

COMMITMENT, RELIGIOSITY, AND ALIENATION,
A STUDY OF SEVEN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES,

by

Susan Shoulders

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APPROVED:

~~G. A. Hillery, Jr., Chairman~~

~~L. R. Della Fave~~

~~J. H. Dorsett~~

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The student movement of the 1960's, characterized by politically active and often violent encounters with the "Establishment" has dwindled to a few sporadic flare-ups in 1973. Frustrated by their lack of success in changing the structure of the social system through revolutionary means, many former activists have given up their cause as futile and returned to mainstream society, accepting its values, and living a "normal" life.

A small number of people, however, find that they cannot participate in a system which they see as corrupt, dehumanizing, and self-destructive. Having seen that rapid social change is not accomplished through violent means, they have turned to the commune as an alternative method for achieving their goals. Within the communal setting, they are able to experiment with radical ideas and lifestyles among friends who are sympathetic and supportive to their aspirations for a better society.

Communal living as an alternative lifestyle is not unique to the latter half of the twentieth century. Idealists have experimented with various social and religious innovations throughout the history of the United States and Europe. Experimental communities existed in the United States as early as 1680 (Kanter, 1972:3), and there is evidence that monasteries were operating in the second century B.C. (Fairfield, 1972:11).

Experimental communities of the past and present, then, offer a valuable opportunity to the student of society. Not only do they allow us to see a social movement over a long period of time, but in them we are able to view first hand the dynamics of community--its genesis, its organizational structure, the interaction of its members--all within the context of a contrived living environment. Through understanding these small planned societies, the researcher will reach a clearer perception of the larger and less well-defined societal milieu. Potentially, studies of communes may be an aid to the experimental communities themselves in solving their problems, thus bringing them closer to their goal--a better society for all human beings.

Purpose and Problem

Sorokin has said that our society is emerging from a materialistically-oriented culture into one based on other worldly values. We can see this trend in numerous new groups--the Jesus Freaks, the Divine Light Mission, and the Hari Krishnas, to name a few. Many of these groups organize themselves communally, pooling their resources and attempting to develop close knit communities.

The purpose of this thesis is to explore some of the characteristics typically attributed to communes that might illustrate the trend of which Sorokin speaks. We shall concern ourselves with three major variables--commitment, religiosity, and alienation. Three questions present themselves in relation to these variables. First, is there a relationship between the apparent alienation of

commune members from the larger society and the commitment the groups command? Second, does a religious ideology affect their alienation? And finally, is commitment related to religiosity among communes? Seven intentional communities will be studied--two monasteries, three populations of a Christian community, a Skinnerian commune, and a Hindu group.

CHAPTER II

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Pitirim A. Sorokin's theory of the history of society provides a useful basis from which to begin a study of the communal movement. According to Sorokin (1941) society moves through history in a cyclical pattern. The cycle is composed of two major cultural forms, each one representing a central theme or emphasis based upon the way society at that time "defines the nature of reality" (Cuzzort, 1969:237). In the ideational form, the themes of God and the super-sensory world pervade every aspect of society. In the sensate culture, the focus becomes this--worldly, sensory, or empirical. A third form, the idealistic, is a mixture of sensate and ideational values. Neither the ideational or the sensate form of culture is perfect; thus, neither can remain dominant forever. One world view typically dominates all of Western culture for a century or more until its creative worth is exhausted and the new culture begins to emerge. For example, the idealistic culture of fifth century B.C. Greece, with the emphasis on the noblest aspects of humanity combined with supersensory values, gave way in the fourth century B.C. to the Roman Empire. This great sensate culture dominated the world until the fourth century A.D., when ideational Christian values became the prevalent focus of the world.

The movement from one form of society to another is usually quite painful to the members of society and its institutions, being marked by an increase in wars, suicides, and mental illness. It

involves the decay of every aspect of culture--from art to religion to law--so that no segment of society is able to escape its effects. Though not so critical a time as those who herald it as the end of the world would have us believe, societal change of such magnitude happens only once over a period of several centuries, and thus is to be viewed as a crisis of the most extreme gravity.

Sorokin says that Western culture is today in the midst of transition from a sensate form of society to an ideational form. What was once a great and productive society has now become "over-ripe." In his own words:

For the past four centuries the sensate culture has been dominant. In the period of its ascendancy and climax it created the most magnificent cultural values in most of the compartments of Western culture. During these centuries it wrote one of the most brilliant pages in human history. However, no finite form, either ideational or sensate, is eternal. Sooner or later it is bound to exhaust its creative abilities. When this moment comes, it begins to disintegrate and decline. So it has happened, several times before, in the history of a number of the leading cultures of the past; and so it is happening now with our sensate form, which has apparently entered its decadent stage. Hence the magnitude of the crisis of our time (Sorokin, 1941:28-29).

Sorokin provides four symptoms by which the disintegration of the present sensate society may be marked. First, "tragic dualism" (1941:241) becomes prevalent. This term refers to the basic contradictions between the ideals of society and the realities of social life. For instance, equal opportunity for all people is proclaimed, yet poverty and racial discrimination are facts of life which clearly deny any real equality. While this age has witnessed

the greatest accomplishments of man in the history of the world, it has also seen the effects of growing dehumanization and depersonalization. Such contradictions are found throughout the elements of our culture, but may be summed up by Sorokin's statement that "our culture simultaneously is a culture of man's glorification and man's degradation" (1941:242).

Second, "chaotic syncretism" (1941:248) appears in every facet of our culture. This involves the importation of the values and customs of every culture of the world into our own. Sorokin describes our society as a "dumping place for the most divergent elements of the most different cultures" (1941:248). Instead of a unified belief system, there exist numerous small cults and sects. Instead of absolute values and mores, the belief in relativism dominates. The result is that society loses its "soul" (1941:250); with no central theme around which to rally, disintegration progresses rapidly.

The third symptom listed by Sorokin is "quantitative colossalism" (1941:252). As the inner substance of a culture disintegrates, it is replaced by an outward facade of greatness. Quality becomes replaced by quantity, and "the bigger the better" becomes the prevailing motto. One need only listen to a few television advertisements to hear evidence: "We sold more cars," or "the largest firm of its kind." A book is rated by how many copies are sold rather than by its content, and a piece of art by how much money it costs. In such an atmosphere, says Sorokin, true genius becomes almost non-existent, as do all forms of inner quality.

The fourth symptom of our culture's decadence, the "decline of creativeness" (1941:256), follows closely from the first three. The emphasis on quantity rather than quality, the lack of a central focus, the drastic contradictions existent throughout society--these are agents of destruction of culture which preclude the possibility of true creativity. Mass production, and planned obsolescence allow for no pride or innovation in one's work. The practice of "studying more and more about less and less" leaves little room for creative discovery in the scientific field. The term "plastic" applied to our society by young people today provides a description for Sorokin's concept which would undoubtedly have pleased him.

Kenneth Kenniston, in studying alienation among college students, has made many of the same observations as Sorokin:

The prevailing images of our culture are images of disintegration, decay, and despair; our highest art involves the fragmentation and distortion of traditional realities; our best drama depicts suffering, misunderstanding; and breakdown; our worthiest novels are narratives of loneliness, searching, and unfulfillment; even our best music is, by earlier standards, dissonant, discordant, and inhuman. Judged by the values of past generations, our culture seems obsessed with breakdown, splintering, disintegration, and destruction. Ours is an age not of synthesis but of analysis, not of constructive hopes but of awful destructive potentials, not of commitment but of alienation (Kenniston, 1960:4).

We now are able to view the communal movement as the logical and necessary emergence of ideational values in the midst of the sensate downfall. Sorokin (1941:26) says that no culture is entirely integrated; i.e., no culture is completely sensate or

ideational, and therefore within our sensate culture, there have always existed some ideational elements. As the decadence of sensate society becomes more pervasive, these ideational "seeds" begin to grow. An increasing number of people join groups which oppose some or all of the values of the overripe sensate society. Thus today we have the growth of conservation and ecology groups such as the Sierra Club, an increase of skilled craftsmen in leather, wood, pottery, etc., and the formation of innumerable "human awareness" groups such as T-groups and primal therapy.

An extreme form of the ideational trend is the commune, for it represents a complete break from the larger society. In these small groups, people are actively attempting to reorient themselves to a new and more meaningful set of values. They are trying to cast aside the sensate values in order to find peace within themselves, with other people, and with their environment.

Richard Fairfield (1972:361-367) lists five basic ideals of present-day communes:

- (1) Getting Back to Essentials--Commune people feel that in our affluent society we have come to possess too many material goods, even to the point that we are controlled by our possessions. By getting rid of extraneous "things" we will have time to concentrate on "the less tangible things in our lives that are far more important--personal and spiritual growth" (1972:362).
- (2) Getting Back to the Land--This ideal is closely related to the first. Communes attempt to return to a more natural lifestyle;

to "experience a part of yourself, the deep inner you, that you have almost forgotten" (1972:364).

(3) Getting Back to the People--In today's society, says Fairfield, "A mood of separateness, isolation, loneliness is everywhere . . . Commune people want to get rid of the interpersonal isolation. So they plead for cooperation, for people to live and work together so that each can benefit more fully from life and one another" (1972:366).

(4) Searching for Self--Members of communes feel that society mass-produces people much the same as it does machines. In the commune, they attempt to find a deeper, more meaningful part of themselves which they feel somehow has been lost in sensate society.

(5) Social Change by Example--Finally, communes want to show the world that there is a better way to life, and to help to bring about positive change through their lifestyle.

Fairfield's description of commune ideals is clearly compatible with Sorokin's theory. The central theme is a struggle to get away from a decadent, unfulfilling society and to build a new culture based upon more humanistic, spiritual concerns. Kanter (1972:33-54) has similarly dealt with the utopian ideals of communes. She proposes seven themes of communal life:

(1) Perfectibility--Communes are based on the premise that people are basically good and that imperfections arise out of the nature of the environment. If a social setting can be constructed

in such a way as to encourage the best aspects of humanity, perfection is possible.

- (2) Order--The outside world is seen by commune people as chaotic and fragmented. In the commune, on the other hand, there is a conscious effort to attain order--in the group ideals, in the rules of conduct, and in personal growth.
- (3) Brotherhood--This refers to the attempt to attain honesty in personal relationships, and to achieve a sense of "family" in a society where the extended family has lost all but its sentimental value. Fairfield's "getting back to the people" corresponds to this ideal.
- (4) Unity of Body and Mind--Many communes, and especially rural ones, feel that physical labor is spiritiaully uplifting. This theme is also found in Eastern religious groups, where physical exercises are performed to bring the body and mind into alignment.
- (5) Experimentation--This is the utopian ideal of learning through experience and of being open to the necessary changes for improvement of the individual and the group. "Since the community is already deviant, it dares more deviance" (1972:51), and so communes often depart radically from societal norms.
- (6) Group Coherence--Commune members are extremely conscious of their status as members of the communal family. "Utopians value their own uniqueness . . . (they) are highly conscious of themselves as a community and of their role in history. They have a clear sense of their own boundaries . . ." (1972: 52). Kanter relates this ideal to the concept of getting back

to the land. The land allows the members to "gain closer contact with nature and the natural order and return to a simpler life more concerned with the fundamentals of existence" (1972:53). Land builds brotherhood (through participation in work), promotes the unity of the mind and body, and produces a feeling of fulfillment through providing the means for the group to support itself.

- (7) Harmony--The main theme, says Kanter, which runs through all utopian ideals is harmony. It is the ultimate goal of communes-- " . . . harmony with nature, harmony among people, and harmony between the spirit and the flesh" (1972:54).

These utopian themes are idealistic and ideational in form. They explicitly reject sensate values and attempt to reach more other-worldly goals. Many communes disband after only a short existence--perhaps because the realities of living with people are not so idyllic as the utopias they pretend; nevertheless, the attempts to reach their goals are important. Sorokin makes clear his solution to the present crisis period: "Our remedy demands a complete change of the contemporary mentality, a fundamental transformation of our system of values, and the profoundest modification of our conduct toward other men, cultural values, and the world at large" (Sorokin, 1941:321). Perhaps as Hillery suggests,

. . . the experimental communes of today may well represent the seeds being sown to the breeding of an alternative for a new Ideational culture. No one can say, of course, that communes are 'the' alternative to the future. But they certainly represent one alternative, one that has proven

historically valid, and one that appears as a strange potential for fulfilling the prediction made by Sorokin more than a generation ago (Hillery, n.d.:44-45).

Definition of Concepts

Several themes have recurred throughout the discussion so far. First, the idea of the rejection of society by commune members and the loneliness and isolation experienced by them within the technological culture is emphasized by Fairfield and Kanter. Second, the ideals expressed by utopians infer that they are committed to a new set of values as well as alienated from the old. Third, the emphasis placed on a more spiritual or religious form of culture indicates the movement from sensate to ideational values. The present thesis will deal directly with these three concepts as they relate to intentional communities. Before any further treatment, however, it is necessary to define exactly how the terms commune, alienation, commitment, and religiosity are being used by the author.

Commune

The popular usage of the term commune has made it a particularly delicate word for the researcher as well as for the members of intentional communities. The word for many people conjures up visions of free love, illicit drug use, undeserving welfare recipients, and of course, communism. While this may be an accurate picture of some (if not many) communes, the more serious utopian idealists and students of community tend to abhor the image and therefore the label. These people prefer to call their groups "experimental communities,"

"intentional communities," "alternative lifestyles," "utopias," or even "deviant communities."

The distinction between two types of communes is important. It is not unusual for a group of people to rent a house and move in, living together and sharing necessities for the purpose of cutting down the cost of living for each individual. Few or no rules are established for controlling conduct, and often the people involved have little in common beyond the generally held values of the majority of today's young people. In other words, there is no core system of values. Berger, et al. term this type of community "non-creedal" (Berger, et al., in Dreitzel, 1972:273).

"Creedal" communes (Berger, et al. in Creitzel, 1972:273), on the other hand, are defined by Berger, et al. as "those organized around a systematic or otherwise formally elaborated doctrine or creed to which members are either required or eventually expected to adhere." This type of commune includes religious groups, social philosophy groups, and social-psychological groups (Kanter, 1972:8). For the members of these communities, there are definite ideologies and goals, and an individual joins the group for the purpose of realizing them in his own life.

This thesis is concerned with the latter type of community. Although not negating the sociological importance of non-creedal communes, the author is here concerned with those communities which are the potential builders of an Ideational culture.

The author will continue to utilize the term "commune" as well as the other labels listed above. It is felt that each of these terms

provides a useful description of some unique aspect of the communal phenomenon. A good definition which provides a central theme for all these terms is supplied by Hillery (in Warren, 1973:513), who defines a commune as a "confined" community which has been "intentionally founded in order to achieve a fuller realization of some ideology." This is similar to the definition of creedal commune, with the important addition of the dimension of confinement. A "confined" population, according to Hillery and Klobus (1973:2), is one in which "less than 45% of the members 'usually spend part of each day away from the group'."

Alienation

Few terms in the social sciences literature have come to represent so wide a range of meanings as alienation. Some of the various definitions which researchers have attached to the word have been listed by Dean (1964:754-755): "Apathy, Authoritarianism, Conformity, Cynicism, Hoboism, Political Apathy, Political Hyperactivity, or Personalization in Politics, Prejudice, Privation, Psychosis, Regression, and Suicide." Add to these Kenniston's (1960:3) list: "Alienation, estrangement, disaffection, anomie, withdrawal, disengagement, separation, non-involvement, apathy, indifference, and neutralism"--and the meanings seem to describe phenomena across the entire scope of sociological research. However, they all have evolved out of two basic theories--those of Marx and Durkheim.

Marx views alienation as the inevitable result of a capitalist economic system. He sees society, the division of labor, and the class structure as restraints which prevent an individual from

achieving his fully human potential. In his natural state (communism), man fulfills himself in his activity, producing only those things which he needs for his sustenance. He is one with nature, with his own "essence," and with his fellow man. In capitalist society, however, man no longer works for himself but for the owners of the means of production. He is separated, or alienated, from his activity. Since he produces more than his own needs, his products become "alien objects" to him; he becomes subject to them, for they provide the means to his satisfaction rather than the satisfaction itself. Says Marx (in Finifter, 1972:14), "the work is external to the worker . . . it is not part of his nature, and . . . consequently he does not fulfill himself in his work but denies himself." Thus "work" and "enjoy" take on two different meanings, and man cannot do both at once. The necessary consequence of this capitalistic condition is that man must become estranged from his own self, and from his fellow man. Thus alienation, for Marx, refers to a social relationship between man and society.

Durkheim discusses the term *anomie* in his study Suicide (1951). According to him, *anomie* is a state of structural disorganization or "de-regulation," which causes the normative restraints usually applied to individuals by society to be temporarily removed. Man as an individual being has no built-in mechanism by which to limit his desires, and without a restraining force superior to his own individuality, his passions are "an insatiable and bottomless abyss" (Durkheim, in Simpson, 1963:74). If one's goals are infinite, says Durkheim, he can never be happy, for he will always be striving for more than he

has. Society provides the norms and sanctions which set the limits to his goals; therefore, it is possible for man to find satisfaction in his life. In times of rapid social change, however, society cannot maintain its stable influence, and the individual finds himself with no definite external boundaries by which to delineate his behavior. Durkheim notes a significant rise in the number of suicides during these times of social disorganization. Anomie, then, is a state of society which clearly affects the individual but is external to him.

Two different levels of analysis are apparent in the theories of Marx and Durkheim. The structural perspective views alienation as large scale social disorganization. The social-psychological approach places alienation in the individual as self-estrangement, isolation, or other psychological reactions to society. These two levels are by no means contradictory, but act as complements to each other, as Faunce has shown:

Rapid social change, increased structural differentiation, decreased structural integration, and rationalization of social organization have produced wide-spread feelings of powerlessness, normlessness, or meaninglessness; this pattern of social experience reduces the correspondence between the criteria used in maintaining self-esteem and those used in assigning social status, which results in loneliness, apathy, or overconformity (Faunce, 1968:102).

Melvin Seeman (1971:95) has summarized the various definitions applied to alienation by researchers on a social-psychological level:¹

¹In an earlier article, Seeman listed five categories: powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. See Seeman, 1959.

- (1) Individual Powerlessness--feelings that one has no power to decide his own future and that his life is determined by fate or by a government structure.
- (2) Meaninglessness--failure on the part of the individual to comprehend why things happen or why the world is the way it is.
- (3) Normlessness--the impression that society's accepted methods for achieving goals are ineffectual. There are feelings of distrust and a general low commitment to the ideals of society.
- (4) Cultural estrangement--the rejection of the goals and values of society and a search for a more meaningful life.
- (5) Self-Estrangement--a discrepancy between the ideal self and the real self, or a failure of the individual to achieve his fully human potential, or in a Marxian sense, a feeling that one is forced to perform work tasks which are uncreative and unfulfilling.
- (6) Social Isolation--feelings of loneliness and exclusion from society. The individual is unsure of his friends and expects to be rejected.

Seeman's six-faceted definition of alienation helps to bring into focus the array of meanings which have been used in the past. The present thesis will concentrate on three of his categories--normlessness, powerlessness, and social isolation. These three attributes of alienation seem particularly applicable to the members of the communal movement. Normlessness in sensate society may lead people to join groups with a more absolute value system; feelings of powerlessness may be lessened in a group actively involved in social change; and

isolation in an impersonal city environment may be relieved in the small, experimental family.

Commitment

Commitment is a crucial factor to the success of any organization. Members must feel that the benefits they receive in associating with a group are equal to or outweigh the demands placed on them by that group. For instance, a factory worker must feel that his wages are worth the time and labor he spends on the job. The more advantages he sees in his job--the friends he works with, the extra benefits received, the desirability of his position--the more satisfied he will be and the greater will be his loyalty to the company.

Becker (1960:32-40) defines commitment as a three-fold process comparable to making side bets. A person must be in a position in which his commitment has effects on other areas of his life. He must place himself in that position by his own choice, and he must be aware of the consequences of his decision by taking that line of action. Kanter (1972:70) calls this the "instrumental" dimension of commitment, and adds to it the dimensions of "affectivity" or emotional attachment, and "morality" or ethical considerations.

For a utopian community, commitment is especially important. Hillery and Klobus (1973:4), in studying the relationship between deprivation of freedom and violence in confined communities, found that "commitment to the group decreases violence even more than deprivation of freedom increases it . . ." In other words, commitment

was more important to the well-being of the group than the other variables under consideration.

Most organizations in our compartmentalized society demand that a member devote only a segment of his time and energy to the group. The individual is therefore able to make commitments to several different groups--his job, his family, his social clubs, etc.--without forfeiting the benefits of any of them. The commune, on the other hand, is what Coser (1974:4) has termed a "greedy institution." It attempts to attain a member's total commitment to the exclusion of all other groups. It demands that a person minimize or dissolve any relationships other than that with the community itself, often excluding even close dyadic relationships between the members of the commune.

Kanter (1972:76-123) proposes six mechanisms used by experimental communities to insure the commitment of their members. First, "sacrifice" is the practice of demanding that a person give up something in order to belong. For example, members may be asked to give up their material wealth, or to abstain from physical pleasures.

Second, members must make an "investment" into the community. They may be required to invest money, time, or work. The investment usually cannot be regained by the individual, thus he is inclined to remain in the community.

Third, "renunciation" is the process of limiting personal relationships both outside the community and within it. The purpose of renunciation is to maximize the importance of the individual's relationship to the group and thus to build group cohesion.

The fourth commitment mechanism is "communion." This is the process of merging the individual identity with the group identity, producing a feeling of oneness or brotherhood among the members. Sharing property and work tasks are two important examples of this mechanism.

"Mortification," the fifth mechanism, serves the function of reducing the individual's feeling of being a private self. Feelings of self-sufficiency or pride are discouraged, and replaced with the belief that the norms of the community are more important than personal idiosyncracies.

Finally, "transcendence" refers to the surrender of the individual to the ideals of the group. Kanter calls this "institutional awe" or "the experience of great power and meaning residing in the community" (Kanter, 1972:113).

These six mechanisms specify demands which the group makes, either consciously or unconsciously, upon the individual. Equally important, however, is the belief of the individual that his needs and desires are being fulfilled by the community. The reciprocal nature of commitment is described by Kanter:

Commitment thus refers to the willingness of people to do what will help maintain the group because it provides what they need . . . (it) links self-interest to social requirements. A person is committed to a relationship or to a group to the extent that he sees it as expressing or fulfilling some fundamental part of himself; he is committed to the degree that he perceives no conflict between its requirements and his own needs; he is committed to the degree that he can no longer meet his needs elsewhere. When a person is committed, what he wants to do . . .

is the same as what he has to do . . . and thus he gives to the group what it needs to maintain itself at the same time that he gets what he needs to nourish his own sense of self. To a great extent, therefore, commitment is not only important for the survival of a community, but also is part of the essence of community (Kanter, 1972:66-67).

Religiosity

Two basic issues surround the concept of religion. First, is religion an individual or a structural phenomenon; and second, is religion the belief in the super-natural or is it the belief in the 'ultimate?'

A useful level of analysis for the study of religion has been discussed by Verbit (in Hammond and Johnson, 1970:24-37). He distinguishes between "religion"--the social institution or structural level of the concept, and "religiosity"--the individual attitudes and beliefs, the content of religion. The student of religion must recognize both the structure (form) and the individual attitudes (content) if meaningful analysis of religion is to be attained. Indeed, many studies have included indices of both levels. Researchers may include, for instance, measures of communal involvement and religious emotion, or other questions and scales which distinguish between the two levels (see, e.g., Verbit, 1970; Yinger, 1970; Glock and Stark, 1968; Lenski, 1961).

Whether religion is considered to be belief in the supernatural or belief in the ultimate cannot be so simply resolved. Though an overlap exists between these two definitions, there are important differences which affect any research. The first approach includes

definitions such as "communion with God" (Wach, as cited in Vrijhof, in Brothers, 1967:39), "a power (or powers) experienced as supernatural and sacred" (Vrijhof, describing Weber, in Brothers, 1967:41), or ". . . the experience of encountering the Divine" (Mensching, fn. in Vrijhof, in Brothers, 1967:44). The second perspective, going beyond simple belief in the supernatural, includes, in addition to sacred concerns, whatever is perceived to be "ultimate." Such definitions as "awareness of and interest in the continuing, recurrent, 'permanent' problems of human existence," (Yinger, in Hammond and Johnson, 1970:55) or "man's relationship with whatever he conceives as meaningful ultimacy" (Verbit, in Hammond and Johnson, 1970:24) reflect this perspective.

The present study will focus on the definition of religion as belief in the supernatural. We are attempting to assess whether religion is important to creedal communes. The "ultimacy" perspective defines all creedal communes as "religious," whether their ultimate concern is Marxism, Skinner-ism, or Hinduism, and thus ignores an important distinction between them.

Hypotheses

If Sorokin's diagnosis of society's condition is correct, we would expect two things: that an increasing number of people will withdraw from society and join groups with belief systems which are antagonistic to sensate values; and that their beliefs will tend toward ideational or supersensory forms. It is a central premise

of the study that communes represent such people. In arguing this, we shall consider three variables which serve as indications of the ideational trend--commitment, religiosity, and alienation.

The three hypotheses suggested by the variables may now be stated. Since this is an exploratory study, they will be expressed in the null form:

HYPOTHESIS 1--There is no relationship between commitment and
alienation.

HYPOTHESIS 2--There is no relationship between religiosity and
alienation.

HYPOTHESIS 3--There is no relationship between commitment and
religiosity.

In addition to the three main hypotheses, several sub-hypotheses will be considered. The measure for commitment contains two dimensions--involvement and cohesion. Religiosity includes measures of orthodoxy and belief in God. Alienation is composed of three elements--normlessness, powerlessness, and isolation. Appendix I gives statements of each possible relationship suggested by the sub-measures.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

Two basic methodological procedures were used to obtain the data used in this study. A questionnaire provided the quantitative measures on which the statistics are based. Qualitative data were collected by the researcher in the form of participant observation. In addition to providing a check on the questionnaire data, the time spent in the communes gave the author a sense of understanding of communal living which could not have been obtained without direct contact. Secondary sources written by commune members or people closely involved with them were also used to obtain information about the communities.

The Scales

Part of the data for this study were collected by George A. Hillery, Jr. and by persons working under his direction. A questionnaire of seventeen pages was given to the members of each of the communes studied. The questionnaire, along with background data about the respondents, contains a variety of questions and scales designed to assess the attitudes of members and the nature of the communes. This study utilizes from the questionnaire four scales--Dean's Alienation Scale, Hillery's Involvement Scale, a modified form of Seashore Work Cohesion Scale, and the Putney-Middleton Orthodoxy Scale. A single item measuring belief in God is also used. These measures are reproduced in Appendix II.

Dean's Alienation Scale is used to determine alienation and its elements--normlessness, powerlessness, and social isolation. Statements such as "The end often justifies the means" (indicating normlessness), "There is little or nothing I can do towards preventing a major 'shooting' war" (measuring powerlessness), and "Sometimes I feel all alone in the world" (indicating isolation) are presented to the respondents. Dean's scale is a Likert-type scale, with reliability coefficients as follows: normlessness--.73; powerlessness--.78; isolation--.84; and alienation--.78 (Miller, 1970:323).

To assess the level of commitment, two dimensions are explored. The first, involvement, is a Likert-type scale based on three questions developed by Hillery, who derived them from Kanter's work. These are, "How important is it to you personally to have this group meet regularly for meals," "How important is it to you personally to have this group meet for religious services," and "How important is it to you personally to have this group meet regularly for group discussion?" The reliability of the involvement measure was found (for the seven groups in the study) to be .55 by the Spearman Brown split-half technique.

The second dimension of commitment is cohesion, measured by a modified version of the Seashore Work Cohesion Scale. An example of questions in the Likert scale is, "Do you feel that you are really a part of this institution?" The reliability for the scale was found to be .90 by the Spearman Brown split-half for the groups in the study. The involvement scale asks a question dealing with religion,

and the cohesion scale does not; therefore, in cohesion we have a measure commitment which is independent of religiosity.

Religiosity is determined by two main measures. The Putney-Middleton Orthodoxy Scale asks the individual to respond to statements such as "I believe that there is a life after death," and "The only benefit one receives from prayer is psychological." The reliability for this Likert scale was not reported by the authors.

The second measure of religiosity is a question concerning belief in God, "What is your religious position?"

Kendall's Tau, a non-parametric statistic, was used as a measure of association and test for statistical significance to assess the stated hypotheses. This particular statistic was chosen because the data in the study are assumed to be ordinal-level data.

The Sample

The sample used for this study was taken from the data collected by George A. Hillery, Jr. Dr. Hillery has collected data from twenty-five groups, including both confined and transient communities. These were studied as they became available to him, with no claim to representativeness or randomness (Hillery, n.d.:8). From his data, the researcher has selected seven intentional communities--two monasteries, three populations of Caphas Village, Walden Farm, and Yoga Trainees. These seven represent a purposive sample chosen because they are all confined communities and because they represent a wide range of religious beliefs.

The Trappist Monasteries

The Trappist monasteries are descended from St. Benedict, who brought order and meaning to the rather chaotic monasticism of the 6th century (Merton, 1949:5). The Rule of St. Benedict is still used today by the Trappists as a basis for their lifestyle. However, there have been several reformations of the order. In the 12th century St. Bernard reformed the Rule, creating the Order of Cistercian of the Strict Observance, or Cistercians, a contemplative branch of the Benedictine order. In the 17th century the order was again in need of reform, and Father Jean-Armand de Rancé, the abbot of La Grande Trappe (from whence the name "Trappists"), became responsible for instituting the necessary changes for the survival of the Trappists as an ascetic, contemplative group. Until 1965, when Vatican II liberalized the entire monastic life, Trappist monks held vows of celibacy, kept silence, ate very restricted diets, lived in poverty, and kept vigils during the middle of the night. Even with the liberalization of Vatican II, monks remain celibate and practice various forms of asceticism (Hillery, n.d., and Merton, 1949:xxii-xxiii).

The Trappist monasteries included in this study are located in rural areas of the United States--one in the Midwest and one in the South. They are independent institutions--they are not under the orders of the Bishop, and they support themselves through small-scale bread-baking, farming, brick-making, etc.

The purpose of the monasteries has been listed by Hillery (n.d.:3-4) as "Liturgy, labor, and Lectio divina." Liturgy refers to the Mass and the other ceremonies the monks attend; labor refers

to the manual work they perform; and *Lectio divina* refers to meditation, study, and reading to improve one's spiritual being. The Trappists do not do social service in the usual sense; however, they consider their service to the world to be their prayer: "In a world in which men have forgotten the value of prayer, it is the monks who pray for the world and for all those in the world who have forgotten how to pray" (Merton, 1949:xix).

Monasteries represent an extreme experiment in living, for they exist in the absence of family life. It is interesting that the Trappists have successfully operated for hundreds of years without one of the three important foci of community life (Hillery, 1968:64).

The two monasteries included in the sample are called simply Monastery 1 and Monastery 2. Monastery 1 is a sample of fifty monks (total population: seventy); Monastery 2, a much smaller community, has fifteen monks in the sample population (from a total population of sixteen).

Caphas Village

Caphas Village was founded in 1942 by a Southern Baptist minister who felt that the organized Church was failing to follow the teachings of Jesus. In particular, he was concerned with the Church's support of war and racism, which he felt were contradictory to the Christian themes of universal peace and brotherhood. The minister bought a farm in Georgia and began to practice "radical Christianity" with several others who held the same beliefs. He and the other members of the community were persecuted by the people

who lived in the area, including the Ku Klux Klan, and were even subjected to bombings and machine-gun fire. However, the community survived and continues to offer fellowship to those with whom they come into contact (Lee, 1971).

Today the farm is a non-profit corporation with three stated purposes (from a brochure): communication of the "radical ideas of the gospel message," instruction for "those who seriously want a new way of life built around the will and purposes of God, to enable them to become more effective and mature," and application of the ideals through farming, industry, and housing projects. Application involves providing housing and employment for the poor people of the area, who are mostly black.

The industries at Caphas Village are managed by the members and staffed by local poor people. They include a pecan factory, a sewing factory, a candy factory, arts and crafts shops, a day-care center, farming, and a worm farm. The aim of the industries is to allow the workers to become proficient enough to run the operations without the help of Caphas members. For instance, the worm farm is now run independently by one man.

The housing project is an effort to build quality houses as cheaply as possible. Homes are sold to poor people at building cost, with twenty years to pay and no interest. Since the members of Caphas Village believe that land cannot belong to any person, only the house is sold, and the buyers are free to use the land as they need.

The people who live on the farm are divided into two main groups. "Partners" or members are those people who have committed their lives to the ideals of Caphas and have donated their possessions to the community. Each partner must have a "plan for Living"--a way to support himself. For instance, one member who recently joined the community helped set up the sewing factory, and serves as its manager. Other members work at farming, engineering, photography, or other kinds of work which are beneficial to the group. The community supplies its members with food, shelter, spending money, and the all-important group fellowship. At present there are twenty-two partners in residence.

Volunteers are people who come to the farm to work for a period of two months to a year. These people make no commitments to the group in the way of accepting the ideology or donating their possessions. They are given housing, one meal a day, and a small amount of spending money. Volunteers are expected to furnish most of their own money and living supplies. Of course, they receive the full benefits of the community fellowship. At the time of the author's visit, there were approximately thirty volunteers.

The members of Caphas Village prefer to call themselves a community rather than a commune. Their living style is not far removed from a traditional community. Each family has its own apartment, and parents maintain responsibility for their children. The family eats two meals a day as a unit, and one meal with the whole community. The departure from main-stream society, of course, comes in their practice of sharing their money, work, and many of their possessions.

In exchange for this sharing of material goods, they receive security, communion, and brotherhood with the other members.

Three samples of Caphas Village were used in this study. One includes both the members of Caphas Village and the volunteers. This is called simply "Caphas." The sample was taken in 1973. Three years earlier (1970), a sample was taken of the members and the volunteers separately. The partners sample is referred to here as "Caphas members" and the volunteers as "Caphas volunteers."

Walden Farm

Walden Farm is a community which was conceived as an attempt to bring to life Skinner's utopic Walden Two. Skinner's thesis is that all human behavior and emotions are learned from society. Walden Two is a hypothetical community where the "bad" traits learned in society have been de-conditioned. At the same time, the desirable aspects of humanity have been strongly rewarded. The result is a community where everyone is equal, and each individual is able to reach his personal creative potential (Skinner, 1948). In 1966 a group of people came together in Ann Arbor, Michigan to discuss the possibility of creating a Skinnerian-type commune, and in 1967 eight of them moved onto a farm outside of Louisa, Virginia (Kinkaid, 1972:29). At present there are about fifty people living on the 123 acre farm, and a new branch has been added a few miles away.

Walden Farm is organized around the planner-manager system of government described by Skinner. Three "planners" make the final decisions on issues which concern the entire community--problems of an ideological nature, use of large amounts of money, etc.

"Managers" take charge of different areas of concern within the commune. There is a manager for farming, one for the kitchen, one for visitor policy, and so on. This system of government supposedly allows those people who want to avoid responsibility to do so without giving anyone in the commune any real power.

The Labor-credit system of work also comes from Walden Two. The jobs which must be done are figured each week and divided among the members. Each member has filled out a sheet showing his work preferences, and the labor-credit manager attempts to give each person jobs which are at the top of his individual preference list. If a person has to take a job which he dislikes, he is given more credit for the time he spends than the people who have jobs they like. Thus, two people may be washing dishes side by side, but one of them will get 1.0 credits per hour of work, and the other 1.9, depending on how the job is rated by each individual.

Walden Farm has deviated from many of the institutions of the larger society. Politically and economically, it is a socialist commune. Each person either gives his money to the commune when he joins, lends it to the group, or puts it in a trust fund where he cannot use it while he lives in the community. He is allowed to keep a few private possessions in his room, but the majority of material goods are donated to the group.

The institution of religion does not exist at Walden. Religion is considered to be an individual matter, and so no group functions are sponsored. It should be noted that many of the members have religious beliefs, and these are respected by the community. For

instance, all meals include a vegetarian main dish for those members who do not eat meat.

Walden also departs radically from main-stream society in its treatment of the family. All children born into the community are considered to be the responsibility of the community as a whole, and the mother of a child gives up her rights to raise him. Even the name of the child is chosen by a group vote.

The sample of Walden Farm used in this study was taken in 1972. In the time between that sample and the researcher's visit in 1974, there has been a great deal of membership turnover. There have, therefore, been many changes in the commune. There appears to be a much greater emphasis on religion in 1974 than there was in 1972. This will be considered in the analysis.

Yoga Trainees

The Yoga Group is an international organization based on the philosophy of an Indian guru (teacher) who is considered by the members to be spiritually enlightened. The goals of the organization as a whole are to bring the teachings to as many people as possible, and to perform social services for all who need them. The commune, Yoga Trainees, is a group living in a large metropolitan area who have come together to learn thoroughly the teachings of the guru and to train as social service workers. There were thirteen trainees (under the supervision of five leaders) when the researcher visited the group.

Time and activities are highly structured in the commune. The day is divided into times for group meditation, individual meditation,

and social service training. Forms of ascetism such as fasting and restriction of sleep are practiced. Although a few members plan to marry, most refer to themselves as monks and nuns.

The trainees live in the commune for four months before leaving to accept social service jobs to which the organization assigns them. During the time they are in the group, they are intensely involved in every aspect of the religion and the community.

The Yoga Trainees commune represents a radical departure from the traditional religious beliefs held by most Americans. The philosophy includes belief in reincarnation, in karma, and in enlightenment through yoga meditation. The goal of life for them is to speed the spiritual progress so that they may be released from the circle of life, death, and rebirth. All this sounds strange to most Americans, yet the trainees, mostly middle-class Americans themselves, believe the principles wholly, and have experienced their truth through their spiritual practices.

Expected Results

It is expected that the null hypotheses will be rejected, i.e., that the variables will show significant relationships. Specifically, the researcher expects to find negative correlations between commitment and alienation and between religiosity and alienation. The correlation between commitment and religiosity is expected to be positive. It should be stressed that the results will be limited to the confined communities under study.

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

Table 1² illustrates the variation among the different groups along the religiosity variable. The monasteries have the highest orthodoxy levels. This is to be expected, given the traditional Catholic religion and the highly structured living environment. By the same token, the Caphas populations, having a somewhat unique approach to what are basically traditional beliefs, have slightly lower orthodoxy levels than the monasteries. The Yoga Trainees commune, which is highly religious and highly structured, but which departs from the Christian religion, is still lower than the Christian communes. Finally, the group with the lowest orthodoxy level is Walden Farm, the only group in the sample having no stated religious belief. The score for Walden is probably lower than it would be if the measure were taken in 1974, but we would expect it still to be lower than the other communities.

The belief dimension of religiosity shows the same trend. The monasteries, along with the Yoga Trainees, show the highest percentage of belief in God. The Caphas members and the Caphas commune also score very high, and Walden Farm has the lowest percentage of belief.

²The percentages in Table I are composed of composite weights for the commitment measures. Individuals who showed strongest agreement to the items in the scales were given the highest scores, and then the mean of the individual scores was taken to produce the reported group score.

TABLE 1

Percent Agreement for Measures of Religiosity and Commitment.

Community	Religiosity		Commitment	
	Orthodoxy ^a	Belief in God ^c	Involvement ^b	Cohesion ^b
Monastery 1	87.3	100.0	12.1	17.3
Monastery 2	98.9	100.0	11.8	17.2
Caphas Village	58.3	95.0	13.4	17.5
Caphas Members	51.2	100.0	13.1	--
Caphas Volunteers	44.4	77.8	12.9	--
Walden Farm	9.6	12.1	8.8	17.4
Yoga Trainees	55.1	100.0	14.3	20.2

^aScores are average percentage of respondents who agree (regardless of intensity) to the six items of the scale.

^bScores are composite weights derived from Likert Scales.

^cScores are percentage of respondents who believe in God.

It is interesting that the Caphas volunteers, though showing a percentage well over 50%, are the next to the lowest scoring group on the question of belief in God. This may be largely attributed to the fact that volunteers remain at Caphas Village for only two or three months and are not required to make a commitment to the group ideals. Thus, they do not feel the full impact of the pressure to conform to the Caphas ideology.

The involvement scale also contains a measure of religiosity. Though not so pronounced as in the previous two measures, the effect of religion is again shown--the Yoga Trainees show the highest scores, the Caphas groups and monasteries are mid-range, and Walden Farm is once more at the base line. Whereas in the orthodoxy and belief dimensions the monasteries were exceptionally high, they are here lower than the Caphas groups. The involvement scale contains three questions--one which concerns religious involvement and two which apply to involvement with the group in non-religious matters. Caphas Village is interested in involvement on all three dimensions. The monasteries, however, are more interested in individual prayer than in community meetings; thus, it makes sense that Caphas would have the higher involvement score. In comparison to the involvement measure, the cohesion scale, which contains no reference to religion, shows no variation across the groups in which it was taken. The exception is the Yoga Trainees Group, which scores higher than the rest, probably because the intensity of group life experienced by members of that group is great.

The alienation scores follow the same general pattern. The least religious groups have the highest alienation scores followed by Caphas Village, Caphas members, monasteries, and the Yoga Trainees (Table 2). The range of scores, here, however, is not nearly so great as those for orthodoxy and belief. This may be accounted for by the homogeneity of confined populations whose members by their own choice cut off their association with the sensate society. Therefore, communes can be considered as a homogeneous population; not only because they all have rather high alienation scores, but also in terms of the utopian ideals discussed above. At the same time, the variation of the groups included in the present sample along the religiosity variable provides important differences across the groups. Thus we may look at the relationships of the variables for the seven confined communities as a whole.

The model suggested by the hypotheses is shown in Figure 1. We can see that the involvement dimension of commitment is not related to alienation, nor is orthodoxy related to either commitment or alienation. Cohesion, on the other hand, is significantly related to alienation, as is belief. Let us examine each relationship more closely.

HYPOTHESIS I. Involvement does not relate significantly to alienation. However, the cohesion measure of commitment is negatively related at a significant level (Figure 2 illustrates the relationships). Interestingly, cohesion lacks any religious meaning, while involvement includes a question dealing with the importance of meeting for

TABLE 2

Percent Agreement for Weighted Measures of Alienation.^a

Community	ALIENATION			
	Isolation	Powerlessness	Normlessness	Alienation
Monastery 1	22.8	22.2	12.3	57.1
Monastery 2	21.4	21.8	11.7	54.9
Caphas Village	25.7	24.3	13.0	63.5
Caphas Members	25.2	22.3	11.9	58.2
Caphas Volunteers	29.1	24.8	13.6	68.6
Walden Farm	26.8	26.3	15.7	67.0
Yoga Trainees	22.5	19.5	11.0	53.7

^aScores are composite weights derived from Likert scales.

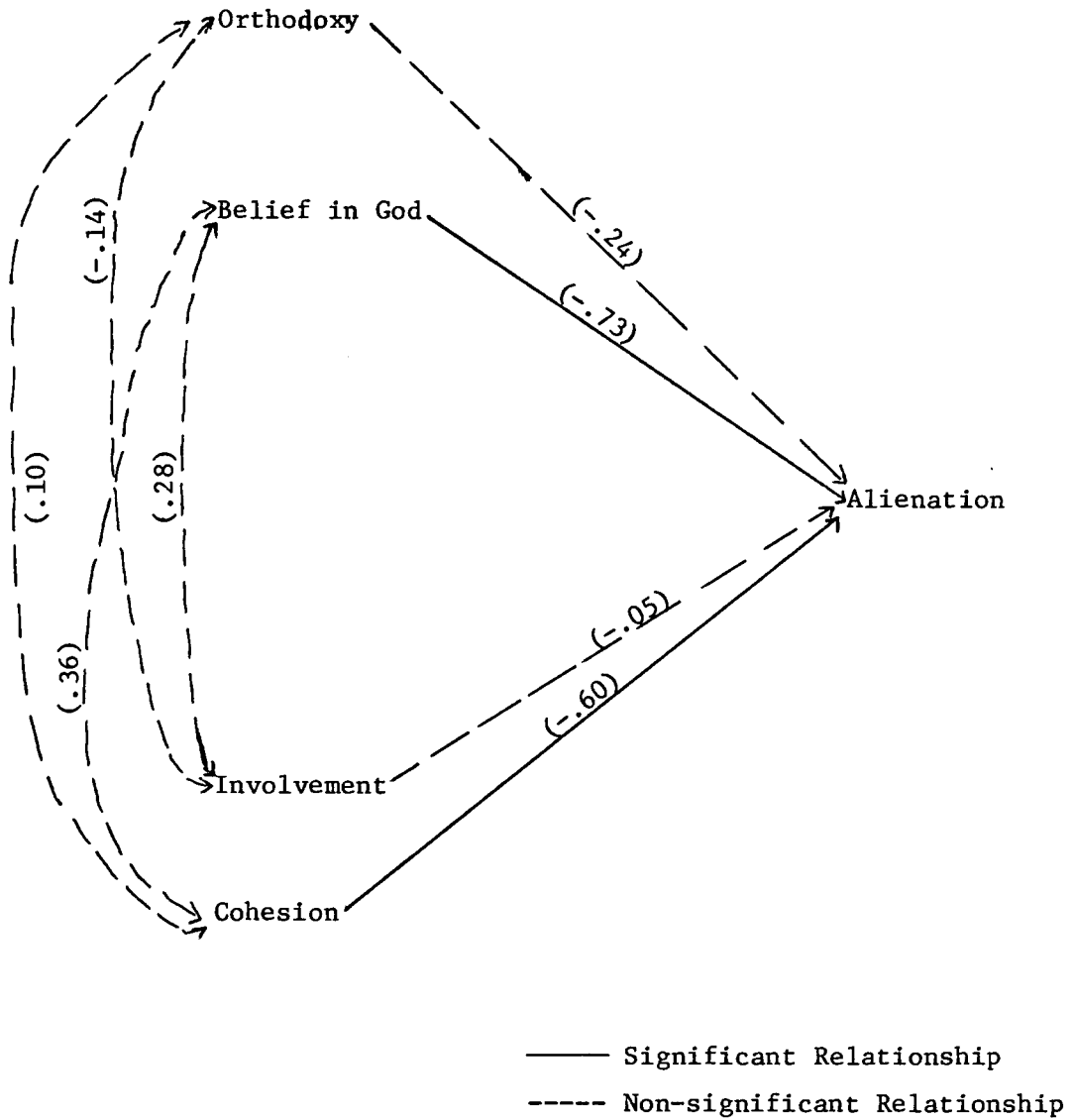


FIGURE 1

The Relationship Between Commitment, Religiosity, and Alienation.

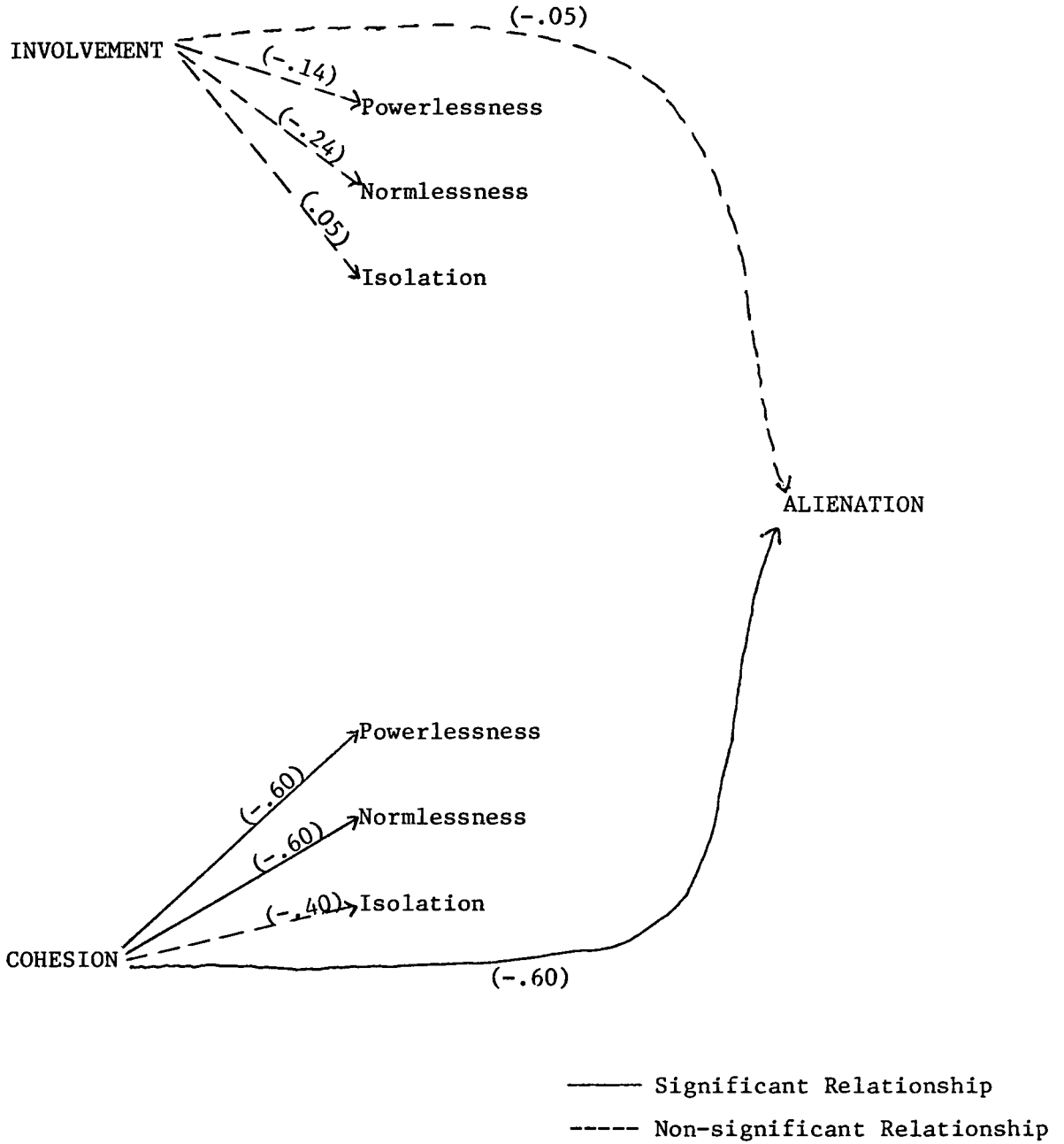


FIGURE 2

The Relationship Between Commitment and Alienation.

religious services. This may be explained by several factors. First, it is possible that religion is simply not important to commitment in communes. However, this seems unlikely, given the religious nature of all but one of the groups in the sample. It seems more likely that the importance of religious services may not be important. While all of the communes except for Walden Farm hold religious meetings, four of these six might be expected to give such meetings low or secondary importance. The monasteries consider individual prayer to be of prime importance, and, while community meetings are important, they take second place to individual religious practices. Caphas Village, and especially the Caphas volunteers, are also likely to give low priority to religious meetings. The researcher was present at two religious services at Caphas Village, neither of which was well-attended.

Another consideration which may effect the relationship was observed by the researcher during her visits to the communes. That is, people were perceived to be committed to the groups in two different ways. Those who were positively committed made comments such as, "I am here because I find fulfillment here," or "I want to be of service and here I am able to really help people." These people would be likely to score high on commitment measures. Negatively committed members, on the other hand, were likely to remark, "I came here because I didn't know what else to do," or "I hated what I was doing before." The latter groups could be expected to score much lower on commitment scales. Kenneth Kenniston (in McEvoy and Miller, 1969:311-313) has made similar observations regarding student

dissent. He notes two types of protesters--the activist and the culturally alienated. The activist tends to be a ". . . politically optimistic, active, and socially-concerned protester," while "the culturally alienated student is far too pessimistic and too firmly opposed to 'the system' to wish to demonstrate his disapproval in any organized public way." The difference between the positively committed members of communes and those who are negatively committed cannot be discerned from the measures of commitment used in the study, yet it seems likely that it would affect the relationships.

A final explanation cannot be ignored. The small number of cases included in the sample may have an important effect on the results. In the same vein, the homogeneous nature of creedal communes in general may lessen the relationships. These methodological problems apply to all the hypotheses in the study.

In spite of the problems with involvement, its relationship with alienation is in the expected direction; i.e., as involvement increases, alienation decreases. It is evident that group cohesion significantly reduces alienation. Interestingly, cohesion is not significantly related to the isolation dimension of alienation. We may surmise that the distinct awareness of one's separateness from the world described by Kanter (p. 11, above) is cancelled out by the feelings of communion and brotherhood felt within the community (pp. 9, 11, above). There are significant negative relationships between cohesion and the normlessness and powerlessness dimensions of alienation, indicating that communes feel they are actively contributing to positive social change.

HYPOTHESIS II. There is no significant relationship between religiosity and alienation (see Figure 3). Again, one measure is significantly related to alienation and one is not. The belief dimension correlates highly with alienation and its component parts. The orthodoxy scale however, is not significantly related to any of the alienation measures, although it does correlate in the expected direction.

The orthodoxy scale measures traditional Christian beliefs--belief in a physical hell, in life after death, in the Devil, etc. Since communes reject many of the larger society's institutions and norms, it would seem that low orthodoxy would correlate with high alienation. Looking more closely at the items in the scale, however, we see that two out of the six describe concepts of a more universal religious nature. Belief in life after death is common to all major religions, and most of the commune members, Christian or not, would be likely to agree with that item. Indeed, the researcher noticed in her visits that in all of the communes a considerable proportion of the members held religious orientations which include belief in life after death. This is also true with regard to belief in a divine plan.

The effect of the inclusion of these two statements with the four which are more specifically Christian in nature is that the orthodoxy scores are likely to be unrealistically high. That is, communes which do not hold orthodox Christian ideologies will still score high on those two items, thus raising the total score for the entire sample, and the relationship with alienation will be lessened.

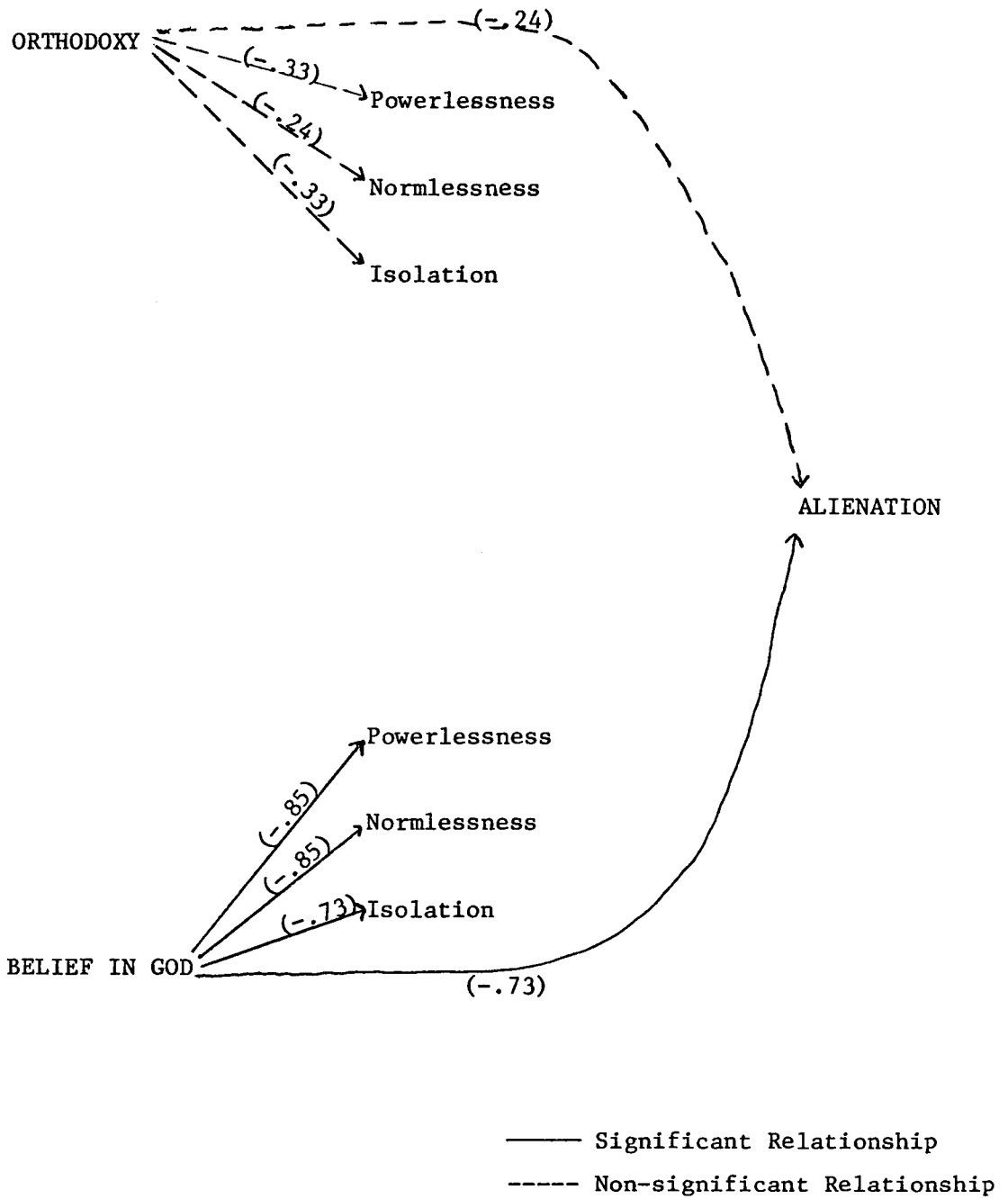


FIGURE 3

The Relationship Between Religiosity and Alienation.

Therefore, the researcher concludes that the orthodoxy scale cannot adequately assess the ideational trend in communes.

The belief measure is composed of a simple statement of religious position, with no reference to any particular religion. It is therefore applicable to all communes regardless of the ideological orientation of the group. The negative relationship between belief and alienation is clearly shown.

HYPOTHESIS III. There is no significant relationship between religiosity and commitment (see Figure 4). This is true of all possible combinations of the two variables. Neither orthodoxy or belief effects involvement or cohesion. This lends support to Kanter's findings that the religious nature of a commune does not necessarily determine its success (Kanter, 1972:136). The low correlation in this study may be partially due to the small sample size and lack of variation among the groups in the sample, but it seems more likely that the two variables are simply not related. Thus, a social philosophy or social-psychological commune could be expected to show as high commitment levels as a religious one. Indeed, the members of Walden Farm appeared to be extremely committed to their group. The researcher noticed that all of the groups expressed feelings of high commitment to the group except for the Caphas volunteers. This is the only group which had the option of not accepting the ideals of the community.

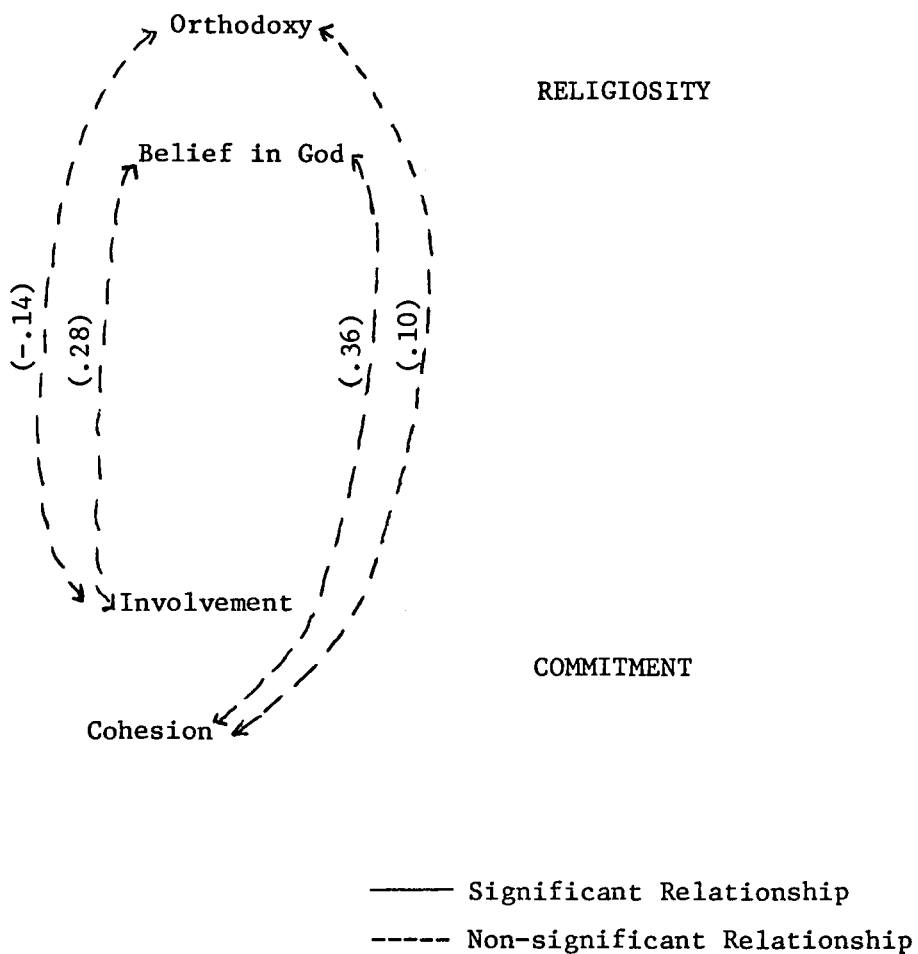


FIGURE 4

The Relationship Between Commitment and Religiosity.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, it appears that both high group cohesion and belief in God significantly decrease the level of alienation in communes. However, belief in God does not affect the level of group cohesion. Orthodoxy and involvement are not significantly related to alienation.

The findings do not allow us to reject all of the null hypotheses. However, this exploratory study implies some interesting suggestions for future research. First, the correlations, although not always significant, are all in the expected direction. The small sample size and the lack of intra-sample variation along many dimensions were suggested as partial explanations for the low correlations. A study which includes many more communes of all types--non-creedal as well as creedal--would be valuable in testing the hypotheses. The inclusion of non-creedal confined communities would also allow the researcher to test the relationship between creedal belief systems and commitment. While religion does not seem to affect the level of commitment, the fact that a commune has a definite ideological base may be important.

Second, the small sample size has created problems of control. The researcher originally intended to control for age and length of membership in the communities; however, this was not feasible given the number of cases. Looking at the correlations between these two

factors and belief, commitment, and alienation, it would seem that age and length of membership have a definite affect on the major variables in the study. However, it is impossible to make assumptions without actually controlling for the variables. Therefore, the author reiterates the importance of an increased sample size.

A third suggestion for future study involves the creation of new scales. The value of a commitment scale which distinguishes between those respondents who are positively committed from those who are negatively committed to the community cannot be over emphasized. Also, an alternative measure to the orthodoxy scale used in this study is needed. The present scale is not applicable to communes for the reasons discussed above. An orthodoxy scale which is designed to measure the level of belief in only one religion to the exclusion of all others is probably an impossibility. However, it would be profitable to devise a scale which would measure the level of religiosity in general, with no reference to a particular belief system or church structure. In other words, a scale is needed which will measure the level of ideational beliefs rather than Christian beliefs. This could be an elaboration of the belief measure used in this study. Wuthnow and Glock (1973:114), working with the Berkeley Religious Consciousness Project, have approached such a measure for a generalized religion: "We are interested in religious and mystical experiences of all sorts, whether or not they fall within formal boundaries."

Another scale to measure alienation from sensate values is also suggested. Dean's alienation scale measures feelings of estrangement from the present culture and therefore implicitly measures rejection of the sensate culture. Still, a scale which specifically mentions Sorokin's indicators of sensate-ness (materialism, colossalism, etc.) would provide a more relevant instrument by which to assess the trend toward the ideational.

Having thus assessed the variables, we can now look at the way they illustrate Sorokin's thesis. In 1937 Sorokin made prediction that ". . . the populace will divide into two parts. On the one hand will be the gluttonous hedonists who seek indulgence and pleasure. On the other hand will be those who withdraw and become antagonistic to Sensate values" (Cuzzort, 1969:245-246). Whether or not his prognosis is true cannot be determined in 1974; however, our study of creedal communes has shown indication of the movement from sensate to ideational values. While no single study can overwhelmingly support a thesis of the breadth of Sorokin's, we have lent to it some empirical evidence. Communes may very well represent one faction which has withdrawn from the sensate society. Cuzzort (1969:252) notes, "It is surprising, as Sorokin develops his plea, to note the correspondence between his ideas and those endorsed by the present 'hippie' culture . . ." And it is from this very sub-culture that the major part of the commune population comes (Kanter, 1972:167).

The communes in the study form tightly-knit groups with definite ideological bases, which allow them to perceive themselves as active agents of change. As they become more cohesive as groups, they

feel less alienation from the world, indicating their sense of aiding in the process of change. Belief in God is an even stronger agent in reducing alienation, suggesting that the trend is indeed toward the ideational culture.

While one would expect a strong relationship between group cohesion and belief in God if Sorokin's hypothesis were correct, this was not shown in this study. Our findings support Kanter's assertion that any creedal commune may have a high level of cohesion. Again, this does not disprove Sorokin's thesis. The author suggests that we are in the initial stages of the movement to an ideational culture. In these beginning phases of the transition, experimental communities are moving toward absolute values (or negatively stated, away from the relativistic sensate culture) rather than to specifically religious ideals.

If Sorokin proves to be correct in his predictions, the commune movement should continue to grow, and more communes should tend toward a religious nature in the future. This appears to be the case, at least among creedal communes. Even though the correlations were not all significant, the trend toward the mystical, super-sensory level of reality cannot be denied. Even in Walden Farm, the Skinnerian community, the trend is growing. The following statement made by a member of Walden Farm in its newsletter shall serve as a conclusion to this study:

Well, then, I can at least find security in myself. Other people flow in and out of my life, I am always here. The community fails, I go on. But when I look at myself in search of that which continues, I am struck

by the metamorphosis I've undergone. No less so than the Community, I am ever different. Roles fall away. I'm not a World Saver and Famous Communitard, I'm not a Group Facilitator, not an Artist, not a Parent, not a Friend. I'm not even a Self, except in the artificially defined way of our culture. When I realize how my actions, thoughts, and feelings are the totality of my internal and external environments, my past and present experiences, it makes no sense to hold on to the idea of being a separate ego-thing. Behaviorism leads directly into mysticism. I'm something which is more like everything/nothing, something which is very indefinite, something which is clearly changing all the time and so can't have An Identity unless it be Change.

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SPECIAL SOURCES

Various pamphlets and newsletters published by the communities were used by the author. They will not be listed in order to maintain the anonymity of the groups.

APPENDIX A

DETAILED STATEMENT OF HYPOTHESES

1. There is no relationship between commitment and alienation.
 - A. There is no relationship between commitment and normlessness.
 - (1) There is no relationship between involvement and normlessness.
 - (2) There is no relationship between cohesion and normlessness.
 - B. There is no relationship between commitment and powerlessness.
 - (1) There is no relationship between involvement and powerlessness.
 - (2) There is no relationship between cohesion and powerlessness.
 - C. There is no relationship between commitment and social isolation.
 - (1) There is no relationship between involvement and social isolation.
 - (2) There is no relationship between cohesion and social isolation.
2. There is no relationship between religiosity and alienation.
 - A. There is no relationship between religiosity and normlessness.
 - (1) There is no relationship between orthodoxy and normlessness.
 - (2) There is no relationship between belief in God and normlessness.

- B. There is no relationship between religiosity and powerlessness.
 - (1) There is no relationship between orthodoxy and powerlessness.
 - (2) There is no relationship between belief in God and powerlessness.
 - C. There is no relationship between religiosity and social isolation.
 - (1) There is no relationship between orthodoxy and social isolation.
 - (2) There is no relationship between belief in God and social isolation.
3. There is no relationship between commitment and religiosity.
- A. There is no relationship between commitment and orthodoxy.
 - (1) There is no relationship between involvement and orthodoxy.
 - (2) There is no relationship between cohesion and orthodoxy.
 - B. There is no relationship between commitment and belief in God.
 - (1) There is no relationship between involvement and belief in God.
 - (2) There is no relationship between cohesion and belief in God.

APPENDIX B

THE SCALES USED IN THE STUDY

I. Dean's Alienation Scale

Below are some statements regarding public issues, with which some people agree and others disagree. Please give us your own opinion about these items, i.e., whether you agree or disagree with the items as they stand.

Please check in the appropriate blank, as follows:

- _____ strongly agree
- _____ agree
- _____ don't know
- _____ disagree
- _____ strongly disagree

(N)=Normlessness

(P)=Powerlessness

(I)=Social Isolation

- (I) 1. Sometimes I feel all alone in the world.
- (P) 2. I worry about the future facing today's children.
- (I) 3. I don't get invited out by friends as often as I'd really like.
- (N) 4. The end often justifies the means.
- (I) 5. Most people today seldom feel lonely.
- (P) 6. Sometimes I have the feeling that other people are using me.
- (N) 7. People's ideas change so much that I wonder if we'll ever have anything to depend on.
- (I) 8. Real friends are as easy as ever to find.
- (P) 9. It is frightening to be responsible for the development of a little child.
- (N) 10. Everything is relative, and there just aren't any definite rules to live by.
- (I) 11. One can always find friends if he shows himself friendly.
- (N) 12. I often wonder what the meaning of life really is.
- (P) 13. There is little or nothing I can do towards preventing a major "shooting" war.
- (I) 14. The world in which we live is basically a friendly place.
- (P) 15. There are so many decisions that have to be made today that sometimes I could just "blow up."
- (N) 16. The only thing one can be sure of today is that he can be sure of nothing.
- (I) 17. There are few dependable ties between people any more.
- (P) 18. There is little chance for promotion on the job unless a man gets a break.

- (N) 19. With so many religions abroad, one doesn't really know which to believe.
- (P) 20. We're so regimented today that there's not much room for choice even in personal matters.
- (P) 21. We are just so many cogs in the machinery of life.
- (I) 22. People are just naturally friendly and helpful.
- (P) 23. The future looks very dismal.
- (I) 24. I don't get to visit friends as often as I'd really like.

II. Putney-Middleton Orthodoxy Scale

Below are listed some statements of how the general public thinks and feels about religious matters. The best answer to each statement is your personal opinion. We have tried to cover different and opposing points of view. You may find yourself agreeing strongly with some of the statements, disagreeing with others, and perhaps uncertain about others. Please indicate your opinion by checking the answer closest to the way you feel:

- _____ strong agreement
 _____ moderate agreement
 _____ slight agreement
 _____ don't know
 _____ slight disagreement
 _____ moderate disagreement
 _____ strong disagreement

1. I believe that there is a physical Hell where men are punished after death for the sins of their lives.
2. I believe there is a super-natural being, the Devil, who continually tries to lead men into sin.
3. To me the most important work of the church is the saving of souls.
4. I believe that there is a life after death.
5. I believe there is a Divine plan and purpose for every living person and thing.
6. The only benefit one receives from prayer is psychological.

III. Belief in God

The measure for belief in God is one question:
 What is your religious position? Check one:

- _____ Agnostic
 _____ Atheist
 _____ Believe in God
 _____ Don't know

IV. Hillery's Involvement Scale

- very important
- important
- not too important
- not important at all
- don't know

1. How important is it to you personally to have this group meet regularly for meals?
2. How important is it to you personally to have this group meet regularly for religious services?
3. How important is it to you personally to have this group meet regularly for group discussion?

V. Seashore Work Cohesion Scale (modified for use with confined communities)

1. Do you feel that you are really part of this group or community?
 - I am really a part of this community
 - I am included in most ways
 - I am included in some ways but not in others
 - I don't feel I really belong
 - I don't feel that I am a member of any community
 - Don't know or uncertain
2. If you had a chance to do the same kind of work, in another group of community, how would you feel about moving?
 - I would want very much to move
 - I would rather move than stay where I am
 - It would make no difference to me
 - I would rather stay where I am than move
 - I would want very much to stay where I am
 - Don't know or uncertain
3. How does your community or group compare with other groups that you are acquainted with on each of the following points?
 - better than most
 - about the same as most
 - not as good as most
 - don't know or uncertain
 - (a) the way the people get along together:
 - (b) the way the people stick together:
 - (c) the way the people help each other:

A PERSONAL POSTSCRIPT

Becoming acquainted with the world of sociological research can be at the same time exciting and confusing. When I entered graduate school, I had already chosen a topic of personal interest for my thesis. My enthusiasm grew with the discovery that there were professors who were also interested in the study of communes, and so I dove into the tasks of choosing variables, stating the problem, writing a proposal, and working with the data.

In the midst of my work, I came to realize that the theories of Pitirim A. Sorokin provided a strong background for the study. I began to fit Sorokin into the thesis as supportive theory, and before I knew what had happened, he had become a major part of the project. However, it wasn't until one of my professors pointed it out to me that I understood my project had become a partial test of Sorokin's theory.

Thus, the final version of my thesis is quite different from the one I envisioned when I began. It is better for the changes, but I wonder about the haphazard route by which I came to the end product. Surely I cannot claim to have used the "scientific method," at least as one finds it expounded in textbooks. However, I have learned many valuable lessons of research procedures, and I have made some useful findings in the thesis. I cannot, therefore, consider my research project badly done. I suspect, in fact, that the "scientific method" is more the ideal than the real in sociological research. The order imposed upon research and theory by devices such as Wallace's wheel (Wallace, 1969:ix) is in actual practice difficult to adhere to.

When one is working with his observations, his theories are being affected; and when he is working on his theories his hypotheses are becoming refined. It appears to be nearly impossible to maintain the order of inductive or deductive research.

Perhaps many research studies evolve in the same, somewhat less than methodical, manner as has mine. If so, researchers should be able to state publicly how discoveries have been made without fear of deviation from the ideal of the scientific method. An unexpected discovery can change a research project for the better and thus make it a greater contribution to the body of knowledge.

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COMMITMENT, RELIGIOSITY, AND ALIENATION:
A STUDY OF SEVEN INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES

by

Susan Shoulders

(ABSTRACT)

The study was concerned with the communal movement as an illustration of Sorokin's thesis. Sorokin maintains that our culture is moving from a sensate or this-worldly form to an ideational or other-worldly definition of reality. It was shown through the works of Kanter and Fairfield that the utopian ideals expressed by commune members tend toward ideational beliefs.

Three variables were chosen as indicative of the trend toward ideational values--alienation from the sensate culture, commitment to a group opposed to the sensate society, and religiosity or belief in the supernatural. Seven communes were selected as a purposive sample--two monasteries, three populations of a Christian community, a Skinnerian commune, and a Hindu group. These were chosen because they were all creedal communes; that is, they all had some core ideology, and because they varied widely in their religious beliefs.

Three main hypotheses were tested regarding the relationship between commitment and alienation, the relationship between religiosity and alienation, and the relationship between commitment and religiosity. It was found that the cohesion measure of commitment and belief in God were negatively related to alienation at significant levels.

There was no significant relationship between the involvement dimension of commitment, between orthodoxy and alienation, or between commitment and religiosity.

The author concluded that several of the measures need modification for use in testing Sorokin's thesis. Nevertheless, it appears that there is a tendency toward ideational beliefs in creedal communes, although the trend is still in its initial stages.