emphasis, in developing the Spiritual Orientation Scale [SOS]. Yet it attempted to achieve a nomothetic generality, by using source material that was an admixture of the literature of a number of *new* religious movements, (some not directly involved as experimental groups in this study), and more 'secondary' texts (Caird and Law, 1983; Robbins *et al,* 1978; Stone, 1978) which analyse belief systems in a more philosophical and comparative manner. A synthesis was attempted of the common defining and distinguishing elements, and the level of abstraction involved was that sufficient to phrase items in a manner which would capture the important elements of the beliefs of a diversity of NRMs, and which would receive assent from their members. This was not viewed as an easy task as Snow and Machalek (l983a) note, there is a certain incommensurability ascribed to the *particular* beliefs and *particular* leader and practice of NRMs by the members.

Social organisations do have epistemological consequences (Shearmur, 1980). To convey items in a manner which was assented to by a range of people attracted to NRMs of an eastern orientation was really quite a triumph. The degree to which the scale managed to assess beliefs that

might have been tacitly believed by those who were not members of these groups was confirmed by a statement made to the researcher by one of the affiliates, that answering the questionnaire was "like having your brain scraped".

## 47.6 Religion as Problem Solving Perspective

The focus of the development of a scale from these items was an attempt to operationalise a feature of religion as a problem-solving perspective, as a cognitive coping style, in terms of the interpretation it permitted of life events, and of transient and enduring concerns. Hence the SOS addresses the possibility of suffering being interpreted as a spiritual task, awareness as being conducive to a sense of release and transcendence from the vicissitudes of daily life, the value of meditation and yoga as practices which might be a step towards a new kind of awareness, and the possibility of a sense of connection with a guru or leader-figure, which might transgress normal limitations of time and space in receiving 'communications' from him or her by supernormal means. The scale also addresses the perceived necessity of a guru-figure for enlightenment to occur. All of these are beliefs and values which seem to predispose a person towards contact with (and perhaps membership of) a group offering instruction on how to apply these notions to enhance one's experience of life, and to achieve this in a community setting.

This thesis presents a reductivist account of religion, as something sought in response to stress, but it is thought possible that the outcome

is a continued enhancement of a person's way of life if these beliefs and practices are sustained when the crisis is over.

The similarities drawn lightly between an eastern worldview and certain of the tenets of Kobasa et al's (1982) notion of 'hardiness' present as a possibility that the former provides tuition on techniques of reinterpreting events to diminish their deleterious impact. From this perspective, whether the postulates by which this interpretation is achieved are true is not the issue. To take for the moment a Jamesian stance in contrast to a Freudian or Marxist stance on the ontological status of religious beliefs, if they have the potential to imbue a person with a sense of challenge and of the potential for change and insight from encounter with disruptive life events rather than helplessness, depression or anxiety, then if they are a fantasy solution to stress, they are phantasies with material effect.

Whether these beliefs do function in this manner could only be discovered by diachronic studies. What this study establishes is that those drawn to these groups have experienced recent life crises, and hold beliefs consonant with an eastern worldview. The data suggest that the existence of these beliefs prior to movement membership, and the congruence between individual focus and movement ideology may have played a determining or influential role regarding which of an array of options from a person's 'opportunity structure' appeals (Richardson and Stewart, 1977) when strife occurs, and a turning point is reached. The fact that these people are open to these beliefs and know about karma and reincarnation and so on, yet are still drawn to the groups, suggests

that such beliefs on their own are not the answer to problematic life circumstances. The community environment, the leadership, and group practices are still sought.

It is of course possible that these beliefs played a part in creating the life crisis. The causal sequence cannot be teased out with cross-sectional data. It is possible that holding beliefs which are non-normative within the dominant community ethos, and being, as we have demonstrated, untraditional in other regards, might be one factor in leading to the diminished sense of social integration found to characterise those drawn to these movements in this study. It might also mean that meaning is seen in a sequence of events which others might not attribute the same significance to or might disregard. The ontogeny of the beliefs, and their role in the stress and coping process cannot be established, but in this instance it has been established that these beliefs which form an eastern spiritual worldview existed *prior* to affiliation with this group.

## 48. NRMs AS A NON-NORMATIVE INVOLVEMENT OPTION:

### Unconventionality and Loneliness in those drawn

The study focuses on people who are drawn to a set of groups which are viewed as non-normative within the wider culture. It is therefore, normatively speaking, an extreme option. One of the things which rendered extremely unlikely eastern movement participation by the western NRMs very early on in the value-added model is their significantly higher endorsement of the traditionalism subscale of the MPQ than any other group. This is indicative of members of the western NRM holding a strongly traditional worldview, which encompasses

attitudes to child-rearing practices, traditional religion, selfishness and indulgence. This renders it quite unlikely that, whatever their state of need, this group would be drawn to NRMs with unconventional belief systems. While this group will be shown to share with those drawn to eastern NRMs the characteristic of having somewhat troubled early and adolescent relations with the parents, and an intense endorsement of non-denominational items deemed central to *any* spiritual worldview, they are distinguished from the eastern groups on every other feature of the *Rites de Passage* model.

The eastern NRMs are portrayed as a non-normative affiliative option within the wider culture, which might be viewed as appealing by those who do not endorse traditional values. The affiliates to the eastern NRMs are certainly significantly less traditional than any other group. For the rebirthing groups in this study, because it was a residential option, there is an affiliation requirement additional to a mere openness to alternative values. These groups require temporary though complete departure from all of previous life circumstances and social circles. Shupe and Bromley (1980:37) note that this is one point of parental concern, that these groups take "individuals out of conventional social networks and (productive) career paths".

In the light of research done by Galanter *et al,* (1979), Barker (1981, 1984), and Snow, Zurcher and Ekland-Olsen (1980), it was not expected that these people would be those who had proximal and demanding social relationships. This assumption proved correct. They were people who lacked a sense of social integration, in terms of *available*

acquaintance-level bonds especially, and were lonely in that they lacked close bonds that were deemed adequate to their needs. Further, the qualitative analysis of life events into categories reflected a high incidence of events of a social nature, particularly those involving the disintegration of social networks via the departure of significant others (social exits), compared to more general life related events. These individuals are characterised by having an markedly high incidence of aversive social events, and social exits. Duck and Lea (1983) suggest that this is likely to have powerful ramifications for a person's sense of identity. The descriptive analysis of single events reveals these groups to have an extremely high proportion of people who have recently lost their intimate partner. So while these individuals have a 'two to tango' perspective on problematic life events, that is ascribing responsibility to themselves *and* to others, it appears they have recently been rather 'out of step' with significant others in their life environment. That this was not reflected in the results regarding recent interpersonal discord as assessed by the social interaction questionnaire is surprising. However, there were very few instances of discord recalled by members of any of the groups. Results might have been different if specific probes or an interview technique had been used (Brown and Harris 1978).

There is certainly evidence of greater responsivity on the part of the subjects in the eastern groups to the specific probes in the recent life events inventory regarding arguments and problematic behaviour from either a spouse or parents.

## 49. THE TURNING POINT

There is considerable support for the *Rites de Passage* model of involvement in NRMs. This study is exploratory, regarding the extent to which affiliation to NRMs is a response to a hiatus in the normal life process, whereby the problem-solving perspective which Richardson and Stewart (1977) deem most 'normal' namely, *muddling through*, is no longer possible to sustain, and the help of an outside agency is sought. The cognitive emphasis of the study on the beliefs of the individual is complemented by a concern with the fairly powerful emotional experiences of the person at this stage. The emotional implications and ramifications of the way that disruption impinges on the person is crucial to whether a turning point occurs, and whether sufficient disruption of coping styles occurs for an agency outside of personal and social coping resources to be sought. Given the significantly higher incidence of life events, the person may feel there is a great deal happening, for which those drawn to eastern movements take more responsibility than any other groups. This was predicted on the basis of the fact that it was thought those drawn to eastern groups are likely to see their actions as complexly interconnected with the whole causal picture, (given a belief in karma, and a belief that coping with suffering may be seen as a spiritual task), and that they would therefore attribute greater responsibility for events to themselves. This proved to be the case, and they did so to an extent which markedly distinguished them from the rest of the groups. Their attributions of responsibility, the discontent expressed with their personality and their actions in contacting these NRMs suggest that they are open to a new way of responding to life events, given that their current responses appear to cause them

significantly higher levels of suffering and disruption than others in this study.

They may seek by group affiliation an understanding of how others respond, and perhaps, why certain events are occurring in the limited sense of a concern with how they are contributing to the event process, for they do seem to see themselves as being more personally responsible for life events than others do. However, they do see themselves as merely contributing to the occurrence of life events however, as they also attribute responsibility to others for what is currently happening to them. Those drawn to eastern NRMs are markedly more likely than the control groups to attribute responsibility to other people: attributions of personal responsibility do not preclude a high level of attributing a causal role to others. The difference seems to be a function of a greater incidence of events, for when mean attribution to others per life event is considered the only significant difference to remain is the lower level of attribution to others evidenced by the Western NRM.

## 49.1 Additions to the Recent Life Events Inventory: Personality Discontent

An important issue in this study is the nature of the turning point which it is suggested these people have reached in their lives, and whether there is sufficient evidence to support the occurrence of such a turning point for these subjects. It cannot be ascribed *willy nilly* by the researcher to a subset of the subjects, but must be something felt by the subject. Reasons were given above about the problematic status of

personal accounts which precludes merely 'asking the subjects'. To have directly asked the subjects whether they felt themselves to be at a turning point in their life, would have alerted them to the specific focus of the study and gained spurious acquiescence or denial. In preference, inferences from the data supportive of this suggestion will be considered. In a sense many people experience many turning points in changing jobs, research focus, city or partner. Many turning points are only apparent as such in hindsight. So, some items were added to the recent life events scale which assessed the extent to which a person was experiencing unexpected moments of difficulty, feeling the odd person out, for example, in a group with whom one is normally comfortable, feeling anxious about how one handled an event, and feeling there were major changes one would like to make in one's personality. These items are indicative of a certain 'uneasiness in one's skin', and indicates an loss of social ease, and of confidence in coping. It seems that a high level of assent to these items evinced by someone who has contacted a group relating to renewed self-awareness is at least indicative of a turning point having been reached.

When the measures added by this author are considered, it can be seen that in terms of feeling discontent with one's personality, the eastern groups not only have more issues that trouble them in this regard, but they are troubled more by them than either of the control groups and much more than the western group which is more content in this regard than the control groups. It seems that these additional items are useful for this sample. However, it must be acknowledged that they contravene the requirement that life events be defined independently of

a person's response to them (Cohen, 1988) so that one does not establish an empty and empirically tautological link between psychological problems and life events. For this reason, they were kept separate for statistical analyses, in keeping with Cohen's (1988) injunction that: "There is no question that life events surveys should not contain items obviously reflective of psychological or physical difficulties, or that if included, must be scored separately " (p.l3).

These items distinguish the eastern groups from all other groups, show the relative self-content of the members of the western group and, in addition, permit the distinguishing of those drawn to rebirthing groups from those drawn to other eastern movements. In the light of the life circumstances and the individual's appraisal of them, and the reflection of their personality and coping style revealed by these items, it seems possible that adequate grounds are provided for suggesting that a turning point has been reached.

## 49.2 Life Events and Rites de Passage

This supports the notion that a *Rite of Passage* is occurring for those drawn to NRMs and to therapy, and that spiritual affiliation, like therapeutic involvement, might be part of this process. These NRMs are viewed as alternatives, for some people, to therapy.

Richardson & Kilbourne (1979) and Galanter (1989) also view NRMs in the comparative context of therapeutic endeavour, suggesting that much of a therapeutic nature is gained from participation in these groups. This study suggests that the NRMs have worldviews which

reinterpret stress and disruption in a way which has the potential to have a salutary effect on the adjustment of the individual. Data assessed at point of first contact cannot assess the effects of participation, but can merely attempt to discover the needs which are being addressed by the affiliates to these groups. Life events, their impact, the causal attributions, and the isolation and loneliness which is part of how they have been endured, it is suggested, have brought these people to a transition point. They have expectations and hopes of greater understanding, a social group: a quest for personal change.

Given the centrality of disruption for the *Rites de Passage* model in that it is assumed to commence rites of passage for a person, consideration of the nature and impact of life events, and the predominant response to those events which characterises those drawn to eastern NRMs will be considered in detail.

## 49.3 The Incidence and Impact of Life Events

Thoits (1982) suggests that there is little relation between the sheer number of life events that occur to a person and the ensuing distress experienced. In this study, while the qualitative analyses of life events and consideration as to the nature and intensity of that psychological impact are highly revealing of domains of special difficulty and response styles characteristic of the different groups, the brute facts of a higher total incidence and a higher total impact of life events discriminate the groups in the predicted order, revealing the eastern groups to have had the most disrupted life circumstances in the recent past. This is one

source of the considerable support provided by this study for the *Rites de Passage* model of NRM involvement.

## 49.4 Event Quality: Negative Social Experiences

When the events were broken down into categories which were meaningful in terms of the predictions of the model it was revealed that for those drawn to eastern NRMs there are very real difficulties with the social environment in terms of negative social experiences. This is reminiscent of the social support deterioration model outlined by Barrera (1988), which suggested this might be a source of stress in its own right and contribute to impaired coping. The implications of this for their personal mental and physical health, in causal terms, cannot be commented upon with this cross-sectional data. However, some interesting issues emerge when their levels of wellbeing and neurotic distress are considered, and these will be commented upon below.

A higher proportion of those involved in eastern NRMs have more social exits and social arrivals than the other groups. The descriptive data revealed many of those drawn to eastern NRMs to have recently lost their lovers. Interestingly, they are also most represented in the category of people who have just begun new relationships in the last twelve months, excepting those who were graduates of the three-month residential course. This is of particular interest, because Tellegen (1982) suggests that there are attributes which might determine the occurrence of stressful life events. That is, he suggests there are personality attributes which increase the probability of eventful lives. He notes that an unconstrained person might be less affected by stress than someone

who has a positive investment in being in control, but that the unconstrained person might also have more occur, due to the 'flirtations with disaster' which his/her relative impulsivity leads her/him to. There seems to be some evidence for part of that postulation in this study in that those who are least constrained are those who are affiliates of eastern groups, and are those who have the highest incidence of life events. However, it was not found to be true of the unconstrained eastern affiliates in this sample that they were relatively less affected by stress. They are also those who evidence the most psychological impact overall and per event, and who avow more anger, disruption and adjustment to be attendant on life events, which suggests that they are not unaffected by the changes in life, and the adjustment required. Zuckerman (1979) also looks at life events as a dependent variable, suggesting that they might be the results of a sensation seeking style of personality. It would be interesting to consider the psychometric relation between a lack of constraint and the more active operationalisation of impulsivity: sensation-seeking.

**49.5 The Total Range of Life Events: Impact and Mean impact**

Let us return for a moment to consideration of the whole range of life events and the psychological impact of them experienced by the different groups. When the higher levels of responsivity to the different qualitative categories of life events evidenced by the eastern groups were considered, it was apparent that the higher level of impact was not merely a function of the greater number of events occurring, but where also reflected in the impact felt per item. The differences consistently fell between the linked quadruple of the three eastern groups and the

therapy group, (who did not differ from each other), but who experienced more distressful psychological impact from life events than either of the control groups or the western group.

To consider some results in detail for a moment: the only groups which are singled out in terms of the average impact of life events across all categories of event are the eastern groups. They experience more life events and more impact from those events than the therapy group, the control groups and the western groups, but when the average response per event is considered, the only difference is their greater vulnerability compared to the western group. This is evidence of a relief effect on the part of the western NRM. It seems that they are not more reactive than the therapy group or the student sample and general population sample, but lack, significantly, the equanimity of the western group. When the impact of negative life events are considered the eastern NRMs have a greater incidence of negative life events than the students, and experience more impact from them than both the student group and the western NRM. These differences remain when the effect of differential incidence is removed and the mean impact per event considered. When the incidence of negative social events is considered, in these instances the eastern groups do not differ from the therapy group, but are more afflicted and more psychologically affected than either of the control groups. For negative social events however, the differences do not hold when the effect of greater incidence is removed and the mean response per event considered. When the mean impact of negative social experiences is considered all of the differences between the groups disappear. It seems that everyone in this sample finds them similarly

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distressing. The fact that there is a higher incidence for the eastern groups suggests however that it is a problem domain for them.

It seems plausible to suggest of the therapy group and those drawn to eastern NRMs that these two sets of people, while drawn to different *genres* of social agencies within the community, are both involved in a *rite de passage,* have experienced disruption in their lives, and are taking active steps to change their ways of coping and experiencing life. For the eastern groups, the qualitative analysis of life events into meaningful subscales reveals that they are distinguishable from the student group and from the western NRM in terms of negative life experiences, but are much more significantly different from *both* sets of control groups and from the western NRM when exclusively negative *social* experiences are considered. This seems to be a dimension of considerable difficulty for all of the eastern groups, and, relative to the general control group, a slight problem area for the western NRM as well.

### 49.6 Acutely-felt and Enduring Life Events: Their Importance for the Lofland and Stark and Rites de Passage models

The original Lofland & Stark (1965) model does not emphasise the nature of the life events which occurred. The early statement of the model in 1965 suggested that the concern was not with the *nature* of the occurrences, or even a matter of their differential incidence (strictly speaking) but with the degree to which life events were "acutely felt" or "enduring".

From the perspective of the reformulated *Rites de Passage* model the nature of the events matters rather more than it did for Lofland and Stark's, in that there is the suggestion that these people might have special difficulties with the social environment. Therefore, from the perspective of the *Rites de Passage* model there is reason to consider the qualitative nature of the events, as demonstrated above: the social nature of events is a meaningful qualitative category concerning life event incidence and impact which distinguishes the eastern NRMs and therapy group from other groups in the study.

The Rites de Passage model takes seriously family history. The possibility is considered that the individuals experiencing more aversive social experiences might be those with a difficult family history and those more likely to question their personal adequacy. This effect might have occurred in a number of ways: disruption in bonding might have had a direct effect on the manner of appraisal of stress in relation to a person's perceived capacity to deal with it effectively; or disruption in bonding might have had an effect indirectly, resulting in an individual's inability to deal with stressful life events without experiencing high levels of anxiety and disruption. Ullman (1982) suggested that those who have experienced conversion are those who have experienced emotional upheaval throughout their childhood and in the period preceding the conversion, suggesting that present life conflicts might gain their impact by re-evoking earlier conflicts. In the *Rites de Passage* model, the significance of the impact of life events concerns not only their emotional impact, but the extent to which they lead a person to assume that s/he could not go on as s/he had before. As we saw above, the

higher incidence and impact of life events experienced by the eastern groups, is paired with personal questioning, and discontent with personality and coping style.

For both Lofland and Stark's model and the Rites de Passage model, responses indicative of an event's being acutely felt are highly pertinent. Specifically relevant is the extent to which events produced a sense of disruption, adjustment, a feeling of anxiety which might be reflective of events being beyond a person's ken and coping skills, and the extent to which events are experienced sufficiently strongly to produce feelings of anger, and helplessness.

## 49.7 Individual Response Style

The independent impact items addressed quite different elements of psychological response to life events, and when analysed separately with the impact summed across all events facilitated consideration of predominant responses for the different groups to life events. It was here that some really interesting differences emerged, which will now be considered in some detail. The items in italics refer to the individual impact items being discussed.

The results are quite striking regarding the predominant individual response styles for the different groups. When the *adjustment* which individuals felt to be necessitated by life events was considered, the eastern groups were more affected than all other groups, and the rebirthing groups most significantly of all.

That the eastern groups differ from almost all of the groups on all of the items assessing emotional responses could be explained by their higher incidence of life events. This is not the case however. Even when differential incidence is accounted for, the eastern groups still differed significantly from the therapy group and from the control group. They experience more *anger* per event than any other group, and experience more mean *adjustment, disruption* and *upset* than the control groups per event. Adjustment and disruption are closely allied as verbal labels, and it might be important at a future date to discover from subjects how they interpret these verbal labels of the Likert scales used to assess the impact of life events. There is some difference in the ordering of the groups for these two items which suggests that they are being distinguished by the subjects.

**Anxiety in the face of life events**

When the degree to which life events elicited *anxiety* from the subjects was considered, the eastern groups (the rebirthing groups especially) were much higher in anxiety and differed markedly in this from all other groups (except the therapy group). When the average amount of anxiety felt per event was considered, the only difference to remain significant was the difference between the eastern groups and the western groups. This supports the prediction of greater anxiety on the part of the eastern groups.

The fact that the western group was significantly lower in anxiety also suggests that commitment to religion might decrease this tendency. However, caution must be exercised in drawing too bold a conclusion

here, as membership is conflated with involvement in a group whose belief system is more consonant with the prevailing ethos, and whose marginal status is slowly transmuting into a charismatic adjunct of an orthodoxy. The eastern groups experienced much more anxiety than the members of the western group, and this is summed across all life events.

**Anger & Aggression**

The pattern of results for the experience of *anger* across all life events is similar to that of patterns of anxiety across the groups. There is one difference of note: the western groups experience significantly more anger than the general control group, though they are still no match for the eastern groups in terms of emotional response. This difference carries through into the average amount of amount of anger felt per event. The similarity between the eastern groups and the therapy group falls away when average anger felt per event is considered: the eastern groups avow far more anger than the therapy group per event, and this is especially the case for the rebirthing groups. Anger is perhaps the most discriminating item of all of the emotional response styles considered so far, as the differences found in terms of the incidence of anger carry through when the mean amount of anger is considered. This is also supported by results from a quite different psychometric source. Tellegen's (1982) aggression subscale revealed the eastern groups to have significantly higher levels of aggression than the other groups in this study. When the amount of upset, helplessness and depression is considered, the eastern groups differ from the control groups and from the western group in their elevated level of responses. They seem to

have more intense responses for all of the emotional responses considered so far.

## 49.8 Constraint and willingness to acknowledge feeling

The finding that those drawn to the eastern groups and the therapy group were significantly less constrained than the other groups may be related to the greater tendency of these groups to report emotions of considerable intensity in response to life events. Whether or not the psychological impact of these events is expressed behaviourally, it seems as though they are more willing to admit to having felt them. This may be a due to the fact that they are differently placed in terms of levels of constraint. However, the ideology of the group may influence how willing one is to report emotions and feelings of disruption. Those involved in the rebirthing groups may have been drawn to them because they value emotional honesty more than personal control.

However, an attempt had been made to exclude the influence of group ideology on the willingness to acknowledge feelings. The items were supposed to be answered on the basis of the time of occurrence which would have been pre-movement contact for all of the subjects bar the western group and the graduate rebirthing group. The fact that the novice group has in most instances the highest scores of any of the groups suggests that this high level of emotionality is not because the movement has given them the words to say it.  It is not merely due to the influence of selective avowal of the past from within the situated vocabulary of the movement.

**49.9 Enduring Life Events**

I wanted to know whether life events were 'acutely felt' but also their actual duration. Data was gathered on the duration of life events, but people seemed to assess this in markedly different ways. One man said he had broken his leg on his motorbike, and noted the duration of this event as "a matter of painful seconds". The disruptive life effect of such an event might have been rather longer than that. It calls into question what one means by an 'event' when assessing occurrence, impact and duration. Differences in classification of events by individual people meant that simple computation of duration would not have been meaningful without further contact with subjects. These data are not reported here.

**Rumination**

The lingering emotional impact of the memories of life events was assessed and it singled out eastern groups once from all of the other groups bar the therapy group. The rebirthing groups are markedly and significantly different from the other groups in their heightened tendency to feel a lingering emotional effect of events which happened in the recent past. This difference is robust even when the level of response for each item is considered. This measure doesn't assess how long an event endured at the time of occurrence, but it does address a tendency for them to have lingering impact and therefore lingering influence on a person's coping resources.

The items regarding continuous strain, such as disappointments and continuous worry, were not frequent enough occurrences for this

sample to be considered in statistical detail. The patterns of results were based on single cases in some instances, though not surprisingly these cases came from the eastern groups.

**More intense, more impactful, more lingering effects of life events**

The implications of these results for the model are clear. Not only are the eastern groups and therapy group distinguishable from the others in terms of the incidence and impact of life events overall, but they have a stronger emotional response to the items. They were asked to rate items on the basis of feelings at time of occurrence. They avow a greater lingering emotional impact of those events. These data provide strong support for the suggestion that these people experience life events more 'acutely' and with more lingering emotional impact than any of the others involved in this study.

**49.10 Positive Events and their Impact on those drawn to Eastern Movements**

There were few predictions regarding the incidence of positive life events and so the results were discussed in the subsidiary section of the results. The eastern groups had rather more positive life events than the general population, and more than the rather dismal lot of the therapy group. They did not have as many positive life events as the student group. In terms of positive social experiences, they had rather more than the general population and an equivalent number to the rest of the groups for this variable. The picture changes, as predicted, when the impact of positive events is considered. It was suggested that the less constrained (and more absorptive, as will be discussed below) eastern

groups might respond more to positive life events and positive social events, as was predicted regarding their response to aversive life events. This proved to be overwhelmingly the case regarding positive life events in general, when they were compared to the therapy group, western NRM and the general population. The heightened responsivity which characterised the eastern groups resembled that of the young student sample from whom they did not differ. A high level of responsivity especially characterised the rebirthing groups, though the high variation for these groups meant that the difference between them and the other eastern NRMs was not significant. The eastern groups were distinguished only from the student sample regarding responsiveness to positive *social* events. Unlike everyone else in the sample, the students are rather blasé about positive social experiences. However, when the differential level of incidence is accounted for, the mean responsiveness to positive social experiences distinguished the eastern groups from the control group and from the western group. The social environment is the source of much chagrin for these groups: whether the events are positive or negative, they experience more emotional impact than other groups. This is not reflective of the cumulative impact of many events as it seems to be with positive general life events (for example, promotions and holidays), but for *social* events reflects more psychological impact per event.

Since it was demonstrated that everybody in the sample is similarly affected by negative social experiences, (there were *no* significant differences among the groups at all when mean impact per negative social event was considered), it is a telling discovery to find that it is only

the eastern groups who also find positive social experiences disruptive. These are also the people in this study who experience a markedly high level of discontent with their personality relative to all other groups, and who have a history of difficult family relations.

## 49.11 Stress as Response and Stress as Trait

In comparing how the different measures of distress and stress ordered the groups, the measures relating to the incidence and impact of recent life events distinguished the groups differently from Galanter's measure of neurotic distress and Tellegen's stress subscale of the MPQ. The eastern groups have a higher level of stress (Tellegen's measure) and neurotic distress (Galanter's measure) than the Western NRM only.

These indices, unlike those assessing the response to recent life events, do not distinguish eastern affiliates from the general population. Further, when the indices of wellbeing are considered, there is little agreement between the two measures regarding the ordering of the groups. The eastern groups experienced a lower level of wellbeing relative to the control groups and the western NRM as assessed by Galanter's measure which is a measure of dysphoria; a subclinical measure of depression and assesses diminished wellbeing in terms of bodily symptoms, health concerns, and sadness. They have a distinctly *higher* level of wellbeing than the general control group and the therapy group if one considers Tellegen's MPQ measure of wellbeing assessed in terms of feelings of having a bright future ahead and feeling good about oneself. These measures might address different levels of mental health and wellbeing. Galanter's scales of wellbeing and neurotic distress have

a time frame of one month, and allow a more differentiated response on a one to six scale. Tellegen's scale concerns the recent past and has a true/false format. Further, Tellegen's scales have a mood, and enduring dispositional focus, while Galanter's centres on bodily symptomatology, or the absence thereof. His indices of neurotic distress and wellbeing, in contrast to those of Tellegen, address stress and wellbeing more in terms of the by-products of an organism's reaction to stress.

**What sets a rite of passage in motion - Personality or life context?**

It is tempting to suggest that it is not a generalised predisposition to experience stress reactions which sets a rite of passage in motion and predisposes people to movement affiliation, but a *recent* high level of life events experienced in a state of isolation and loneliness.  This is consonant with Barker's (1981) findings. The eastern affiliates do evidence a reduced level of wellbeing as assessed by Galanter's scale, consonant with Galanter's (1980) findings.  However, the eastern affiliates and therapy group who had more disruptive life events are not predisposed to experience stress at a personality level as shown by Tellegen's measure assessing usual moods, habits and bodily reactions.

The eastern NRMs actually have a *significantly lower propensity* to experience stress than the control group.  This was an unexpected finding. In fact those who are prepared to countenance involvement in NRMs or Therapy report less habitual stress (in terms of Tellegen's measure) than do the students and members of the general population who made up the control group.

Those who actually belong to a NRM broadly consonant in spiritual orientation with the dominant culture have a dramatically lower propensity to experience stress. There seems to be an insulation effect from being a member of a cohesive group, consonant with Galanter's (1989) findings. Galanter *et al,* (1979) found affiliates to be in a state of suffering prior to involvement relative to their post-involvement profiles, and, suffering relative to the general community even after involvement (in spite of a considerable relief effect attendant on involvement). The lack of elevated stress levels for the eastern NRMs relative to the general population in this study may be due to the extent to which these affiliates are already involved with these groups. A pertinent remark by Galanter (1989) reveals the difficulties in obtaining measures of precursors of involvement, as he found that potential recruits acquire a high degree of social cohesiveness very quickly during initial phases of the introductory workshops. Furthermore the psychological wellbeing of active members was directly proportional to how closely affiliated with the group they felt, in terms of both social ties to other members and acceptance of the group's beliefs (p.11).

It may be that a 'relief effect' had already occurred, given the factors which left these people ripe for movement involvement: the neutralisation of extra-movement attachments, and the consonance of beliefs may have made eastern affiliates and those of the therapy group 'ready primed' for connection with the new groups. In any case, on this measure, these individuals are not in a position of relative suffering compared to the control group, even if they fall short of the stress-free western religious group.

The greater consonance between predictions of group ordering indicative of relative stress levels and the results obtained from assessments of the more immediate reactions to things which happened recently, over Tellegen's admirable stress measure, suggests that the stress productive of *rites de passage* considered here might be a dynamic process, relating to how a person adapts to occurrences, rather than being predominantly the result of an enduring and generalised tendency to experience more stress. Tellegen's stress measure adroitly distinguished the members of the western NRM as being significantly less stressed than the general population and the eastern groups, but it did not reveal an elevated level of stress for those drawn to the eastern groups. This underscores the importance of detailed consideration of how a theoretical concept like disruption is operationalised. There was considerable consistency in the group orderings resulting from the different subcategories of the life-events measures, but across the three different measures, the recent life events measures, the frequency of discord, and Tellegen's (1982) stress measure, different patterns emerge. In fact, the results from Tellegen's stress measure reveal the young student group to have elevated stress levels relative to the general control group, providing a cautionary note regarding the use of student samples as control groups, and giving some insights to the psychological impact of tertiary study.

Galanter's measure of neurotic distress revealed the eastern groups to have significantly more distress than the western NRM, but in this, they were no different from the general population who were also more

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distressed than the relatively stress-free western group. Like Tellegen's measure of stress, this measure of neurotic distress revealed the student group to be in a position of suffering relative to the general population.

The two measures of stress, which have quite different time frames and response options, similarly distinguish the eastern groups from the western NRM. They do not distinguish the groups from the control groups however, which the indices of stress of a more 'reactive' and specific nature do.

## 49.12 Dynamic adaption

The dynamic nature of stress and coping and the causal sequence between the incidence of events and psychological impact is discussed by Barrera (1988), who notes that the dynamic interplay of incidence and psychological repercussions is unavoidably neglected by a research focus on cross-sectional data. The western group in this study has been shown to have a reduced tendency to experience stress relative to the control group as assessed by Tellegen's measure. Yet they are indistinguishable from the control group on all measures of incidence and impact of recent life events, bar the measures assessing the incidence and impact of negative social experiences, where the western NRM members actually experience more of these events. Further, these negative social experiences have greater psychological impact on the western NRM than they do for the control group. This suggests that whatever insulation from stress might be provided by group membership is not due to reduced occurrence of events or reduced responsivity to them. The high level of recent life stress and the comparable tendency to habitually experience stress reactions on the

part of the eastern groups relative to the control groups certainly casts some doubt on a postulated direct relation between recent experience of stressful events and the propensity to have bodily reactions and changes in mood indicative of stress on an enduring basis.

**49.13 Do lonely people have more stressful life events?**

Acknowledging Thoits' (1982) observation of the possible confounding of events which diminish social support in linking higher stress with lower support, the results from this study pose as possible the notion that more life events occur to the socially uninsulated, especially if some of the recent life stress has been in the form of social exits of significant others. Social supports' availability and adequacy might influence the experience of stress in that the high incidence of life events may result from a person's not having preventative social supports which diminish the likelihood of particular events and particular courses of action (Emerson and Messinger, 1977). For example, one is perhaps more likely to move from one relationship to another (Kohut, 1977), and perhaps be more likely to get into an incompatible relationship if lonely. The novice rebirthing group falls into this category. The members of this group are on average the most lonely of all of the eastern groups, are the group with the greatest proportion of members who have recently had a relationship breakup with an intimate partner, and are second most highly represented in the category of those who have recently begun a new relationship. This pattern holds true for the eastern groups and none of the others. The therapy group is relatively lonely, but has neither a high percentage of people who have recently lost their

partners, and has an extremely low percentage of people getting involved in new relationships. Half of this group is married however.

Pursuing the line of thought that those who are socially uninsulated are those to whom most life events occur, it is noteworthy that the eastern groups do not even have a sense of community integration. This may in part stem from their untraditional views and values, and their different spiritual views, which might reduce their social desirability for those who do not share their views. Further, given that they have a recent history of a number of stressful life events, it is possible that, as Barrera (1988) suggests, being people who have experienced trauma they might receive less effective social support due to the stigma of stressful events and the unease and anxiety of the potential caregiver as to the appropriate response. The lack of a sense of community integration might derive from the fact that many of those drawn to eastern NRMs have also recently moved house and have perhaps lost neighbourhood contacts. Many of them had recently changed job and endured periods of unemployment and economic hardship. This captures a powerful level of alienation from the general community, from the means of production - people ripe for a social movement.

The statistical analysis of the availability of acquaintances and close friends reveals the eastern NRMs to have less acquaintances available than the general population, but not fewer friends. Analysis of individual items regarding recent social losses reveals that the eastern groups are not disproportionately represented among those who had recently lost a friend than anyone else in this sample, as there was a reasonably high

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incidence of this type of social occurrence for everyone, especially for the members of the western NRMs. There is a lack of available close friends for the eastern groups relative to those who are already members of the western NRM, though they are not more isolated than the student group, therapy group or general population in this regard.

## 49.14 The Uniqueness of the Rebirthing groups: So Lonely, So Distressed

There is a significant difference between the novice rebirthing group and the graduate rebirthing group, in that the former seems from the data to be especially isolated from the community, lonely in terms of the availability and adequacy of close friends, and distressed. That the more distressed and lonely people are drawn to rebirthing groups may be due to the nature of the groups' appeal, which more explicitly than any of the other groups promises a new beginning: a fresh start.

There is a confounding factor here however, in that these groups were also the residential groups which required the most extreme temporary commitment: requiring total departure from existing lifestyle and social circles. It may be that this is the refuge of the most distressed subjects, rather than be a product of the promises made by the group's ideology, and its appeal to these quite lonely and distressed people.

These groups are distinguished from the other eastern groups by significantly higher incidence and impact of life events overall, and by relatively extreme loneliness, particularly for the novice rebirthing group, which was assessed prior to any group involvement. It is not

possible to either substantiate the differential appeal of the groups' ideology over their residential form with the present data. This would require a comparative study among an array of residential and non-residential eastern NRMs to distinguish between the two confounding features of group agendas.

**49.15 Alienation as a Precursor of Movement Involvement**

A generalised condition of alienation is thought to be a characteristic of a society ripe for the rise of social movements. Within the social resources of an individual, alienation is something that occurs at a point of disintegration and attenuation of community relationships, perhaps even more than intimate relations. This seems to be the case for those in the eastern NRMs and the therapy group, in that the indices of social integration reflect a lack on this level. The two indices of extent and quality of social networks, their availability and their adequacy, reveal the isolation and marginality of those drawn to eastern NRMs and reveal that the western NRM is well-provided for in this regard. The eastern groups have significantly less acquaintance-level bonds available than the student group and the control group, and, like the therapy group, are much more isolated than the western NRM as well. The plight of the eastern groups and the therapy group is not so marked by social isolation regarding closer bonds. They do seem to have the same number of intimates available, but they are rated as falling short of individual needs to a greater extent than is true of the social support available to those in the western spiritual community.

Assessments of the total incidence and impact of life events, and the availability and adequacy of social support distinguishes the eastern groups and therapy groups from the other groups, but it would not be possible to distinguish the therapy group and the eastern groups in this regard. Concerning the experience of recent and psychologically disruptive life stress which is endured in relative isolation (McHugh, 1972), the eastern groups and the therapy group are similarly disadvantaged relative to the other groups in this study. The eastern NRMs show a rather greater emotional response to these events than the therapy group in terms of anxiety and anger attendant on their occurrence, but regarding other qualitative indices of incidence and impact they are indistinguishable from each other. This suggests that as far as Type One Differential Openness to movement involvement is concerned, they are both ready-primed for some kind of social option, and since both sets of groups are relatively unconstrained (the eastern groups are less constrained), they are perhaps likely to take action rather than 'muddle through'. It seems that the less constrained groups also approach the most unconventional self-help option.

The loneliness revealed when the measures of the adequacy of acquaintance-level bonds and the more intimate level of bonds are considered reveals that these people are not 'happy loners'; the isolation portrayed is revealed by the adequacy measures to be felt as loneliness by the people involved. They gain low adequacy ratings because they have replied in response to particular probes that they would like more intimacy in a particular regard, and 'would like someone else as well' to

fulfil a particular category of Weiss' social provisions (Weiss, 1973; cited in Henderson *et al, 1981).*

They have unmet needs of a social nature. They are lonelier than the general population and certainly lonelier than those who belong to a western movement. There was a surprisingly low level of rated adequacy of intimate bonds for the student sample, suggesting that their needs and wishes for intimacy and support are in excess of that provided for them by their social networks. This might be one factor in rendering adolescents vulnerable to, or open to, the appeal of social options which offer cohesive groups bonds, and may be behind the high incidence of adolescent conversion attested to in the literature (Wright and Piper, 1986). This study is quite an exception in this regard as many of the people drawn to these groups are in their late 20's and early 30's.

When the actual measure of alienation developed by Tellegen (1982) was considered as a possible precursor of NRM affiliation, the eastern groups and the therapy group were *not* distinguished from the general population in feeling more alienation. If alienation is a precursor of the rise of social movements (Seeman, 1959; Glock, 1964), then a general condition of alienation seems to characterise the general population and those drawn to eastern groups, with only those who already belong to a western NRM having relief from this condition. All other groups in this study have a higher mean level of alienation than that found by Tellegen (1982) in the normative data he provides regarding his scale.

**49.16 Mental Health and Movement Involvement**

Those with the highest incidence and impact of life events and who are least socially integrated and supported at an intimate level are not strangers to joy it seems. While they have significantly lower levels of general wellbeing as assessed by Galanter's (1979) wellbeing scale, they are not characterised by low levels of wellbeing as assessed by Tellegen's (1982) measure, nor by higher levels of neurotic distress, (assessed by Galanter's (1979) measure). They experience as much positive affectivity as the control groups in this study, and the western NRM, and experience no more negative affectivity than the control groups, though they do experience significantly more than the western NRM. Galanter *et al,* (1979) found the UC members at significantly lower levels of wellbeing, even after involvement. The Western group is not so characterised, they are significantly less prone to negative engagement than the control group, which does seem to be indicative of improved mental health on the part of those members of the western NRM. They are advantaged relative to the eastern groups regarding Galanter's and Tellegen's measures of wellbeing, and Galanter's measure of neurotic distress. They are advantaged relative to the control group in all but Galanter's measure of wellbeing.

**50. PARENTAL APPRAISAL: CURRENT CRISIS, PAST CONCERNS**

There is certainly strong support for the loneliness of those drawn to NRMs and the inadequacy of social bonds outside of the group, in line with the discoveries of Barker (1981), Galanter *et al* (1979), Galanter (1980), Balch & Taylor (1977), and the predictions of Snow *et al* (1980). There is also strong support for the recent occurrence of distressing life

circumstances at an untypically high level of incidence and impact. Ullman (1982) suggests that current distress evokes old familial conflicts, and in fact, data reveal that the retrospective appraisal of parents in childhood and adolescence by those drawn to eastern NRMs and to a lesser extent those who are committed members of a western NRM, finds the recollected parents as lacking in certain attributes. They are seen as less warm, energetic, involved in family life, more hostile, (verbally and physically) colder and more detached.

In terms of the retrospective appraisal of the parental bonds, the western NRM did not differ from the eastern groups on this measure, and this is a remarkable finding, for there is little else that these groups share in this study. The western group differs only regarding the appraisal and satisfaction with the father in adolescence; he is viewed more positively by this group than by the eastern groups. In addition to parents being more negatively appraised by the eastern groups and western NRM, they were also not the parent they would write into their lives if they could rewrite their childhood. While this may well characterise everyone to an extent it characterises them to greater extent than the control groups. The therapy group has a warmer appraisal of and satisfaction with the mother of their childhood and their adolescence than the eastern and western NRMs. They are much more likely to select someone with her features if they could rewrite the past. This warmth does not extend to the father of these time frames. He is viewed as negatively, and with the same level of dissatisfaction expressed as that of the eastern groups. It seems then that only the eastern groups have a negative appraisal and dissatisfaction with both

mother and father, for both time periods considered in this study. The therapy group at least had warmth towards the mother, and the western NRM at least had an acceptable experience of their father in adolescence. These findings are somewhat different from those of Ullman (1982) in that she found that while the relation to father was problematic for the 'cult' groups in her study, the relations to mother was not so problematic, and only attained significance if all indices of discontent with mother were summed. In this study, mother is as much a problem as father in terms of family relations. This is reason for concern regarding whether the appraisals captured parents as they really were at the time frame specified, or as they were seen at time of appraisal. The reliability of such retrospective measures might also be queried since for many of these people the data is gathered concerning a time period some 20 years prior. However, if the appraisal given is that which remains true for that individual, then to some extent how things *actually* were is beside the point, since it is the felt lack or injustice which perhaps influences their course of action. If the issue has lingered differentially for some people then that in itself is data of pertinence.

It has been suggested by Deutsch (1983) that those drawn to religions often express a strong sense of the neglect and inadequacy of their parents only once a parental substitute has been found. There is reason to consider whether this negative appraisal might be a retrospective and self-justifying reconstruction of past circumstances. However, there is not the same degree of negative appraisal from the therapy group who might also have reason to find fault with their parents, and this negative characterisation of parents also characterises those who are merely

drawn to eastern NRMs, (especially given the extremely high levels of parental dissatisfaction expressed by the novice rebirthing group), who have not yet the safe vantage point from which to view the past.

**Accounting for conversion**

This suggests that something more than a mere situated vocabulary of motive (Mills, 1940) is contributing to these results. Granted there may be a considerable discrepancy between the consciously avowed appraisals and the levels of attachment felt unconsciously, but, being restricted to self-report measures as empirical data, clinical levels of insight were not possible within this study. There was no sense in which these measures were presented to the subjects as possible determinants of involvement in New Religious Movements.

My concern that the people studied might have intuited some of the hypotheses was frequently allayed by the (once quite indignant) queries about how all these things fitted together, including a quite exasperated assertion from one subject that he felt unconvinced that these items had anything to do with each other. Yet, the patterns are quite remarkable. Especially remarkable is the congruence between the composite rating of a positive or negative appraisal of the mother from a number of Likert scales regarding certain attributes found by Ullman (1982) to have been desirable or undesirable features of the parents of converts, and the single item which assesses how closely she resembles a subject's ideal. This latter question would enable one to sort individuals into cult-prone vs non-cult-prone groups with an extremely economic psychometric outlay, provided that the other conditions of the model were fulfilled.

## 50.1 The Appraisal of Parents: Data Form

The differences in results between the present study and those of Ullman's (1982) may be due to differences in the groups studied, or due to different assessment techniques. Like this study, hers was a comparative study which looked at a number of NRMs and a number of orthodox religions. She found the problematic family relations, especially relations with the father to especially characterise those who had converted to the NRMs. When these subjects were excluded from the data, and only the orthodox converts considered, the effects fell away. Her in-depth interviews are admirable sources of data, and perhaps more likely to assess problems, and their nature than the present study's use of Likert scales.

Open-ended questions were provided in this study to remedy the limitations on subject's responses, asking subjects to detail specifically what they found difficult regarding their parents' relations to them. These measures provided a check that the verbal labels on the Likert scales were being interpreted as assumed. These questions provided a welter of personal commentary, especially from the eastern affiliates. The details subjects in the eastern groups noted they would like to have received from their parents which were lacking concerned: being seen for what they were, rather than loved only as they lived up to parental hopes: having more play and more physical affection from parents: being played with and cuddled: and having experienced more acceptance of their emerging sexuality. In sum, there is a desire to have been accepted more on their own terms.

## 50.2 Inadequate Mirroring: Implications for Coping

Whether this experience of the family, still prepotent in the memories and perhaps motive structure of these people, has influenced their experiences of stress cannot be answered with the kind of self-report data I've used here. It seems possible that those individuals describing their parents as less than ideal have experienced less of a sense of protection (from parents viewed as both distant and demanding) and less endorsement from their parents that their own way of dealing with events was appropriate. Also, in so far as early significant others may have consequences for the development (if not the ontogeny) of the ego in psychoanalytic terms, then this might influence allied 'ego strength'. This would be revealed in responses like: being somewhat constrained and considering the options rather than being more disposed to impulsive action, resilience in the face of stress, the viewing of stress as manageable challenge, and having a belief that personal resources will be sufficient to meet that challenge. Eastern affiliates were not more stress-reaction prone at a personality level, but more did seem to happen to them in life, including disruptions of a social nature.

## 50.3 Lost Love Objects and Narcissistic Wounds

Kohut (1971, 1977) suggests that early life experience has left those drawn to charismatic others "mirror hungry". This is echoed explicitly in much of the recent literature on affiliates of NRMs: the work of Deutsch (1983), Halperin (1983), and Cushman (1986). It is indirectly present in the work of Barker (1981) when she suggests that few had expectations of ever forming satisfying relationships at a point prior to membership of the Unification Church. That those drawn to eastern NRMs in this study

had recently lost lovers relates to the speculative part of the model that perhaps early life experience has left these people "mirror hungry", as Kohut (1971, 1977) suggests. Weston La Barre (1980) thinks people can be predisposed to the charismatic appeal of leaders. He suggests that it is the needs prepotent in the follower which give the charismatic leader's message such an emotional welcomeness and the leader such an uncanny sense of 'supernatural rightness'. In a sense, we accord charisma to a leader. Our early life, according to Doi (1971) is marked by a desire for dependency akin to identification. Optimally there seems to be a presumption (unconscious or otherwise) that one can depend totally on another and have no sense of imposition or shame. This sets us up for bonds which respect the otherness of the other. Those who are prone to absorption may be more open to the blurring of the lines between self and other.

In groups, Freud (1921) notes a sense in which a leader takes the place of the individual's superego, or moral beliefs. We are all prone to idealisation and hero-worship, yet few of us emerge into adulthood longing for explanation and interpretation in so human a form as a charismatic leader. Most content themselves with ideas serving that function, as Freud (1921) notes they might. Yet this differential openness to charismatic appeal where the ideas are embodied in a living leader has been claimed to characterise those drawn to NRMs. The underpinnings of this openness has been explained by Kohut (1971, 1977), Cushman (1986) and Halperin (1983) as due to the fact that these people have sustained a low-level narcissistic wound in the formation of their psyche, deriving from sub-optimal parental bonding which has not

allowed the child a sense of competency from believing in the power and limitless resources and insight of the parent (idealisation, in Kohut's terms).  The child has low-level wounds because s/he has not been able to unconsciously align him/herself with that all-powerful parent (phase-appropriate merger, in Kohut's terms).  The child has lacked reception and feedback regarding their competency and worth from their parents' (mirroring, in Kohut's terms).

In this study, it is suggested that there are possible signs of such a wound, and the evidence for this will be discussed below. Poor family relations may indirectly draw people to NRMs, and as Wright and Piper (1986) have shown, may have consequences for disaffiliation. Even if participation in such groups does not directly change the appraisal of the parents, it may satisfy some of the needs that were operative at the time of affiliation.

**The twice-born**

It seems that there are significant differences within the eastern groups themselves, in terms of the felt lack regarding the nature of family relations, demonstrated here in the differences found between the rebirthing groups and the other NRMs. It seems that the ideology of rebirthing, which seems to hinge on a notion of being born once more from the shackles of an identity forged by early and imperfect family relations, draws people who have specific difficulties and yearning in that realm. The changes in the appraisal of the parents between the novice and the graduate groups, while in the direction of a warmer appraisal of the parents in most instances, did not attain significance.

While, as Ullman (1982) suggests, *new* religious movements attract those with difficult family prehistories, it seems that some new movements draw those with a heightened awareness of those difficulties, and possibly with some idea as to which groups might help them to focus and resolve them. It is premature to suggest that such involvement does not achieve an ameliorated appraisal of the parents, as the graduate group had only just finished a three-month workshop, and had not yet been reintegrated into the community. Some explicitly said in qualitative commentary that they felt that emotions had been stirred up which would take some time to work through. A long-term follow up, of true diachronic dimensions would be desirable.

## 50.4 Regression in response to stress & the ultimate object of trust

It is possible that group affiliation, especially of a residential nature is a regression in response to life stress, as Buckley and Galanter (1979) suggested. While the descriptive data regarding difficulties found in taking a critical perspective revealed that the eastern groups (bar the theosophist group) did not seem to experience special difficulty in this regard, and while a desire for a leader did not characterise these groups to a disproportionate extent (though the discrepancy between the proportion who would like a leader and those who had found one was greatest for these groups and the student sample), the fact remains that they have been drawn within the ambit of charismatic groups, and a charismatic form of authority. They have had difficulties with their social environment and have found their intimate bonds less than adequate.

Given that they have no less bonds *available* than the general population, it is possible that this rated inadequacy of bonds reflects unluckiness on their part that they have drawn people to them who cannot provide them with social resources to the extent that others in the community enjoy. The possibility also exists that these people have more needs which they address to others, and this could be an acute phase of additional neediness due to recent elevations of life stress, or a chronic requirement.

The absence of significant differences in negative affectivity suggests that the eastern groups do not have a personality style which predisposes them to an aversive engagement with life. Yet the groups they join, especially the residential groups, provide an environment where they are free of daily concerns, free to address felt difficulties and emotions with greater freedom than they seem to have felt was possible with those close to them. The environment is, in a sense, a 'holding environment'. It has been shown that these people do not differ from the control groups in terms of their social competency, and their level of achievement, as assessed by Tellegen's MPQ subscales.

They are not more alienated, but they are more disrupted, upset, angry and aggressive, feel they are responsible to a greater degree than others for the life events which have occurred, and would like to make changes in their personality and coping style. Portraying this affiliation as a regression in response to stress is not a pejorative statement, as there are examples of regression in the service of the ego: in daydreaming, creative writing, and perhaps, mourning.  There is perhaps adaptive

regression found in therapeutic 'working through' where one becomes dependent on the figure of the therapist or analyst. In this sense, the modern religious movements are perhaps not merely a fantasy solution to stress as Freud suggested, but a regressive solution. The mechanistic world of causality might not afford a sense of safety, and a sense of the grace of that old machine which drives the seasons. For some a world of demand and response may be much more comfortable. While the eastern groups do not have this demand and response in their cosmology, in that there are no overseeing deities, they do have it in the actual form of worship. The leader has special status, be it divine, enlightened or 'emotionally worked out', such that they are seen as above (or so in touch with to be functionally above) petty human concerns. S/he is to some extent an ultimate object of trust.

## 50.5 Parental Relations, Submission to Authority and the Authority of Non-Authority

The results suggest that there is a tendency for those drawn to spiritual movements, of either orientation, to appraise parents more negatively in retrospect. There is a lack of idealisation of their parents, revealed in negative appraisals of them, and the tendency to want to change features of the parents if a childhood or adolescence could be rewritten. Adorno (1970, cited in Kreml, 1977) suggested that parental childrearing techniques were powerful influences for a child's later tendency to obey moral authorities, and to submit to leaders. Child-rearing techniques were not assessed in this study, and so a direct relation between a relatively negative appraisal of parents and authoritarian tendencies to submit to authority was not postulated. The predicted unconventionality

of the eastern subjects led to a prediction that this would entail a rejection of traditional moral authority, for such is the nature of the values encapsulated in the submission to authority subscale of Ray's (1979) balanced F scale.

**The paradox of freedom**

A low level of submission to authority was predicted, and the results support this hypothesis strongly. The eastern groups had an extremely low level of submission to authority, particularly the novice rebirthing group, (no data were available for the graduate group on this measure). Yet these eastern groups by their actions in being involved with a group centring on a charismatic leader show a seemingly paradoxical inclination to shun one form of authority and tum towards another. Yet, in the case of the rebirthing groups, these charismatic leaders permit subjects to express their aggressive and despairing feelings about their real parental authorities. It is possible that the form of authority exercised by leaders steeped in eastern belief and practice has a different form, sufficiently different to prevent rejection by those who challenge orthodox authority. From participant observation, since I had the privilege of witnessing may group sessions, it was apparent that this form of leadership is an exercise by the leader in turning questions and decisions back to the individual. I recognise this as very real form of influence and guidance, but it has a form that is novel in western cultures.  It is perhaps not seen as an arbitrary or normative authority, but one based on the unique psychohistory and awareness of the individual. The power to be guided is portrayed as accorded by the individual. It is suggested that the form of the authority makes it unlikely

to be a target of rejection and rebellion for those who have moved away from conventional authority.

## 51. The Conventionality of the Western NRM

It was expected that the western group would be more conventional in their value systems, in terms of endorsing views consonant with those of the wider society, with regard to respect for one's parents, child-rearing practices and the importance of orthodox religion. They did in fact accept more readily the elements of the F scale regarding submission to authority. They are the most authoritarian group, closely followed by the student sample.

## 52. Absorption and Stress

The eastern NRMs have experienced more psychological disruption as a result of life events: they have experienced more disruption and adjustment, more anger and anxiety. This, coupled with their low level of constraint, their negative appraisals of their mother and father at both life time frames, their disregard of traditional authority and their seemingly paradoxical involvement with a charismatic authority, suggests that there is perhaps some difference in the permeability and resilience of their sense of themselves. Jones and Gerard (1965) refer to this as the phenomenal self (and I do not intend to reify a 'self' in speaking in this way) which is more open to influence. Their openness to experiences has been shown in their strongly absorptive perceptual style, and may be a positive influence on their experience of the natural world. Interestingly they do not evidence an increased tendency to experience negative affectivity, which Watson and Clarke (1984)

portrayed as consonant with a tendency to brood over misfortunes and mistakes, despite a greater impact of life events and social experience. A tendency towards an absorptive perceptual style might mean however, that when things are going badly in the present, these individuals, chameleon-like, might evidence more emotional impact than others without this perceptual style. This is supported by the data which shows they do have more emotional responses and more lingering responses to life events, in keeping with Tellegen's description of absorption as experiencing recollected perceptions with a greater vividness as well as the greater vividness of momentary perception. Absorptive tendencies have implications for the sense of separateness for the things that are happening to one, and one's sense of separateness from those whom one loves. The origin of the scale was as a trust scale. Highly absorptive people might endure stress less well, in the sense of a dynamic adaption to events.

## 53. What Features Debar Other Groups From Participation?

The student control group provides an example of some of the interconnections between measures cited above. They have a relatively high level of stress, even if their level of wellbeing is high. They are somewhat lonely and are also more absorptive in their perceptual style than the general control group. They have a number of the features which would make them somewhat open to the appeal of NRMs, though they lack the crucial feature of endorsing as true the eastern beliefs examined in this study. Further, there is no behavioural evidence of seeking, as they have had few flirtations with eastern groups.

The therapy group shares with the eastern groups an even more similar life situation than does the student control group. Yet they too lack the element of a belief in eastern spiritual conceptions of the sacred. They are more acquiescent to these items than the western NRM, but the ratio of belief reveals them to have a more western than eastern spiritual orientation.

## 54. Operationalising the Narcissistic Wound

In this study, it is suggested that possible signs of a narcissistic wound might consist in a tendency towards impulsivity which is found in the low level of constraint characterising those drawn to eastern NRMs. A further sign is a tendency towards experiencing a strong emotional response to life events, which is also the case for the eastern groups, as is the tendency to experience an emotional fusion with the objects of perception and recollection. There is support for this in the elevated levels of absorption which characterises those drawn to eastern NRMs (their scores on Tellegen's Absorption scale of the MPQ is the highest of any group). As Tellegen (1982) suggested might occur, this scale does seem to distinguish those with a mystical propensity if being drawn to movements with an emphasis on meditation and yoga might be deemed a behavioural sign to validate the scale. Support for this inference is provided by Deikman (1965) who has compared the sense of fusion with the meditational object which is a characteristic meditational experience with the more full-blown mystical form.

While the western NRM members have had dissatisfactions with mother in childhood and adolescence to a similar degree to the eastern groups,

and have had a similar level of dissatisfaction with father in childhood to these groups, during adolescence they have a significantly higher positive appraisal of father relative to the eastern groups. This effect is in part caused by the extreme dissatisfaction of the rebirthing groups with father during this time.

Therefore, in terms of this study's cursory assessment of familial relations, there is insufficient evidence to explain why the western groups are not also unconstrained, prone to an absorptive perceptual style and so on. It is for this reason that this is termed the most speculative part of the model. It concerns what is in essence a psychoanalytic hypothesis, and self-report data scoring adjectives on Likert scales may well capture a sense of dissatisfaction with parental bonds which have implications for later social experiences, but test psychoanalytic hypotheses they cannot. The influences which determined the development of such features are likely to be more complex, and more difficult to assess, given they may not be available to the person for conscious report.

## 55. The Irrelevance of Non-normative Spiritual Traditions to a Western NRM

The adherence of the western NRM to traditional moral values and traditional forms of authority makes it very unlikely that they might find attractive the non-normative eastern movements with the experimental lifestyles and spiritual forms entailed in these groups. They showed great assent to western spiritual tenets of the SOS and almost none to eastern spiritual tenets. Given that there is an objective criterion of membership

of a Western spiritual movement, this provides good empirical validation for the SOS. It was interesting to note just how little they were interested in eastern spiritual beliefs. When the test batteries arrived back from this group the items on the SOS which referred to eastern spiritual items were returned incomplete by many of the members of this movement. They did not comment upon the eastern items at all. They were more than willing to comply when the scale was returned with my request for completion, but it was as if they felt these items had no relevance to them whatsoever and they did not even want to assert that they did not believe in them. They were not significantly less open to such belief items than the general population, though they had a lower level of assent, and much less variation in response than the control groups. This group does differ in their spiritual beliefs from the other groups in that they are most differentiated in their responses to the eastern and western scales of the SOS.


**THE SOS**

**56. The Control Groups and the SOS**

The two control groups show little intense belief to either of the scales. The therapy group evidences moderate credence for the eastern scale and a surprisingly high level of assent to the western scale. They are eclectic though favouring western spiritual conceptions of the sacred.


**57. A surprising spiritual eclecticism: The Eastern Groups and the SOS**

As predicted, the eastern affiliates show a high level of assent to eastern items, and a moderate level of assent to western spiritual items. They have a higher level of assent for the latter than either of the control

groups, though significantly less than the therapy and western groups. The ratio of belief reveals the intensity of their beliefs to favour eastern spiritual items, but their level of eclecticism was something of a surprise. It was thought that in line with Needleman's (1975) observations, there might be a disaffection with the western forms of spirituality. It does seem to be the case regarding their experimentation with forms of religion other than the family religion, that they experiment more with eastern than with western movements. This supports Galanter's (1980) findings of a high incidence in eastern experimentation and a low incidence of western and political prior affiliations in those drawn to an introductory workshop. However, the eastern groups, despite an absence of behavioural experimentation, do seem to have retained an allegiance to the beliefs of the religious orientation into which they were primarily socialised. The exception to this among the eastern groups is the Theosophist group, where a high proportion had been involved in western religions. Interestingly enough, this group was also that most represented in the category of those who came from a single religion family. The eclecticism of this group is rather less surprising, given the explicit statements of the group belief system which link Christ with Buddha. Further, one of the leaders of the rebirthing group had previously trained as a Catholic priest, so it is possible that these groups portray a tolerant, syncretistic approach to religions.

This finding reveals that if these people have moved to eastern form of spirituality as a result of a disaffection with western forms, it seems that they are only disaffected as far as the institutional forms of expression

are concerned: they are still quite open to the component beliefs of the worldview, as Barker (1981) noted.

It seems that Nock (1933) carries the day on this issue: their affiliation is one of adhesion rather than conversion, they have added new spiritual beliefs on to an already engage religious (mental) life, at least, and have not turned from the tenets of the religion into which they were born in embracing the new. This is reminiscent of pre-Christian times. It is perhaps for this reason that those members of the western movement dissociate themselves as sharply as it has been demonstrated that they do from beliefs characteristic of the 'cultic milieu'. Perhaps they still remember that theirs is a jealous God.

## 58. POSSIBLE EXTENSIONS OF THE STUDY

If the test battery could be reduced to more time-elegant proportions, the study would be vastly improved with larger groups per sample, and a broader array of eastern and western groups. It would be rewarding to cover a broader range of structural and organisational features of these movements, for example comparing residential groups and weekend groups, groups with a present and interactive leader, with groups whose leader is not immediately available.

Greater consideration of the degree to which the belief systems are syncretistic amalgams of eastern and western traditions would facilitate the exploration of the degree to which individual beliefs and orientation of worldview are consonant with that of the movement approached, as Zygmunt (1972) suggested.

It would improve the design to have a therapy group which was not run under the aegis of a church group, though it is important to retain the comparability of the group arrangement of those drawn to therapy, so that the *social element* of group appeal is held constant for those who seem to be isolated and lonely, as both those drawn to therapy and to NRMs appear to be.

A diachronic study is vital to tease out the causal sequence of the variables which are strongly interrelated in this study. A similar effect cannot be achieved using path analysis (Heirich, 1977) as the issue is not *how much* of the variance each variable accounts for, for example the incidence of life events, but *how* this incidence influences the person's coping with life events and appraisal of social networks, and social agencies of self-change. It seems to be that the conjunction of having lots of things happen to a person with psychological attributes such as a lack of constraint, an unconventional outlook, and a tendency towards absorbing perceptual experience. They thus seem to make sense of life disruption in the context of their history of some involvement with eastern movements and their own eastern worldview with its explanatory and consolatory potential.

**Disruptive life events are only part of the picture**

The eastern groups are distinguished by the nature and degree of their response to life events from the control groups, but from the therapy group only on the form and intensity of emotional response regarding these variables. They are distinguished from the control groups in terms of social isolation at a community level and loneliness at an intimate

level. They are not lonelier or less socially integrated than the therapy groups.  It is only when psychological attributes are considered that it is possible to distinguish those ripe for therapy, from those ripe for a spiritual movement. Unconventionality, a lack of constraint and an unwillingness to endorse traditional moral authority might also distinguish any number of activist groups in the community from terrorist, political, feminist, to radical psychoanalytic groups. These variables are perhaps only determinants of involvement in non-normative social options.

It is the predisposition to respond to perceptions and memories in an absorptive manner, and the assent to beliefs which are spiritual in nature which distinguished these eastern affiliates from all other groups. The theoretical form of the model is thus vital to the results. When taken in concert these variables reveal affiliates to be differentially open to involvement of a social and a spiritual kind, especially where a physically and emotionally present charismatic leader might also be found.

Is the state of transition delineated here an acute response to a personal life cycle stage? Whether they are perpetual seekers in a perpetual state of transition can only be answered by longitudinal data.

## 59. WHAT WAS DEMONSTRATED AFTER ALL

For the moment, it was demonstrated that those drawn to NRMs of an eastern nature are in a state of transition, and that the manner of resolving that transition was in a direction whereby a consonance of

individual worldview and movement ideology was achieved. The affiliates do not emerge as 'dropouts': they do not differ from any of the other groups in terms of achievement, social competency, wellbeing, negative affectivity or positive. Any measures which assess more acute ongoing response to stress, such as Henderson *et al's* (1981) Recent Life Events Schedule, and the scales relating to impact and emotional response styles, or Galanter's measure of General wellbeing, differentiate the groups. Barker (1981) acknowledged the recency of changed life circumstances, living arrangements, and pessimistic thoughts regarding future relationships as features relevant to who might be a 'moonie'. These are endorsed by this study in vivid psychometric detail. At the time of contacting these people they seem alive to the broader concerns of life, the larger issues of the human condition the peace we might attempt to make with the future, regarding our finite nature, and the peace to be made with past hardships lack and suffering. These are the hallmarks of a person who has seen the slanted cheekbones of the ocean, and found them gaunt. They are also the hallmarks of a person open to personal change.

## Returning by an unused path

### 60. CHARISMATIC NEW RELIGIONS, PRIMARY NARCISSISM & THE DENIED WISH

#### 60.1 The roots of religion

"An animal without *prolonged infancy* in a *nuclear family* has no experiential basis for regressive belief in magic or religion.  Only Oedipal apes can have religion." (p.275, my italics) notes Weston La Barre (1980).  He adds "only humans have the extravagant discrepancy between large, experiencing brains and protracted, near total dependence *on others* in their physically immature post-natal state.  In this lie the roots of magic and religion." (p. 272).  The two elements of a prolonged infancy and the fact of that infancy being experienced in a nuclear family mark two central features of a psychoanalytic account of religion; wish fulfilment, and the need to deal with guilt.  The wish (for protection by and union with a powerful other) springs from the helplessness of total dependency and vulnerability which characterises human infants; concern with guilt is part of the aftermath of the culpability of having desired one's parents which resulted in a system of morality arising out of the Oedipus Complex of the nuclear family.  This two-fold function of religion is not evenly considered by Freud who neglects religion's promise of wish-fulfilment and the regressive dependency entailed in that aspect, and deals almost exclusively with

its promulgation and assuaging of guilt.  The neglect of wish-fulfilling features of religion stems at least in part from the restricted scope of Freud's subject matter, and perhaps in part for his slightly 'obsessive' leaning which Jones notes he acknowledged of himself.  I will deal first with the restrictions of his treatment of religion, and speculate about the reasons for his focus.

## 60.2 Old, strong, urgent wishes

By briefly considering classical Freudian psychoanalytic accounts of the origin and function of religion, we open the way to a considering how such a specific focus on western religions precludes concern with the role of pre-oedipal relationships on the form of religious longings, specifically, how relations to the mother might have influenced the manner of expression of religious impulses and mystical phenomena.  While Freud does not address in detail the legacy of the pre-oedipal years on religious experiences, save to borrow the words of his friend Romain Rolland in alluding to the oceanic feeling, a faintly marked but unused path exists in classical psychoanalytic theory, which hinges on Freud's (1915) analysis of the 'pleasure ego', and the problematic nature of 'object' relationships during this phase.  If we return by this unused path, certain uncanny features of the appeal of mystico-charismatic new religions come within explanatory reach.

For Freud, religion serves the oldest, strongest, most urgent wishes of mankind; the strength of religious ideas, given their illusory basis, is a reflection of the strength of these wishes.  When so much of magic and religion is disconfirmed by later experience, notes La Barre, they are

nevertheless firmly believed in and fervently sought.  What experiences lend plausibility to these wishes?

## 60.3 Childhood and cherished illusions

Jones (1974) provides a succinct account: religious life represents a dramatisation on a cosmic plane of the fears and longings which arose in the child's relations to her or his parents.  "The child's sense of guilt or sin regarding early sexual activities and longings are interfered with by the parents, and the child's repressed death wish towards the parents leads to a fear of retaliation which results in the desire for forgiveness and reconciliation."  It is not merely a realistic transcription of early relationships however, as in an artificial group, such as the church, says Freud (1921) there is

> the illusion that the leader loves all of the individuals equally and justly.  But this is simply an idealistic remodelling of the state of affairs in the primal horde, where all of the sons knew that they were equally *persecuted* by the primal father and *feared* him equally" (p. 125, original emphasis).

Jones speaks of both parents, Freud of one.  To be reconciled with the father is to gain assistance from him and this plus the conviction of sin and the ensuing necessity for salvation forms the core of (at least) Western religions for Freud.

## 60.4 An obsessive's account of religion: no place for love

However, even as an account of Christian religion it is a partial one, since the God portrayed is very much Jah Weh, the god of Moses, and a character for whom one must feel *mysterium tremendum*.  Yet this

captures well the 'otherworldliness of religion' (Jones, 1974), a relation to something which transcends space and time and to which, in the West, we are socialized to assume attitudes of dependence, fear and reverence with an emphasis on love intensifying with the advent of the New Testament conception of God.   The implications of the other-worldliness of God in the West is worthy of further exploration as one of the reasons for the return of a repressed wish in modern New Religious Movements [NRMs], the return of a wish for mystical, embracing union with a more immediate or immanent "God" .

The emphasis on God-the-superego is a diminished version of the functions of religion outlined by Freud (1927) in *The Future of an Illusion*.   There religion is portrayed as an attempt to exorcise the terrors of nature, to compensate for the sufferings and privations of civilised life and to watch over man's obedience to the now (dangerously) divine moral precepts; dangerous because their divine status places them beyond human questioning.   Elsewhere, in *Totem and Taboo*, and *Group psychology and the analysis of the ego*, (1921), Freud presents us with an obsessive's account of religion. The emphasis on the stern father, fear, and punishment, is reminiscent of the comparison Jones makes between the neurotic's obsessive rituals and those of orthodox Christian religion.   Both are prepared to avoid a feared calamity, and to avoid punishment and damnation rather than aiming at being blessed and loved.   Vergote (1978) notes that the obsessive ritual, like the religious one, repeats the transgressing act it symbolically annuls.   An obsessive's rituals symbolize acts of restitution only. Love is beyond him or her, while hysteria is not merely concerned

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with forgiveness but with love also, (Jones, 1974). To Freud, religious hysteria suggests the narcissistic and feminine position with respect to the divine father, part of the complex tangle of desires active during the Oedipus complex which he notes in case studies like *The rat man*, but which he does not apply to his analysis of religion.


## 60.5 Science, the tragic mind and wishes born afresh

Dependency and vulnerability do not feature strongly in Freud's account of religion. His is a voice of the Enlightenment.  With a thorough scientific analysis, religion will go away, replaced by scientific logos.  To some extent God did 'go away' as the order in nature became more apparent in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries.  He was forced 'upstairs' becoming more inscrutable in His workings and in His control of fate.  God left the world, says Goldmann (1959) "and only a few Seventeenth Century intellectuals realized that he had gone".  This 'hidden god' resulted in the Seventeenth Century tragic mind, tragic because of a conflict which is partly why religion is unlikely ever to 'go away' altogether, and a conflict which is pertinent now with the burgeoning of NRMs in the last few decades.  Goldmann notes that the tragic mind hinges on

> the complete and exact understanding of the new
> world created by a rationalistic individualism,
> together with all the invaluable and scientifically
> valid acquisitions which this offered to the human
> intellect . . .[being coupled with] the complete
> refusal to accept this world as the only one in

which man could live, move and have his being"

(p.32).

Wittgenstein expresses a similar concern when he suggests in the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* that "We feel even if all possible scientific questions are answered *our problem is still not touched at all.*" Religion is not merely a source of explanation, but also of consolation, and embodies a wish which persists in the face of science; a refusal to accept that the world of cause and effect is the only one in which we can 'live move and have our being'.

## 60.6 The persistence of the wish

A wish persists because civilization doesn't keep its promises, nature remains unsubdued and death defies human mastery, (Ferrarotti, 1977). A wish persists because difficulties arise for us in attempting to deal with the notion of death on an emotional and intellectual level. It persists because in the vagaries of nature there seems neither rhyme nor reason to 'that old machine which drives the seasons' in terms of the equity of occurrence of suffering, its form, its timing, and its accumulation for particular individuals. It persists because ultimately these issues must be faced alone. The spiritually inclined would exchange a world of cause and effect for one of demand and response. The classical psychoanalytic account of religion rests on a remote and inscrutable God and an unchallengeable tradition. To that extent it omits analysis of needs for consolation, and for union; for a more immediate relationship with a 'divine' personage, which might lend modern and specific pertinence to traditional writings, beliefs and practices. Weber recognized this need when he spoke of

the religious needs of the laity for an accessible,
tangible, familiar religious object which could be
brought into relationship with concrete life
situations and definite situations or with definite
groups of people to the exclusion of outsiders, an
object which would above all be accessible to
magical influences. The security provided by a
tested magical manipulation is more reassuring
than the experience of worshipping a god who
precisely because he is omnipotent is not subject
to magical influence. (p. 25).

The declining appeal, for some, of Western religions, stems in part from
a very old problem - the problem of theodicy: God is omnipotent, yet
the world is imperfect. From this flows one inevitable result, "the
concept of an unimaginable great chasm between the transcendental
god and the human being continually enmeshed in the toils of a new
sin" (Weber, 1963, p. 142). This is not a universal theological issue -
there is a quite complete solution of the problem of theodicy in the
Indian doctrine of *karma* where every ethically relevant act contributes
causally to life outcome rendering unnecessary a judging deity. Both
chasm and sin are eliminated. There is no chasm between god and
wo/man due to an immanent conception of the divine, with no
distinction between the natural and the spiritual coupled with the belief
that human beings have the divine within, waiting to be realized. There
is no sin since wrong actions are those which adversely affect spiritual
development; no external judgement is entailed. Weber traces the

concept of a transcendental god (implying an utterly subordinate and creaturely character of the world) as arising in Asia Minor, with the results for the Occident that "any planned procedure for achieving salvation faced a road that was permanently closed to self-deification and to any genuinely mystical self-possession of god . . . because this appeared to be a blasphemous deification of a mere created thing".  So God remains a hidden god.

Such attributes of orthodox western religions have ramifications for accounts of religion, psychoanalytic and otherwise, which focus exclusively on the Western spiritual traditions.  A sense of mystical union attested to by St Theresa of Avila and Meister Eckhardt is a union with God the Father.  Thus, partly due to the scope of Freud's subject matter, the way is blocked for detailed analysis of the role that an early (perhaps maternal) golden age might play in religious feeling; described as the *oceanic feeling* by Freud (1927), attributed to Romain Rolland. Within the Christian orthodoxy such a mystical path was blocked and called heterodox.  In emphasising the punitive moral father, and the ethical features of religious life, classical psychoanalysis denies a powerful wish by downplaying the sense of omnipotence wished for, and unconsciously gained by the longed for fusion with an all-powerful, all-providing, all-loving other - an unconscious regressive fusion with the mother and with pleasurable fragments of the natural world.

It has been noted by Faber (1976) that Freud did not use his case study material in his accounts of religion, did not consider Oriental religions at all, but looked at what he termed a 'cultural psychopathology' closer to

home - orthodox western religions.  The exclusion of the feminine is a keynote in orthodox Western religions at the levels of theology and of practice.  His analysis of religion is further restricted by sharing the limitations of the object of his research.

## 60.7 Women in theology and spiritual practice in Western religions

The Jews abolished mother worship and Weber suggests that it was the almost total exclusion of women that lead to the ascendancy of Christianity over Mithraism when both were recruiting from the working classes.  Mother worship "plays only a veiled part in Christianity," (Jones, 1974).  Although the family-like trinity is maintained, "the third member of it has an ambiguously nebulous character, in spite of a probable derivation from the Spirit that moved upon the face of the waters in the beginning of the world and who must originally have been a brooding Mother." (Jones, 1974, p.209). This exclusion is something that Elaine Pagels (1979) says anyone interested in the early history of Christianity (the field called 'patristics' - that is the study of the fathers of the church) will be prepared for, given "the passage that concludes the Gospel of St. Thomas:

> Simon Peter said to them [the disciples] 'Let Mary
> leave us, for women are not worthy of Life.' Jesus
> said, 'I myself shall lead her, in order to make her
> male, so that she too may become a living spirit,
> resembling you males.  For every woman who will
> make herself male will enter the kingdom of
> heaven" (p. 72).

In contrast, the Gnostics had as their conception of God one which included a feminine element.  Bishop Iranaeus notes with dismay, says Pagels, that women especially are attracted to heretical sects; "Even in our own district of the Rhone Valley, he admits, the gnostic teacher Marcus had attracted 'many foolish women' " (Pagels, 1979, p. 80).  By the end of the second century women's participation in worship was explicitly condemned and groups in which women continued on to leadership were branded as heretical.  So women were excluded from religion, both at the level of the conception of the deity, and deemed unworthy of participation, and authority.

My point is that while Freud went intensively into the study of religious history, by not taking oriental religions into account at all, his conclusions entail similar omissions to those which the object of his study had somewhat forcibly deleted; the feminine in religion.  He alludes to the importance of the experience of being suckled in a number of places, no more than intimating the undoubted importance of this experience, but refraining from further developing this line of thought. In his study on Leonardo da Vinci, Freud (1910) suggests that the 'organic impression of' suckling at the mother's (or wet-nurse's) breast is the first source of pleasure in our life, one which 'doubtless remains indelibly printed on us' and which Leonardo went on to depict 'in the guise of the mother of God and her child.'  In the *Introductory Lectures* he notes

> if an infant could speak, he would no doubt
>
> pronounce the act of sucking at his mother's breast
>
> by far the most important in his life.  He is not far

wrong in this....I can give you no idea of the
important bearing of this first object upon the
choice of every later object, of the profound effects
it has in its transformations and substitutions in
even the remotest regions of our sexual life. (1916-
1917, p. 314).

Yet Freud does not fully explore the legacy of the pre-oedipal phase on
religious longings and phenomena.  In 1933, he attributes features of
religion to our early developmental years, noting that religion is an
attempt to get control over the sensory world by means of the wish-
world, then dismisses further consideration of these early years sternly
when he says that the final judgment of science of religion is that, "Its
doctrines carry with them the stamp of the times in which they
originated, the ignorant days of the human race.  Its consolations
deserve no trust.  Experience teaches us that the world is not a
nursery." (p230).  While Freud began to trace the origin of father hate
to fixation on the mother, Henderson, (1975) notes "he failed to pursue
that, and veered instead to elaborate some reasoned proposals about
an earlier father - the primal father", who jealously kept the women of
the tribe to himself.  The father's murder by the blood brother sons led
to 'feuding, and ruinous disruption of the social order' leading to two
moral imperatives: thou shalt not kill and the incest taboo.  Henderson
notes:

We have no quarrel with [Freud's] choice to look
beyond the relationship to father, but his choice of
an earlier father rather than what would seem

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today to be a more obvious area of enquiry (the

infant-mother relationship) is curious. (p. 111).

**60.8 Freud's Family Romances as a basis for 'neglect' of the feminine**

Henderson speculates about Freud's own austere Austrian mother as the basis for this neglect, and puts forward what he terms a humbler view that perhaps Freud had little interest in child psychoanalysis and therefore lacked that form of empirical data. The latter speculation seems improbable as Freud pieced together the psychosexual stages of childhood from largely adult data. Of the former, there are some tantalising leads. Roith (1987) presents an ably researched account of details of Freud's relationship to his mother, her strength and her origins, and surmises that she must have been something of a liability to Freud's view of himself as a Western scholar, given her *ostjuden* vernacular and habits, and given the absence of a strong and admired father in Freud's life. Guntrip (1975) in his commentary on his analyses with Fairbairn and Winnicott notes that much relevant material was missed due to the interpretation of his dreams and associations in uniquely Oedipal terms by Fairbairn. What was missed was an earlier trauma related to his troubled bonding with his mother, and his near death at her hands as she retreated from him at age 3, following the death of his 1 year old brother Percy. Faber (1976) comments that Freud's view of religion may have been influenced by the death of his younger brother and the guilt experienced over the death wishes felt towards the sibling. It is possible that this event also provided him with a changed maternal relationship at that young age. Roith (1987) lists in scholarly detail the plethora of Judaic traditions which may have borne

upon Freud's relation to his mother and his views of women, leading him to de-emphasise the mother-son bond and devalue women. She cites "the rabbinic hostility to the female function" (with the uterus being referred to as a 'place of rot' (p. 99)), the recurring legal classification of 'women, children and slaves' (p. 94), fear and envy of female reproductive functions (p. 90) and an "important feature of Jewish family patterns in which cross-sex ties [particularly the mother-son relationship] are highly emphasised, often at the price of husband-wife relationships." (p. 105). Yet in contrast to Freud's many pronouncements on the differences and inabilities of women in relation to men (their more emotionally based morality, their incapacity to love, their excessive jealousy, envy, narcissism and diminished capacity for the sublimation required for intellectual pursuits) he suggests that the mother-son relationship is the only one to bring her "unlimited satisfaction" since it is entirely "free from ambivalence" (Freud, 1933, p. 133). Roith (1987) notes that

> Subsequent psychoanalytic findings have long since
> superseded Freud's simplistic formulation of the
> mother-son relationship. The fact that he adhered
> to it, it is suggested can only be understood in
> terms of his own "family romance", the need to
> defend against related anxieties, and the larger
> subcultural system in which that 'romance'
> occurred". (p106)

She suggests a possibility which is rarely considered, that "the theory of the Oedipus complex - articulating the child's conflict with paternal

power - might be a reaction-formation on Freud's part to an opposite constellation, one in which the informal and customary role prescribed that his mother was the dominant and most powerful influence and the father the weaker one..." (p. 105).

## 60.9 Returning by an unused path: tacit accounts of union, dependence and regressive fusion with the mother in religious experience.

For whatever reason, Freud has on a number of occasions overlooked the significance of the pre-oedipal mother-child bond; regarding the female superego he initially did not realise the significance of the early bond with the mother and the task for the girl of separating from her and moving towards the father in the Oedipus complex proper; regarding Dora, he was so concerned with her rejection of Herr K, he missed her attraction to Frau K; and now in connection with religion, he does not directly address the mother-infant bond which is arguably central to the mystical oceanic feeling, and a crucial part of the wish-fulfilment promised by religion in its promise of union, protection and consolation. However, he does address this issue indirectly, and this is the unused path which concerns us.

## 60.10 The riches of the pre-oedipal phase for explanation of mystical phenomena

Interest in the pre-oedipal phase is rewarded by the richness of this developmental epoch for human analogues of the phenomena of mystical fusion; the sense of an underlying oneness with the universe avowed by mystics of all cultures. La Barre (1980) ascribes to this early

developmental phase the origins of magic and mysticism, reserving religion for a later developmental phase;

> in life history, the impersonal magical commanding,
>
> or projecting and incorporating of ambiguously
>
> placed *mana* represents an *earlier individual* phase
>
> of adaptive ego growth than does religion, a later
>
> phase-development which knows in emotional
>
> reality the existence of persons.
>
> (p. 274).

He underscores this distinction is his comment, "[t]he mystic supposes some placental attachment to an omnibenevolent environment still to exist, the religionist more specifically to omnipotent others, his parental gods" (p. 273). This is a distinction which does not hold for many religions within eastern traditions where an immanent relation to god is part of orthodox religion. Even within the Western tradition the spiritual union of the mystic (with the environment) and the wish for protection, and love (from powerful others) are not as incompatible with an emphasis on God the Father and on the important role of ethical religious values as Freud's account of these traditions suggests. It is for this reason that I suggest Freud gives us an obsessive's view of religion, where culpability is in focus, and love somewhere out of the picture.

Union and protection in the history of our development are closely linked in that, in childhood, becoming like the father obviates fear of harm from him, and achieves protection by him: 'if I am like him, he will not hurt me'. This identification, along with the introjection of the

parents' moral values, contributes to the formation of the superego. It is a wish for fusion with something greater and more powerful, which in religion extends to a wish for unconscious fusion with something divine, which can protect us from the crushing forces of nature and from our own mortality - a promised fusion which lies behind charismatic attractions. One could argue that the motives promoting Oedipal identification reinstantiate, at least at an unconscious level, a more primary union. However, is it really Oedipal identification which concerns us here, or something earlier than that?

## 60.11 Primal self love, primary narcissism, and the pleasure ego

In discussing 'higher' religions, Jones (1974) notes, primal self-love is displaced onto the superego and the sense of supreme values in religion stem from the ego coming to be like the superego. In speaking of primal self-love, I take it that he is referring to the phase of primary narcissism before, as La Barre puts it, "the gold of self love is traded for love; the paper money of narcissism is exchanged for the nourishment of object love" (p. 274). In this phase the child experiences 'itself' as a unity, but it is in fact a compound of pleasurable elements from the mother and from the external world, (Freud, 1915). Many analysts differ as to how this phase is characterised. Primary narcissism is the term used by Freud, Margaret Mahler and Kohut, while Klein and Kernberg speak of primary internal object relations and Balint (1952) speaks of intense relatedness. The Japanese psychiatrist, Doi (1971), refers to this phase as *amae*; literally 'cleaving to the breast with no shame'.

## 60.12 Primary object love and the end of a golden age

It is beyond the scope of this paper to detail the differences in these viewpoints regarding the activity or passivity of the child, her contributions to the texture of the relationship and so on, since the point is a simple one. I suggest that the relatedness experienced during this phase is not an example of identification, but at best a prototype for subsequent identification, since the 'object' as such has **never** been recognized as having a separate independent existence, has never been 'lost'. Further the lost object never existed as something which could move discretely through space and time. Identification entails an unconscious belief in one's identity with, or possession of the attributes of another whom one (consciously, at least) knows to be separate, and whose loss one fears or has experienced in some regard. During this phase the child has not yet realised her mother might fail to arrive on time, fail to meet her needs, or leave her to unbearable instinctual tension by abandoning her. The pleasure ego assigns to itself all that is pleasurable and projects outwards in a primary defence all that is hostile to its comfort, (Freud, 1915). This is a peculiar state of fusion where two objects are experienced as one (though the relation is asymmetric, that is, it is experienced as fusion on the part of the child only) where the composite is a partial one, leaving out attributes of both of the actual objects, while including parts of the environment. It is an asymmetrical relation because, consciously at least, the mother acknowledges the separateness of the two, though unconsciously may believe the child to be part of her. The mother is capable of identification; the child is not. This unconscious tendency of the mother to subsume the child to herself and to her unfulfilled longings from her

past is the trauma of misrecognition; one is born desired (Pereira, 1988; personal communication). The stronger this tendency of the mother's, perhaps the less satisfactory, or more abruptly terminated is this 'golden age' for the child. It comes to an end as the mother's desires intrude, impinging as alien as do the previously defensively projected aspects of reality, thus bringing to fruition the secondary process/reality principle which is the hallmark of the child's developing ego.

## 60.13 Fusion, identification and the concept of Amae

Doi's (1971) concept of *amae* refers to this union of mother and child. However the active sense of the word, where one seeks to *amaeru*, is retained for when the child "realises that itself and its mother are independent existences, and comes to feel the mother as something independent to itself." (p. 73). Amaeru is closer to Freud's concept of identification; amae closer to the pre-object relations fusion. It is this union which perhaps underlies Freud's comment that every discovery of an object is a refinding of it. The potential for unquenchable nostalgia is immense - one longs for an ago that never was. The object of phenomenal experience was not an object *de re*, but in a sense an object 'in you out there': what Kohut (1977) terms a self-object. There is a sense in which this lost object can never be rediscovered, since in a sense it never existed. This is not to slip into solipsism and the related assumption of idealism, since there is a real physical substance at least partly responsible for the sensations - be it mother, or physical environment. However, it is not an object which can move as a discrete entity through space and time. It is an object born of the 'wish-world'

alluded to by Freud, created by projection and incorporation. It is perhaps the first lost object.

Unlike Balint (1952) and Doi (1971), I do not think that this 'passive object love' lies outside the scope of Freud's explanatory endeavour. I do think that the implications of this phase and its ramification have been imperfectly traced in classical psychoanalytic accounts of religious phenomena. Further, it is perhaps just such a primal union which identification, love and other transference phenomena like charisma unconsciously, partially and imperfectly reinstate.

**60.14 Fusion and the deathless object in charisma**

Theologically charisma meant 'gift of grace' (Rudolph Sohn, 1892-1923). Lindholm (1988) refers to it as "an ecstatic experience of self-transcendence with a beloved other" (p. 3) or a "naked capacity to muster assent" (p. 5). Charisma is a transference phenomenon based on a repression, or a symptom. It has an 'uncanny' quality. Freud (1921), identifying its occurrence in hypnosis, notes that the experience of the 'uncanny' "suggests something old and familiar that has undergone repression." (p. 125). The hypnotist asserts and the subject colludes that s/he is in possession of a mysterious power that robs the subject of her own will. Freud suggests that

> the uncanny and coercive characteristics of group
> formations which are shown in the phenomena of
> suggestion that accompany them, may with justice
> be traced back to the fact of their origin from the
> primal horde. The leader of the group is still the

> dreaded father, the group still wishes to be governed by unrestricted force, it has an extreme passion for authority...The primal father is the group ideal which governs the ego in place of the ego ideal. (p. 127).

This passion for authority by force is a source of concern, since a leader in a charismatic relationship, like a leader in charge of a group, takes over the function of the person's own moral faculty, or ego ideal. Jim Jones in the People's Temple in Guyana, certainly acted out the attributes of wildest primal horde father, including exacting the most extreme submission on the part of the ego - to surrender its claim to life. This is in keeping with Freud's observation that the individual gives up his/her ego-ideal and substitutes for it the group ideal as embodied in the leader. He suggests that this is readily achieved in those for whom the separation of ego and ego-ideal is not very far-advanced. He notes in this case the leader "need only give an impression of greater force and of more freedom of libido" (p. 129). While this is rarely the case with traditional Eastern holy men and *Saddhus* who may be ascetic and celibate in lifestyle, it may characterise some leaders of NRMs.


## 61. Modern Charismatic Leaders

The person of the leader in NRMs is a focus of great interest for the followers and frequently great dismay for outsiders. Those leaders who have risen to ascendancy in recent times have, like the charismatic prophets of old, bridged the chasm between divinity and mere mortal. This is aided in many cases by claims of privileged access to the sacred, or by promulgation of a conception of immanent divinity whereby each

of us houses a potential 'buddha-nature' within, and where, with enlightenment, each of us can realise our unity with the 'ground of all being'. The leaders may claim to be ascetics themselves, but they promise bliss, and offer themselves as a tangible mediator between a state of spiritual impoverishment and a sublime existence now; a mediator and an immediacy of bliss denied in the austere, judgmental god of orthodox western religions as portrayed by Freud. In NRMs, the personage of the leader is in many cases male; the path to enlightenment a more or less rigorous denunciation of transient pleasures, (less in the case of Rajneesh) but the outcome promised is a state of union now with all that is. The wish is, "if I am like it, it cannot harm me", and of course, "if it is part of me, I can influence it, and will live as long as it lives." It is a promised re-instantiation of a state of fusion with an 'object' which includes a good, protecting, all-powerful, all-loving object, and a benevolent environment. It is a promise of a regressive fusion with the mother, a return to the golden age of the 'oceanic feeling' of security and protection. Such a regression can only occur if total trust is accorded to the leader, if s/he takes the place of a person's superego. As Rajneesh notes: "Only those are accepted who surrender, only those are accepted who are utterly committed, who have fallen in love with me, who can trust and whose trust is unconditional and absolute..." (p. 297).


## 62. The Sources and Uses of Charisma

Weston La Barre (1980) characterises the nature of charisma as arising from a personal state of dissatisfaction in the follower, or a longing that leads the follower to feel that a leader has 'seen into her heart' and is

'speaking directly to her'. Charisma permits a relationship in a group context to collapse into a personal, unique and uncanny bond between leader and follower. La Barre notes:

> The compelling force comes not from the great man as he voices some new supernatural truth; he speaks to the powerful anti-commonsensical fantasy already present in the unconscious wish of each communicant . . . the voice of the vatic has an 'uncanny' consistency with each one's private wish (p.52).

Goldberg (1983) notes that these groups would not draw people to them so readily unless the followers were not already 'actively seeking lapses from reality'. So charisma is not so much a personal quality as a skill which causes the ascription of qualities to the leader by the follower; a follower who has no awareness that her unconscious conflicts and longings participate in the ascription of an 'uncanny' giftedness to the leader. This is reminiscent of Freud's account of therapeutic transference, and it must be noted that a psychoanalyst has, as a result of transference, marvellous attributes attributed to him or her, thus acquiring a measure of charisma as a result of giving voice to wishes prepotent in the unconscious of the analysand. Charisma can either be based on personal skills or institutional and social roles. As Hayley (1989) notes, psychoanalysts are those whose charismatic authority is based on both categories. Freud distinguished suggestion from other kinds of mental influence such as a command or the giving of information, saying that 'in the case of suggestion an idea is aroused in another person's brain which is not examined with regard to its origin

but is accepted just as though it had spontaneously arisen in that brain'.
He wrote

> It is perfectly true that psycho-analysis, like other
> psychotherapeutic methods employs the
> instrument of suggestion (or transference). But the
> difference is this: that in analysis it is not allowed
> to play the decisive part in determining the
> therapeutic results. It is used instead to induce the
> person to perform a piece of psychical work - the
> overcoming of his transference resistances - which
> involves a permanent alteration in his mental
> economy. (1925, p. 42)

The difference between therapeutic transference and transference to a religious leader is that the latter will tend to strengthen repression, and this is the basis of much concern regarding pastoral counselling, (see Ross, 1975).


## 63. Psychoanalysis and New Religions

The relation between therapeutic transference and charisma experienced in relation to NRM leaders is also worthy of consideration. "It is not hard to discern," says Freud, "that all ties that bind people to mystico-religious sects and communities are expressions of crooked cures of all kinds of neuroses". The tendency towards the introjection of an object is enhanced by melancholia where the "most notable of its exciting causes is the real or emotional loss of a loved object". This state may lead to an openness to a charismatic other. Because of the object loss which has been suffered, and the depletion of the ego,

identification may be sought with a powerful other. Freud (1921) notes that idealisation often occurs in love, and that

> the object serves as a substitute for some
> unattained ego ideal of our own. We love it on
> account of the perfections which we have striven
> to reach for our own ego, and which we would now
> like to procure in this roundabout way as a means
> of satisfying our narcissism. (pp 112-113).

If sexual overvaluation and being in love increase even further, then the ego becomes

> more unassuming and modest, and the object
> more and more sublime and precious, until at last
> it gets possession of the entire self-love of the ego,
> whose self-sacrifice thus follows as a natural
> consequence. The object has, so to speak,
> consumed the ego. Traits of humility, of the
> limitation of narcissism, and of self-injury occur in
> every case of love; in the extreme case they are
> merely intensified, and as a result of the
> withdrawal of the sensual claims they remain in
> solitary supremacy. (p113).

Everything that the object does is blameless, since the object has taken the place of the ego-ideal. I suggest that charismatic transference to a new religious leader has a nucleus of pathology - not in the sense that it hinges on a symptom (because perhaps all transference stems from a disguised repetition of something repressed and an unconscious

assimilation of two quite dissimilar 'objects') but in the sense that the symptom is *shared*. The devotee cannot hope that the leader will disabuse her of her transferential ascriptions and return to the ego the libido invested in the leader's person, setting her free to love and work with a minimum of conflict - the leader may attempt a cure, but will leave her with one vital symptom intact: her idealisation of the leader.

## 63.1 The Stability of Charismatic Relations

The symptom they share is perhaps a longing for narcissistic omnipotence. The charismatic relation is as stable and as non-pathogenic as the leader is stable. Deutsch (1983) notes the case of a deeply paranoid leader who set up a 'sidewalk ashram' in New York, who sank into a psychotic episode, but whose increasing bizarreness and cruelty were dealt with by his followers through their increased submission, and through denial. The object of devotion was beyond criticism.

A number of writers have suggested that charismatic insight derives from the fact that the leader shares some of the vicissitudes of the follower. Ross (1975) notes

> A demagogue has a 'pipeline' . . .to the most socially destructive affects and wishes of large numbers of human beings." (p. 84). He gives the example of a paranoid patient of his, an enormously successful businessman, who, "was able (unerringly and without discursive thinking) to distinguish individuals as paranoid and corruptible as himself - and to play upon these characteristics with unfailing accuracy (p. 84).

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## 64. Welcomed Transgressions

In acknowledging unexpressed wishes, or seeming to see into one's heart and/or mind, the charismatic leader transgresses the boundaries of personhood.  Kohut (1977) suggests that some charismatic authorities have "a keen grasp of even the subtlest reactions in other people which are related to their own narcissistic requirements".  In an ashram I visited as part of a large empirical study I conducted on the pre-existing attributes of those drawn to New Religious Movements, some of those attending the ashram had been smoking marijuana, against the express traditions and expectations of those running the groups.  The leader of the movement called everyone together and said that it was a very common experience to have an olfactory hallucination close to enlightenment, that it was perhaps even a sign of it.  Of course, those responsible were having difficulty at this point in containing their amusement, and the leader was able to detect those responsible with little margin of error.  Those who had been facing forward all this time and did not see the signs of barely contained amusement must have found his initial firm pronouncement of guilt rather remarkable.

This transgression of personal boundaries can be a component of love, and mystical fusion - it also has a powerful precedent in the parent-child relationship.  As a result of this experience the follower may then accord to the leader parental powers viewed from the unconscious perspective of a dependent child and thus satisfy her own narcissistic dependency needs in a way that is conducive to supernatural and uncanny interpretations.  Those especially vulnerable to this uncanny,

charismatic relationship, Deutsch (1983) suggests (empirically supported by Ullmann (1983, 1989)) are those who had 'early traumatic disappointments with one or both parents'. A remedy is sought by "seeking out in adult life new idealized objects with which to merge" (Deutsch, 1983, p. 121).

## 65. Origins of Openness to Charisma

But does it rest there? From empirical research (Ullmann, 1983, 1989) and a theoretical vantage point (Freud, 1921; Lindholm, 1988) it seems that the recent loss of a loved one, through separation or death, may be a contributing factor to an openness to a charismatic relationship; the ego may be weakened by a loss of those attributes which were identified with the loved one, and the ensuing sense of depletion and worthlessness may predispose a person to entering into a charismatic relationship. Ullmann (1983) suggests that current traumata act to re-evoke earlier conflicts regarding separation anxiety. And that might seem to be the end of a tentative exploratory account of charisma.

## 65.1 Fusion with the Environment: Nature mysticism and the Romantic impulse

However, I retained a fascination with the notion of openness to a non-personal sense of union, found in James (1902) and the writings of St Theresa of Avila. The fascination was enlivened by the fact that the amalgam that is the pleasure ego is constituted by parts of the mother, the benevolent features of the environment, and part of the child's body proper. In the early totality that is the child's pleasure ego, there are to be found parts of the natural environment. Union

with the non-personal world struck me as something that characterised only the most mystical strands of poetry and religion in the west, but seemed to me a likely further expression of the kind of permeability of identity that occurs in those who are drawn into charismatic relationships. Further, it seems a neglected strand of a wish which religion promises to fulfill - the longing for a sense of oceanic union. Doi (1986) suggests that while there is a link between Japanese experience of nature and those of the most abandoned romantic poets in the West, he notes "the long Christian tradition still had its influence, and even the Romantics were never able to give themselves up completely to nature" (p. 148). He cites Oyama, a Japanese scholar of German literature, noting:

> [i]n the end, even Goethe, who is said to have entered into the bosom of nature most profoundly, set the ego and nature in opposition, a fact which leaves us feeling inexplicably ill-at-ease. (p. 149).

The Japanese, Doi suggests, turn to nature to seek oblivion from the complications in human relations. Ross (1975) sees this tendency to become immersed, lost, or absorbed by music, art and nature as instances of "partial and reversible symbiotic states" which, he notes, are passionately sought by us in a variety of ways. He suggests that there is an archaic union of thought and feeling and that it is to this state that a person regresses in mystical experience, that it is for this reason that such experiences are characterised by feelings of "passivity, loss of discursive reasoning powers and merging with a pervasive object"(p. 89) and cites James (quoting St Francois de Salles): "In this state the soul is like a little babe, still at the breast" (p. 91).

Since the first 'object' with which union is experienced is not in fact an object which might move discretely through space and time, but is in fact an amalgam of all things pleasurable, including a segment of the environment, it is understandable that solace gained from one (the beauty of the natural environment) might be sought when the other (interpersonal relations) is a source of chagrin. This interchangeability of solace is not conscious, and the gratification and reassurance is similarly unconscious. The unused path traverses changing terrain; the romantic impulse, charismatic relationships, and mystical phenomena, which are not in principle beyond the scope of psychoanalytic explanation, but which have remained uncharted.

**Summing up**

Freud neglects religion's promise of wish-fulfilment and regressive dependency, dealing exclusively with its promulgation and assuaging of guilt. This seemingly leaves 'uncanny' charismatic and mystical phenomena beyond the explanatory reach of classical Freudian psychoanalysis. Reasons for this neglect are addressed and explorations made of an unused path already there in Freud's thought, unused because of a leap he made from analysing the father of childhood's effect on religious impulses, to those of the primal father, bypassing consideration of the importance of earliest relations. In returning by this unused path new links are made between charismatic relationships and psychoanalytic transference on the one hand, and pre-oedipal fusion with the mother, charismatic relationships and the romantic impulse on the other. Charisma, suggestion and transference

owe an uncharted legacy to that developmental epoch, hinted at by their shared 'uncanny' features. Consideration of primary narcissism contributes to an understanding these phenomena bringing their uncanny features within explanatory reach.
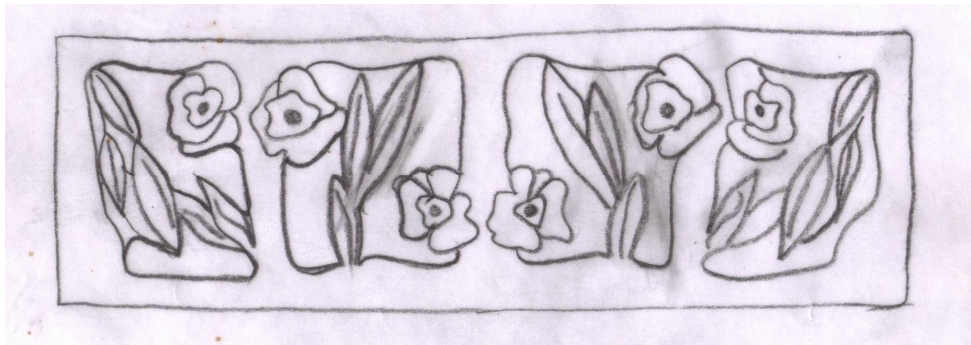
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