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FEMINIST RECONSTRUCTIONS OF IDENTITY IN A SELF-HELP PROGRAM: A STUDY OF TWO SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS FOR INCEST SURVIVORS

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

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* * * * *

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

This study examines the self-help movement for incest survivors as an example of the "new social movements" challenging dominant frames of analysis in Western Europe and the U.S. The literature examined falls under the rubrics of social movement theory, feminist theory, and research on culture, self-help, and collective identity. My goal is to explore sociologically the impact of social movement participation on individual biographies, and specifically how the movement's culture and collective identity allow women and men to reframe their experiences. The popular argument has been that the movement induces members to interpret the past retrospectively in a manner consistent with movement ideology. Research conducted thus far on this movement is popular-journalistic (Hechler, 1988; Armstrong, 1994) or psychological (Bass and Davis, 1988). A few sociological studies have discussed types of perpetrators and the long-term self-reported effects on survivors (Finkelhor, 1984; Russell 1986). The influence of the radical branch of the resurgence of American feminism on women's movements against privatized male violence has also been well-documented (Tierney 1982; Schechter, 1982; Taylor and Whittier, 1993; Armstrong 1994). However, no sociological studies have integrated theories of social movements with feminist understandings of the effect of the culture of self-help on women's identity construction.
Currently there is a resurgence of interest in examining the cultural elements of social movements (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield, 1994; Taylor and Whittier, 1994; Taylor forthcoming). Culture has traditionally been conceptualized as collectively-held norms, values, beliefs, language, and rituals. These have usually been construed as independent of the influence of social structure. Yet this functionalist definition lately has been questioned (Swidler, 1986; Wuthnow, 1987; Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990). Studies focusing on social movement culture have conceptualized it as ideology (Gusfield, 1963; Wuthnow, 1987), a coopted commodity within hegemonic discourse (Best, 1990; Alcoff and Gray, 1993), or as interpretive frames that emerge in mobilization (Snow et al. 1986; Snow and Benford, 1992). In addition, recent studies have explored how the women's movement's symbols, beliefs, and emergent norms serve collectively as a master frame for connecting experiences to collective action (Taylor and Whittier, 1994). However, there have not been any sociological studies focusing on how elements of social movement culture frame people's experiences of incest or facilitate the construction of a sense of that collective identity. Qualitative methodology will be used to examine these phenomena from social movement members locally and nationally in this study.

This chapter opens with a discussion of the resource mobilization and new social movements perspectives within sociology. A discussion of the changing nature of cultural analysis within sociology follows this. The culture of the self-help movement and its relation to feminism are then detailed. An examination of the notions of social movement culture and collective identity are then examined, with an emphasis on how cultural
elements in social movements may be construed as part of a culture of resistance to dominant hegemonic frames. Implications for the integration of studies of culture and structure are then discussed. An overview of the research questions asked is then provided. The chapter concludes with a synopsis of the structure of the ensuing chapters of this dissertation in their relation to the research questions asked. Methodology and data collection are discussed in chapter 2.

THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Resource Mobilization Theory

The resource mobilization perspective takes an organizational approach to social movements. The resource mobilization perspective is useful for its focus on the structural and organizational aspects of movements, such as their tactics, strategies, and relation to the larger political opportunity structure (McCarthy and Zald, 1973,77; Freeman, 1974; Tilly, 1978; Jenkins, 1983; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1988; Taylor 1989; Buechler, 1990; Gamson, 1990). This approach emphasizes how social movement organizations garner the resources available to them, such as funding, constituents, and publicity.

In contrast to earlier approaches focusing on deprivation and grievances, this perspective moved away from actors' social-psychological motivations. The new emphasis was on the cost-benefit analyses of rational actors attempting to mobilize resources for collective action. Social movements were construed as operating in the form of social movement organizations (SMOs), run by social movement entrepreneurs, within social movement sectors and industries (McCarthy and Zald, 1973,77), or as mass-based indigenous movements at the grass-roots level.
(Morris, 1984). More recently, it has branched out into explorations of the biographical consequences of activism (McAdam, 1989), social-psychological aspects of actors' participation (Ferree and Miller, 1985; Klandermans, 1984); the creation of activist identity as established through socialization and solidarity ties (Oliver, 1980, 1983), or aspects of the free-rider problem and rational choice theory (Opp, 1989). The free rider problem was initially elaborated by Olson (1965), regarding why social movement actors would choose to participate in high-risk collective action when they could obtain the same collective goods for free by sitting back and letting others do the high-risk activity. The solution lay in providing selective incentives to social movement actors, such as opportunities for accruing power by gaining media access or building a cadre of elites to organize and run the organization. Solidary incentives, or the building of solidarity links to other activists, also played a role in explaining activist commitment.

Resource mobilization theory has also been construed as comprising the related, political process model. The political process model examines how a social movement poses an observable challenge to the state in terms of visible cycles, and how it relates to the surrounding political opportunity structure (McAdam 1982; Tarrow, 1991, 1993; Tilly, 1978, 1983). The actions of the state may create a favorable or unfavorable opportunity structure for social movements, thereby precipitating their periods of being at peak mobilization or at a nadir of mass mobilization in which the movement is then elite-sustained or in abeyance.

Tilly (1978) and Tarrow (1993) discuss how those tactics which achieve success within a social movement in a given sociohistorical era may then be adopted by later social movements for success. Thus certain tactics
and strategies may become part of a larger cultural repertoire of collective action for social movements. This study will thus examine the strategies used by this social movement to garner resources for movement maintenance, some of which fall within the traditional conception of politics and others which can be considered cultural: "Strategies of action are cultural products; the symbolic experiences, mythic lore, and ritual practices of a group or society create moods and motivations, ways of organizing experience and evaluating reality, modes of regulating conduct, and ways of forming social bonds, which provide resources for constructing strategies of action" (Swidler, 1986:284).

Recent research has drawn from political process theory and Goffman's concept of frames to discuss activism and movement participants in micromobilization contexts. Meyer and Whittier (1994) discuss how the women's movement affected the peace movement's direct action and institutionally-oriented branches in terms of ideological frames, repertoires of collective action, organizational structure, and leadership. Similarly, this study draws from both the political process model within resource mobilization theory and Goffman's (1974) framework perspective, to examine the self-help movement for incest survivors. Specifically, with respect to the political opportunity structure, my analysis concentrates on how the incest survivor self-help movement has been influenced by the anti-movement backlash and on the declining impact of the women's movement as it has moved into abeyance (Taylor, 1989). With respect to Goffman's framework perspective, this analysis focuses on how self-help and feminist frames have influenced frame alignment processes in the self-help movement for incest survivors.
With respect to the broader political opportunity structure, ample evidence has documented that the women's movement itself currently exists as a social movement in abeyance during a hostile political climate of backlash against feminism and apathy towards feminist concerns (Taylor, 1989, Faludi, 1991). The media have widely touted the era as "post-feminist," despite evidence that many women still hold feminist beliefs and that feminist values have become diffused into the mainstream culture. A variety of social-scientific studies have been quoted and misquoted alleging that career women would not be able to find a suitable mate or would be infertile if they delayed marriage and motherhood. The U.S. Republican party pursued a platform in the 1980s including the idea of "putting women in their place" (Taylor and Whittier, forthcoming).

This backlash also extends to the self-help movement for women incest survivors, with a range of diverse critiques of it being widely publicized. People within the countermovement False Memory Syndrome Foundation are critical of what they see as the movement's "obvious" links to feminism and the women's movement (Goldstein, 1992; Goldstein and Farmer, 1993). Some sociologists or mental health professionals revive classical Freudian models of women's "hysteria" or "seduction fantasies," or reanimate old contagion models into current "gender role anxiety" or "mass anxiety" theories, to explain the current prevalence of retrieved memories of childhood sexual and/or ritual abuse (Gardner, 1991; Ofshe and Watters, 1993, 1994; Richardson, Best, and Bromley, 1991). Critics also complain that those in recovery are brainwashed by mental health professionals, are socialized by the movement to blame others for their own unhappiness, are creating a "culture of
victimization", or are even "victimizing" their abusers with "false accusations" (Kaminer, 1992; Dershowitz, 1994; Ofshe and Singer, 1994).¹

Survivors are also said to be "destroy[ing] the integrity of the family" by their allegations of incestuous or other abuse due to a confabulated medical "false memory syndrome" (Conference Brochure, 1994, cited in Quirk and DePrince, 1995). Long before this last claim about "destroying the family as an institution" was levelled at the self-help movement, its members and their therapists, it was also originally laid at the door of the women’s movement. Feminists have been vocal in noting that biological ties do not imply love, that love and affection are present in families where there are no biological or legal ties, that the nuclear family as "traditional" is an inaccurate social construction, and that cross-culturally the family form varies widely or is less significant than ties of kinship and tribe (Collier, Rosaldo, and Yanagisako, 1992; Thorne, 1992). I contend that this current critique of the anti-sexual assault movement including the self-help movement for incest survivors exists because feminist critiques of the dysfunctionality and violence in the U.S. nuclear family have diffused into the self-help movement for incest survivors and because both encourage people to construct more satisfactory "families of affinity" as alternatives to the nuclear family. It is sometimes unclear whether therapists or survivors themselves are more vilified, but both are targeted by the backlash (Quirk and DePrince, 1995). It has been noted that both survivors and therapists treating survivors are predominantly women (Feldman, 1995). Hence the backlash seems not to be directed solely against feminists but also against women who speak out against
sexual abuse, which was one of the original feminist targets of patriarchal society (Griffin, 1971; Brownmiller, 1975).

Articles by women survivors and therapists have commented that both are part of a larger social movement against sexual abuse (Armstrong, 1994; Bloom, 1995; Quirk and De Prince, 1995). Bloom (1995:280) comments that, "Psychotherapy, if it works, is inherently subversive to the status quo...It is because of therapeutic success that we have seen the birth of the backlash. Too many abused and exploited adults have found their voice, and in seeking justice for themselves and the protection of others, they have threatened the seat of power--the right of a man to do anything he pleases in the privacy of his own family." Thus she puts the backlash again in the context of predominately male war against (originally feminist) critique of male power and privilege in the family. Various authors have noted that the backlash has the ear of the media and is successfully taking the offensive against this feminist critique of sexual violence, in the current political climate of hostility to feminism and the women's movement (Bloom, 1995; Quirk and DePrince, 1995). Quirk and DePrince identify the American Coalition for Abuse Awareness and One Voice as social movement organizations within this larger social movement against sexual abuse.

Meanwhile many feminists themselves decry the self-help movement, self-help books, and therapeutic professionals as depoliticizing feminism and as encouraging women to adapt themselves to male culture or traditional gender roles (Simonds, 1992; Haaken, 1992, 1993; Hochschild, 1994). Susan Faludi, author of the best-selling book Backlash, even stated, "Millions of women have sought relief from their distress, only to wind up in the all-popular counseling of the era where women learn not
to raise their voices but to lower their expectations and "surrender" to their "higher power" (1991:57). Self-help books which offer ready, facile solutions to complex modern problems are also lambasted for personalizing those problems in the public arena which instigated private sphere problems in intimacy and family life and thereby women's needs for counseling and self-help (Simonds, 1992). Tavris (1993) claims that self-help books for incest survivors foster an attitude of victimization among their audience. Hochschild (1994) states that the more recent self-help advice books published between 1970 and 1990 "have become "cooler" in their approach to intimate life...From the vantage point of the early feminist movement, modern advice books reaffirm one ideal (equality) but undermine another (the development of emotionally rich social bonds)" (1994:3). Authors of modern self-help books, acting as "emotional investment counselors," are said to be promoting a paradigm of distrust, control of emotions, and no-needs isolationism for the feminine self. Feminism is supposedly being used by these authors, to support a commercial spirit of intimate life. The egalitarian ideals of feminism are thus wed to the worst elements of capitalism, an emotional detachment from others, a self cut off from family and community which only seeks and derives emotional support from one's therapist. This commercialized spirit of intimate life is tied to the new cultural tendency for women "to assimilate to male rules of love" (Hochschild, 1994:16). This emphasis on women's imitation of "the gendered cultural capital of white middle class men of the 1950s" is thus steering intimate relationships towards instrumentality and isolationism, away from family and community, according to Hochschild.
However, some authors see in the new emphasis on therapy and support groups, a quest for authenticity and intimacy in relationships which traditional forms of family and community have not supplied (Bellah et al., 1985; Wuthnow 1994). Bellah et al. (1985) suggest that this quest for community can be satisfied by a return to a common biblical and republican ethic which ostensibly provided a cultural unity of caring that is lacking in American society at this time. However, actual behaviors do not seem to be conforming to exhortations to unite under a common biblical ethos. It is contended in this dissertation that, since traditional forms of family and community cannot satisfy emotional needs, people are creatively constructing their own alternative forms of family and community. This does not result in women living the ideal of Hochschild’s “postmodern cowgirl,” the cool and autonomous self that depends on no one, but rather in women living in "families of choice" created from intimacy networks developed in self-help groups. Rituals of boundary-setting, family confrontation, and alternative family construction denote the existence of these alternative "families" within social movement communities in this self-help movement. Emergent norms surrounding issues of access to one’s personal life and sexuality, and regarding new definitions of incest, perpetration, and the family, characterize this culture. Discourse on sexual assault, the nature of memory, and the dysfunctionality of U.S. institutions is used to promote self-understandings and to denote ingroup-outgroup boundaries. Symbols representing new identities of the self as survivor rather than victim are used. The result is a social movement culture with alternative constructions of self, family, and community that do not fit Hochschild’s
narrow definitions of family or community and therefore are falsely construed by her as not existing at all.

The concept of framing derives from Goffman's (1974:21) notion of frames as "schemata of interpretation" facilitating individuals' location, perception, identification and labeling of events in their own lives and in the world in general. Frame alignment is construed by Snow et al. (1986:464) as "the linkage of individual and SMO interpretive orientations, such that some set of individual interests, values and beliefs and SMO activities, goals, and ideology are congruent and complementary." Snow et al. coin the term "frame alignment process" as the cover term for these linkages. Frame alignment can occur in four types of processes: frame bridging, frame amplification, frame extension, and frame transformation. Frame alignment brings the social movement's belief system into congruence with individual experience and thus mobilizes participation for collective action. This occurs primarily in micromobilization contexts, referring to the settings in which "the various interactive and communicative processes that affect frame alignment" occur (Snow et al. 1986:464). Snow and Benford (1992) discuss how collective action frames construct meaning within social movement culture. This symbolic interaction approach explicates how frame alignment processes link individual experiences with the movement's production of meaning to foster mobilization. The movement uses cultural elements in a creative way to link individuals' "interpretive schemata" into a social movement culture which has common interpretive understandings for the group as a whole (Snow et al., 1986). It does this by punctuating injustices and attributing responsibility for them, and by articulating how individual subjectivities are made coherent via a
shared, "meaningfully interconnected" collective action frame (Snow and Benford, 1992). Thus the frame alignment concept provides a useful approach integrating social-psychological factors with structural factors in explaining how individual experiences are made meaningful and transformed into collective action. Thus this study examines frame alignment processes in the formation of collective identity, which serves as a basis for mobilization in the self-help movement for incest survivors.

Individual experience is thus politicized by the social movement organization. In this case individual beliefs about the definition of incest and intrafamilial sexual assault and the individual's experiencing of incest are translated into movement ideology. This belief system encompasses a view of the family as dysfunctional and a privatized haven for violence and domination, and incest as a product of this dysfunction and violence. This was a critique of the family originally expressed by the women's movement. Thus movement members who may have seen the incest as stemming from some flaw in themselves, are encouraged to view the incest as "not their fault...the perpetrator will go to any length to attack the innocent victim. The more gentle the attack, the more guilt the victim inappropriately feels." Thus the feminist frame involving the innocence of the victim in sexual assault and incest cases becomes adopted into the view of the individual who is drawn into the movement.

New Social Movements Theory

This study proposes to employ predominantly the "new social movements" (NSM) approach which has been prevalent in Western Europe and American sociological studies since the mid-1980s (Cohen, 1985; Offe, 1985; Melucci, 1985, 89; Touraine, 1985; Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988; Taylor
and Whittier, 1992,94; Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield, 1994). The new social movements perspective focuses on the expressive, cultural aspects of new movements emerging in Western Europe and the U.S. under post-industrial society such as emergent norms, discourse, values, rituals, symbols, collective identity, and issues of identity politics (Cohen, 1985; Offe, 1985; Melucci, 1985,89; Touraine, 1985; Klandermans and Tarrow, 1988; Taylor and Whittier, 1992,94; Larana, Johnston, and Gusfield 1994). New social movements analysts suggest that the factors underlying NSM mobilization are those of cultural, symbolic issues.

According to new social movement theory, new forms of collective action are emerging in Western Europe contemporaneously with the delegitimization of major political parties. New forms of collective action focused on the cultural arena have also emerged in the U.S., even though the bipartisan system has not been challenged. Cohen (1985) prefers to call these new forms of action "contemporary social movements," since she does not see their novelty, but notes that they are characterized by a self-limiting radicalism, or the challenge of civil society against the state. At any rate we see the emergence of support for new, nontraditional forms of politics and participatory democracy in these postindustrial societies. Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield (1994) argue that new social movements do not bear a clear relation to the structural roles of participants. The backgrounds of NSM participants are dispersed among rather diffuse social statuses. Ideology within NSMs is not the totalizing feature that it was, within the working-class labor movements earlier in this century. NSMs rather demonstrate a pluralism of ideas and values. They frequently involve the emergence of new or formerly-weak dimensions of identity which are essentialized. The
relationship between the individual and the collective is also blurred in NSMs, so that "the movement becomes a focus for the individual's definition of himself or herself, and action within the movement is a complex mix of the collective and individual confirmations of identity" (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield, 1994:8).

Issues of identity politics and the expansion of civil society have become the arena of contestation between social movement participants and the state. Previously mobilization had centered around the problem of economic exploitation, under industrialized society. Mobilization had developed from people's common socioeconomic position under capitalism. As issues of identity politics come to the fore, the membership of participants in an NSM is no longer based on any clear, unifying social class or economic base (Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield, 1994:7). Instead, a sense of collective identity replaces Marx's notion of class consciousness. Recent studies have focused on how a sense of collective identity emerges from commonalities among members of a group due to a shared position in the social structure (Melucci, 1985,89; Touraine, 1985; Giddens, 1991). Examples of this would be gender or sexual orientation, rather than social class. Employment of the RM and NSM perspectives together provides a helpful complementarity for integrating the structural and cultural approaches to social movements. The RM approach answers the "how" questions about mobilization processes while the NSM approach answers the "why" about these identity-oriented movements (Melucci, 1989).

The proliferation of self-help groups in post-industrial societies has been said to represent a shift away from the "action-oriented" modes of collective action involving demands on the polity. NSMs have been
construed as more "passive" and "nonchallenging" than their pre-1960s counterparts. Haaken for example, says self-help involves "retreat from a politicized view of gender" because it is "wedded to a disease model of family dysfunction that obscures power inequities within the family and reduces...social ills to family pathology (1993:341). Taylor and Whittier (1994) discuss how the legacy of RM's gender bias might dismiss women's self-help "affinity groups" as apolitical due to their gendered form, ideology, tactics, structure, and membership composition.

This study takes the opposing view that NSMs still involve challenges to the state, but in a different form. Scott (1990) construes the shift to postindustrial society as creating "new action forms" which involve alternative challenges to the system. These take the form of resistance organized around new forms of identity which are distinguished by their reflexivity. Cohen (1985) discusses how NSMs are focused on developing a new relation of the individual to the state, involving demands for an expansion of public democratic spheres rather than wresting economic concessions from it. Gamson (1992:57) sees NSMs' creation of a sense of collective identity as forcing us to redefine movement success as "cultural achievement". This self-help movement could be interpreted as embodying a "prefigurative politics" if we view it as a social movement culture which will "create and sustain within the lived practice of the movement, relationships and political forms that prefigure the desired society" (Breines, 1982:6). Thus the formation of an alternative social movement culture of self-help with its own cultural elements of symbolism, emergent norms, discourse, ritual, and collective identity becomes the chief means for challenging the system when the goal is not
economic restructuring or socioeconomic concessions but a freedom to live without the impingements of systemic constraints.

The Changing Nature of Cultural Analysis Within Sociology

Studies of culture have become increasingly important within American sociological theory, particularly within the past decade (Wuthnow and Witten, 1988; Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990; Wiley, 1990). Wiley (1990) states that American social theory "has moved, stepwise, from an emphasis on interaction (the Chicago school) to social structure (functionalism) to culture (the continental turn)" (1990:401). Functionalism had been the hegemonic paradigm with respect to culture, in the U.S., from the postwar period until the 1980s. The functionalists identified culture with dominant values and beliefs, permeating all aspects of social life. However, this rendered culture too vague and nebulous a concept to be useful for analysis (Wuthnow, 1987). The once-dominant functionalist view of culture as prevalent values, a people's entire way of life, or those things requisite to becoming a functioning member of society, is giving way to the notion of culture as "the publicly-available symbolic forms through which people experience and express meaning" (Swidler, 1986:273).

The traditional functionalist view has been that culture's effect on action is expressed through values, which then influence action. Swidler (1986) argues that the Parsonian model of cultural traditions accounting for the ends of people's actions through the provision of "value orientations," cannot account for people's actions as much as a focus on culturally-shaped skills, habits, and styles can. Swidler's example of using the Calvinist quest for salvation as the reason for the rationalistic, ascetic Protestant ethos as expressed in hard work and abstemious behavior, shows that the way action is organized is the
enduring quality in culture, not the ends of action themselves. Thus neither the Weberian focus on interests as shaping action through the mediating factor of historically-rooted ideas, nor the Parsonian focus on non-rational cultural traditions as shaping action through value orientations, can account for how individualistic or group ways of organizing action are directed into specific behaviors. Both perspectives focus on individual actions or the "unit act" as if they were chosen one at a time without any overall guiding framework except the maximization of outcome. Swidler says we need to focus instead on how actions are formed into larger, cohesive units which she calls "strategies of action." "Culture shapes the capacities from which...strategies of action are constructed" (Swidler, 1986:277). A "strategy" here is defined as "a general way of organizing action...that might allow one to reach several different life goals" (Swidler, 1986:277). Swidler notes that individuals and groups both select from among differing elements of culture for creating different routes of action, depending upon the situation. Culture affects action by forming a "repertoire" or "cultural toolkit" of "habits, skills, and styles" which people then use in everyday "strategies of action" (Swidler, 1986:273). Culture thus comprises the elements of beliefs, rituals, symbols, and strategies of action used in everyday life to allow individuals or groups to meet desired goals or achieve desired results by imbuing these cultural components with certain meanings. Thus a new focus on strategies of action as cultural products which in turn influence collective action, provides a better explanation of how culture shapes action rather than simply relying on notions of values, ideas, cultural traditions, or "common sense" (Swidler, 1986).
Swidler's notion of cultural elements as a "toolkit" in which strategies of action as cultural products influence collective action, is similar to Bourdieu's notion of habitus (1984) as related to action strategies. He discusses culture in the context of "rules," saying that we need to contextualize cultural traditions in order to comprehend them fully, including the notion that in order to change cultural traditions we must have a full understanding of how their historical constructions have changed over time. Individuals or groups create specific strategies of action within the context of the structure of cultural patterns in their society. Certain choices of action are more understandable within the context of larger strategies of action. Specific skills and habits of the individual, known as "habitus," shaped by her/his culture, can be exploited in attempting to organize one's overall life and overall strategies of action.

Traditionally in the U.S., theorists of culture have used experience and action to study cultural categories and meaning systems. The American experiential approach to culture owes its origins to U.S. pragmatism, symbolic interactionism, Berger and Luckmann's (1966) social constructionist approach, social-psychological studies of attitudes, and ethnographic research (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990).

This experiential approach to culture rests on four premises, according to Lamont and Wuthnow (1990). First, experience constitutes the basis of knowledge and knowledge in turn should have practical applicability. This premise stems from American pragmatism. Secondly, meaning construction cannot be divorced from its social context. Third, actions are strongly related to the creation of symbolic codes. This premise comes from social-psychological work on attitudes and
anthropological approaches emphasizing ethnography. Fourth, the subject's experience of everyday life serves as a legitimate basis for knowledge. This premise has its roots in Berger and Luckmann's (1966) phenomenological approach to reality. According to this phenomenological tradition, the subject constructs symbolic codes by means of using "primordial categories for making sense of everyday experience" (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990:289). "Symbolic codes consisted [for Berger and Luckmann] of primordial categories for making sense of everyday experience and of secondary and tertiary codes that helped to legitimate experience by placing it in broader frameworks of meaning" (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990:289). Other levels of codes validate one's experiences by contextualizing them within larger "frameworks of meaning" (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990:289). Thus this dissertation draws from American symbolic interactionist and phenomenological approaches to culture in its focus on how subjects' individual experiences are constructed within the context of the larger framework of meaning of the social movement's belief system.

In Europe traditions of Marxism and the structuralist paradigm have influenced notions of culture so that cultural studies have focused on symbolic codes and cultural classification systems. These studies also question how these cultural classification systems are comprised of symbolic elements, whether and how such systems have commensurate elements, the manner in which they make their content meaningful, and how they are organized according to latent conventions. Symbolic codes range from "myths, religio-moral creeds, scientific dialogue, political rhetoric, plot structure in novels, to the conversations of lovers" (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990:289). European structuralist, cognitive
studies of culture are exemplified by the works of Levi-Strauss and Barthes, who view culture in terms of signifier and signified. Cultural codes are not viewed in experiential context but are rather conceptualized in terms of "cognitive categories or boxes in which elements of reality are located" (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990:290). Lamont and Wuthnow commence to say that this European, cognitive approach tends to examine the extant categories, which elements become situated in specific categories, and how the boundaries between categories are formed. Symbolic codes are composed of both surface and deep structures, which comprise both manifest and implied structures of meaning. This cognitive focus on rational discourse and formal categories privileges cognitive as opposed to experiential dimensions of cultural analysis. American theorists have also been increasingly drawing from these European structuralist approaches emphasizing power, meaning, and inequality, such as Levi-Strauss, K. Erikson, Foucault, Mary Douglas or Pierre Bourdieu.

However, since the 1980s, American cultural analysts have been drawing from the critical theory of the Frankfurt School in cultural studies, such as that based on the work of Habermas, thus emphasizing hermeneutic, communicative solutions to problems of instrumental and technical rationality in late capitalist society (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990). Habermas's work on communicative action exemplifies the rationally-based, European approach to culture, in which validity claims and commonly-understood regulations about rational discourse are emphasized with respect to creating the ideal speech situation in the public sphere. Habermas emphasizes the predominance of the secular, scientific codes of science and technical reason for understanding modern culture and is
optimistic in his view of the eventual triumph of rational language understandings over even the shortfalls of technical reason (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990). This European, evolutionary approach to culture contrasts strongly with the American approach, in which the ultimate hegemony of rationality is questioned.

These European structuralist and rational/hermeneutic approaches to culture have been criticized for their championing of rationality by other analysts of culture. European structuralist positions on culture have been critiqued by postmodernist and poststructuralist theorists in the U.S. and Europe. These poststructuralist or postmodernist theorists (e.g., Lyotard, Derrida, Foucault) follow a social conflict perspective on culture by emphasizing how power can be exploited through the use of cultural codes. These poststructuralist or postmodernist writers are cynical about the structuralists' view of the potential for rationality to provide emancipation through communication. Rational communication cannot be achieved, in the worldviews of these radical writers. However, even the most pessimistic European writers on power and culture usually discuss rationality more than American theorists. The rational/hermeneutic approach to culture has been critiqued for its upholding of rationality, rational discourse, and scientific reason by American authors such as Alexander (1988), Swidler (1986), and Wuthnow (1987). Alexander (1988) critiques Habermas, stating that human experience and behavior in the world are also influenced strongly by the nonrational. Wuthnow (1987) also suggests that rationality itself is a "ceremonial" mode of interpreting experience that can also be used for "nonrational ends."
There have also been increasing attempts to synthesize these European structuralist and hermeneutic traditions within American cultural analysis. For example Stryker (1993) discusses the culture of Students for a Democratic Society on the basis of examining the social construction and deconstruction of knowledge-power regimes. This is based in the work of Foucault (1977,1980), in which knowledge, power, and truth are discussed as means of social control and as frameworks for discourse on contested cultural terrain. The emphasis in SDS on participatory democracy was based on a critique of dominant cultural assumptions about politics and lifeworld. Stryker relates the culture of resistance within SDS to the episteme habitus of Bourdieu (1977) and Habermas’ theory of communicative action.

American theorists of culture have focused on culture as public moral discourse rather than taking a European approach focusing on symbolic codes (Gusfield, 1981; Luker, 1984). Studies of public moral discourse that have integrated cultural analysis with theoretical analyses of social movements, have focused on the use of symbolic elements by actors on opposing sides of a moral controversy. They have discussed this in terms of conflicts in status consistency and varying views of women’s roles in society (Gusfield, 1963,81; Luker, 1984).

For example Gusfield (1963) discusses the debate about temperance in nineteenth century America in terms of the ascetic, industrious, rural "native American" (WASP-heritage) middle-class Protestant versus the "immoral," urban working class immigrant Catholics. The former sought to control drinking behavior and viewed it abstinence as a symbol of middle-class membership and ambition in career. The latter viewed it as a right and resented attempts to constrict access to it as well as the
moral/political implications attached to this behavior. Links to the women's movement could be seen in terms of the nineteenth century cult of true womanhood which emphasized the middle-class, Protestant white woman as an icon of morality, virtue, and piety who should be a model of morality for the Victorian family. Women such as Frances Willard of the Women's Christian Temperance Union used public discourse to link socialism, feminism, and an assimilative-reformist orientation towards temperance to appeal to various constituents of the temperance movement, constituents which had varying status consistencies.

Similarly, Luker (1984) discusses how diametrically-opposed attitudes of activists on both sides of the abortion debate leave no room for mediation or reconciliation. Pro-choice activists tend to be middle-class, professional women in egalitarian marriages who use cultural elements as symbols of planning, rationality, women's rights to control their bodies and sexuality, while pro-life activists tend to be homemakers dependent on their husbands' incomes who symbolize the fetus as the unborn child cast away by selfish women refusing motherhood. Each side uses rituals, discourse, symbols, language, and emergent norms to frame the other as "immoral"—one in terms of the rejection of motherhood roles, the other in terms of the rejection of liberal Enlightenment-era ethics of individual rights.

Likewise, this study puts culture in the context of symbolic codes, moral discourse, and social movement culture. On the structural level of public moral discourse, the dominant culture frames incest as a private "trouble," people who are survivors as "victims," or as "dupes of their therapists," and mystifies the gendered and class-based nature of the controversy. The issue is gendered on both the levels of public, moral
discourse and the populations involved. The gender-based nature of the populations involved comes into play also, since most incest is perpetrated by fathers against daughters (Russell, 1986; Armstrong, 1994). There are more women in self-help programs and reading self-help books than men (Simonds, 1991; Hochschild, 1994). Men in general make more money than women. Age plays a role in determining income (most perpetrators being 20 or more years older than their daughters, who are on average in their early 30s when joining this movement) (Russell, 1986; Bloom, 1995). Also, a significant number of survivors income level seems to be reduced at least during the time that they are in the movement, due to depression or other characteristics making them temporarily unable to work. A significant number of women survivors at group settings seemed to be deriving their income solely from social security disability payments for illness relating to depression-related symptoms which the survivors seemed to attribute to the incest. The result is that public media discourse favors the powerful/wealthy perpetrators who have the resources to publicize and problematize "false memory syndrome" as a moral issue more than incest and child sexual abuse is (male perpetrators vs. female survivors/therapists). The issue is class-based due to the higher social socioeconomic status and thus greater credibility of male perpetrators, as opposed to female survivors.) On the meso- or organizational level, social movement organizations within the self-help movement for incest survivors use self-help and feminist frames in terms of symbolic codes, which then are used in micro-scale interaction to frame women's experiences of everyday life as survivors. People on both sides of the "incest" debate cast themselves as being hurt by those on the other side of the debate--women and men who are incest survivors as
having been hurt by sexual molestation, women and men who have been accused of perpetration as having been falsely and unjustly accused due to "false memories." Issues about definitions of "the family," people's rights to "divorce" their family and rights to limit access to themselves, and definitions of religion, spirituality, and the divine all come into play and become charged with symbolism in this movement, for several reasons. First, many survivors cut off or curtail contact with their families of origin after having memories, and also form their own "families of affinity" composed of people in the movement. Many survivors also completely reject their families of origins' religious tradition in favor of a different religious or spiritual orientation, when they start to reframe their identity in terms of being a "survivor."

Overall, four new trends are emerging within the realm of cultural analysis: a movement in the direction of more objectivist conceptions of culture; a turning-away from subjectivist views of culture; a solution to the problem of sociological reductionism by providing a new way of exploring the relationship between culture and social structure; and increasing analysis of the relationships among the different aspects of culture such as meaning, moral order, ideology or beliefs, symbols, ritual, discourse, norms, values, and language (Wuthnow et al. 1984).

Thus, this dissertation will locate itself within an organizational and symbolic interactionist approach to culture based on (a) the view of culture as an explicit socially produced feature of social life; (b) the view of cultural elements within this constructivist paradigm, as a type of "natural knowledge" which on the micro-level of interaction, is used to create myriad individual self-identities (Wuthnow and Witten, 1988); and which on the "meso-" or organizational level is used to construct a
sense of collective identity in contemporary social movements which challenge hegemonic-cultural frames of analysis; (c) the "theoretical-institutional" view of cultural elements as produced within specific social contexts and requiring certain social resources for the production of those elements (Wuthnow and Witten, 1988); (d) the phenomenological, interactionist foundation of cultural analysis, based on American notions of culture, which emphasizes experiential knowledge of the subject in everyday life, and which emphasizes the contextual nature of meaning construction in generating symbolic codes (Wuthnow, 1987; Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990); and (e) the American emphasis on culture as experiential and contextual, produced by and for actors with the power of agency (Lamont and Wuthnow, 1990).

Studies of culture viewing it as a foundation of social life, have recently discussed it in terms of norms and values, beliefs and attitudes, or "mentalité," while those who see culture as socially-produced view it as expressive, instrumental, or natural (Wuthnow and Witten, 1988). This approach "consists largely of symbolic material such as conversational discourse and the behavioral rituals of everyday life that come into being as part of the public displays involved in social interaction" (Wuthnow and Witten, 1988:52). This third, naturalistic approach to culture constitutes the perspective of the proposed study of incest survivors as a social movement. Thus within this study, culture will be conceptualized in terms of the emergent norms, discourse, rituals, beliefs, language, and symbols used by those in the culture of this social movement to create alternative politicized definitions of everyday life activities which act as forms of resistance to
The Culture of the Self-Help Movement and Its Relation to Feminism

Various authors have noted the importance of informal, voluntary associations in Western, modern societies, particularly in the U.S. today (Katz and Bender, 1976; Katz, 1981, 1993; Melucci, 1989; Giddens, 1991). These groups have been variously described as voluntary associations, mutual aid societies, or self-help groups. Self-help groups have been defined as locally-organized, voluntary, indigenous, largely spontaneous, and informal small group structures organized for members' mutual aid and support. This aid takes the form of emotional support or sometimes material assistance to members such as food, clothing, or money. The emotional support is given through face-to-face social interaction in peer-led support groups which meet on a regular basis such as weekly or bi-monthly (Katz and Bender, 1976, 1990). Members are encouraged to assume personal responsibility for their problem. However, twelve-step model groups also emphasize members' reliance on some form of deity or "higher power" to help them accomplish their goals and control their addictions (Katz, 1993).

Self-help groups have also been described as being organized by non-professionals on a deliberately collectivist, non-bureaucratic and non-hierarchical organizational model. This constitutes an alternative to the medical model in which a bureaucratic hierarchy of medical professionals tells the patient what to do (Katz and Bender, 1976). The hierarchy in professional-patient relations was experienced as disempowering to patients. For example Traunstein and Steinman (1973) found that self-help members preferred the autonomy and solidarity of self-help group
structure over the hierarchical, bureaucratic structure of human service organizations run by professionals. This objection to hierarchy in health care was part of the impetus for the women's health care movement, as is explained later in this chapter. Thus self-help groups have been formed as an alternative source of expertise from that found in traditional medical health practice. They are operating from a "collective knowledge" frame that posits that members' unique experience with some problem gives them a special understanding of the problem which medical health professionals lack (Van Willigen, 1993). I contend that this collective knowledge frame has been adopted from the women's movement, in particular the consciousness-raising groups of the late 1960s and early 1970s.

The members of self-help groups convene to provide mutual support on a common need, handicap or life-disrupting problem, and to effect social and/or personal change surrounding the issue (Katz and Bender, 1976). This definition of self-help as small groups organizing to effect personal or social change, is similar to sociologists' conceptions of social movements. For example social movements have been defined as "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population which represents preferences for changing some elements of the social structure" (McCarthy and Zald, 1977:1217). In addition, the initiators and members of self-help groups perceive that "their needs are not, or cannot be, met by or through existing social institutions" (Katz, 1981:135). Thus Katz's definition is also similar to sociologists' definition of social movements in terms of their extra-institutional stance and origins (Traugott, 1978; Morris, 1984).
Katz (1993) defines "the large and growing collectivity of 12-step groups" as "a social movement of a special kind," (1993:108). He elaborates that they fit Blumer's (1969:23) definition of "expressive social movements," which do not seek political change through existing, institutionalized channels but rather personal growth and change in individual members. In the U.S. this focus on symbolic, expressive, cultural challenge to the social order has been documented as characteristic of the peace movement (Solomon, 1986), the New Left counterculture (Stryker, 1993), and the women's movement (Taylor and Whittier, 1994). Katz (1993) notes that self-help groups have many of the characteristics of social movements, such as an ideology that attracts members, a sense of common purpose, some type of organizational structure, and an action plan including strategies and tactics for movement expansion. Katz notes some 12-step groups meet these classic criteria and are thus "social movements in their own right" (1993:108), such as Alcoholics Anonymous. He calls A.A. a movement in its own right because it fits his additional criteria for social movements, including its history, duration, influence on public opinion about alcoholism, and steady growth.

It is hypothesized that the self-help groups for incest survivors studied, also constitute collectively a social movement. This movement's characteristics fit with Katz's and the "new social movements" perspective's definitions of social movements, for several reasons. First, this movement is based on the twelve-step model of A.A. and shares with A.A. the traits that Katz uses as criteria for a social movement. It has an ideology that resonates with movement members in terms of how they frame their experiences, as will be explained in chapter 3.
Secondly, members demonstrate a sense of common purpose or "we-ness," through a shared sense of collective identity. Thirdly, the groups studied all conform to the same participatory-democratic, collectivist organizational structure as outlined by the guidelines for meetings of Survivors of Incest, Anonymous, Incorporated\(^3\). This collectivist structure is typical of group structure in the twelve-step, self-help movement generally. It is also characteristic of new social movements. Fourthly, although one of the "twelve traditions" of SIA (adopted from A.A.) prohibits individual groups from adopting strategies and tactics for movement growth, ("it is a program of attraction not promotion"), the movement has experienced growth through informal recruitment networks of friends and family already in the movement. In addition, although another "tradition" also proscribes groups' espousal or endorsement of opinions on "outside issues" such as incest or childhood sexual assault, the movement has had an influence on public opinion indirectly through individual members' politicization of their experiences and subsequent daily enaction of that politicization. Lastly, these groups constitute a social movement since the movement illustrates traits of the new social movements emerging in Western Europe and the U.S. The movement seeks personal change in members and uses symbolic, expressive, extrainstitutionalized modes of resistance to dominant frames of analysis.

Self-help is one of the "new social movements" in its focus on, first, collective identity, and secondly, lifestyle politics. Self-help was first characterized as a social movement important for issues of identity construction by sociologists studying deviance, particularly those focusing on the social-psychological aspects of small, indigenously-based
groups of "outsiders" attempting to overcome social stigma (Toch, 1965; Sagarin, 1969; Killilea, 1976). Self-help groups have been said to promote a belief system which encourages a positive identity in members (Katz and Bender, 1976). It has also been said that "the groups fill needs for a reference group, a point of connection and identification with others" (Katz, 1981:136). The emotional support provided in self-help group interaction reinforces members' conceptualizations of their own identities (Katz, 1981; Wuthnow, 1994). In addition, self-help group culture is adopted by new recruits and becomes a lifestyle for many members. Some self-help groups have been described as focusing on the creation of alternative patterns for living (Katz and Bender, 1976), or as a subculture or way of life (Killilea, 1976). Self-help has been viewed as promulgating a cultural alternative allowing for individuals to change their identities (Levy, 1976). Self-help also shares characteristics of the new social movements in its focus on empowerment and in its defense of civil society, seeking to extend the latter into public, democratic spheres. Self-help has been noted for its focus on members' empowerment (Eastland, 1994). Self-help has been viewed as embodying participatory democracy because of its focus on autonomy and democracy (Killilea, 1976). Eastland (1994) notes that recovery processes in the public sphere are analogous to critical theory within academia, because of their common focus on empowerment, individual agency, emancipation, and a critique of distorted communication in civil society.

Various research has been conducted on issues of women "survivors" in other parts of the women's health movement, such as battered women, breast cancer survivors, rape survivors, and women with eating disorders.
(e.g., Bart and O'Brien, 1985; Mukai, 1989; Van Willigen, unpub. 1993; Gagne unpub. 1993). Quite a few case studies exist of women reporting their victimization experiences, or reporting their recovery experiences from incest as individuals or in therapist-led support groups (e.g., McNaron, 1982; Gallagher and Dodds, 1985; Bass and Davis, 1988; Bass and Thornton, 1991; Gallagher, 1991). Self-help workbooks for incest survivors, and popular-psychological or psychological manuals to assist friends, family members, and therapists of incest survivors, have also been written (e.g., Courtois, 1988; Davis, 1990, 1991; Maltz and Holman, 1987). However, no studies have been conducted on women as survivors in the self-help movement for incest survivors. This study aims to address that gap in the literature by addressing the relation between the larger self-help movement, the women's movement, and the self-help movement for incest survivors.

Sociologists have noted the proliferation of books in the popular-psychology genre aimed at women as an audience, and that the self-help movement in general is comprised mainly of women. Feminist sociologists have been critical of the extent to which the ideologies of self-help books or self-help twelve-step programs address women's needs for equality and empowerment on an individual rather than structural level. According to this critique, these ideologies ignore how the women's movement or individual activism could make a difference in women's lives on the social-structural level (Simonds, 1992; Haaken, 1993; Hochschild, 1994).

Feminists in general have also been critical of the self-help movement, including its ideology and target audience. The feminist collectivist groups of the 1970s have been viewed by some feminists as
the radical foremother of the self-help movement (Armstrong, 1994). These 1970s feminist collectives included the women's self-help health care movement. The radical ideology of the women's health care movement of the 1970s is upheld as a model against which the self-help movement of the late 1980s and early 1990s falls short. The original impulse underlying the women's self-help health care movement was a radical challenge to the hierarchical relations and male dominance within institutionalized medicine, capitalism, and the family (Ruzek, 1978). This entailed reliance on participants' experiential, intuitive knowledge and the belief that the woman patient herself knew what was best for maintenance or restoration of her own well-being (Van Willigen's (1993) "collective knowledge frame"). The feminist focus on experience and intuition as legitimate sources of knowledge was opposed to predominantly male, medical professionals' theoretical, book-based knowledge. This theoretical knowledge was critiqued for being based on a medical model of women as deviant. Women's bodies, minds, and experiences were viewed in the medical model as deviant from the normative male. Feminists in the women's health care movement also perceived that women who transgressed from the prescribed feminine gender role were also wrongly diagnosed via this medical model as "having problems with their reproductive organs" or mentally ill (Chesler, 1972; Ehrenreich and English, 1978).

The ideology of the women's health care movement advocated that women "take control of their own bodies back from the medical establishment and capitalism." Thus movement ideology encouraged women to buy low-cost "natural" foods and herbal-based palliatives and remedies, to reject expensive chemical, surgical, or therapy-based treatments, and to question the ethics and profit motive of the chemically-processed-food
and toiletries industries (Boston Women's Health Collective, 1984; Norsigian and Sanford, 1987). Women involved in the women's health care movement repudiated the traditional, hierarchical doctor-patient relationship and began establishing grass-roots feminist health collectives to education women about their own bodies.

These women's health collectives were radical feminist organizations which emerged out of women's radicalizing experiences in consciousness-raising or "rap" groups of the late 1960s-1970s, which had in turn emerged from the radical or "women's liberation" branch of the resurgence of American feminism in the 1960s (Carden, 1974, 1977; Freeman, 1975; Evans, 1979). However, just as these radical feminist organizations succumbed to cooptation in the form of medicalization of women's addiction problems, professionalization of staff members and bureaucratization of organizational structure, so likewise, it would seem, has its daughter self-help movement succumbed to medicalization, professionalization, and the forces of capitalism and male dominance. Feminists have lambasted the present-day self-help movement in general for (allegedly) having been coopted by the institution of medicine in general and by mental health professionals in particular. This feminist critique also extends to the self-help movement for incest survivors (Armstrong, 1990; 1994). Although the self-help movement for incest survivors retains a collectivist format based on a 12-step model, most survivors in the groups studied were seeing a therapist or other mental health professionals as an adjunct to their self-help activities. Feminists such as Armstrong view the incest survivor movement as having been founded by radical feminists critiquing male sexual violence within the family. They complain that the movement has moved into taking a more
individualized, depoliticized approach in which the focus is on treatment for "troubled" individual women "victims." They lament that the legal system now focuses on treatment for "sick" individual perpetrators, instead of on institutionalized sexual violence as normative male behavior.

Feminists have addressed the flaws in self-help on three fronts. First, self-help has been marketed and "sold" to women on a mass basis as a substitute for feminist calls for activism and social change on the structural level. Thus feminists have been critical of what they view as the self-help movement's underlying disease model of "addiction as individual illness." Operating from this disease model, mental health professionals and self-help books' authors provide the cure to "recovery" for women, in individualized terms. Secondly, self-help operates as yet another outlet for advanced capitalism to push women into the consumer role to make a profit. Authors of self-help books are netting millions of dollars in profit a year by writing self-help books for women. Treatment centers and therapists are also allegedly getting rich at women clients' expense. Thirdly, self-help operates as an overly-broad way to lump women's problems together under the rubrics of "relationship addiction," "codependency addiction," "women's self-esteem problems," and then to push them into "treatment" by medical and mental health professionals (Simonds, 1992; Haaken, 1993; Hochschild, 1994). Other critiques have also been made that the recovery program generates its own kind of "addiction to recovery" by encouraging members to attend meetings, read self-help books obsessively, talk about their recovery continually, and to disassociate themselves from "unhealthy" people and
relationships (notably those who are not "in recovery"), including other women.

Feminist authors on recovery, however, have continued to address women's addiction problems in terms of structural forces. For instance feminist authors in recovery themselves have called for a newer, feminist model of addiction that addresses women's roles within society (Bepko, 1991), a feminist re-working of twelve step programs that addresses problems of women within patriarchal systems (Swan, 1989; Kasl, 1992); and increased understandings of how addiction, substance abuse, and recovery programs in general relate to structural forces such as privatized male violence or institutionalized sexism, racism, classism, homophobia, or addictive processes (Roth, 1990; Bepko, 1991; Schaef, 1981, 1987; Hafner, 1992; Kasl, 1992).

Social Movement Culture, Collective Identity and Culture of Resistance

Social movement culture has been conceptualized as being composed of the interpretive frames, emergent norms, rituals, symbols, discourse, and sense of collective identity created in collective action mobilization (Snow et al., 1986; Snow and Benford, 1992; Taylor and Whittier, 1994). Movements use frame alignment processes as interpretive frames to link individuals' interpretations of their experiences to movement beliefs. New expectations for social movement participants' behavior emerge, as these interpretive understandings become translated into norms for action. Ritual, or a "set of symbolic acts" (Wuthnow, 1987:99) which communicates meaning for a community, is often created within this culture for expressive and/or instrumental purposes. Wuthnow notes that "ritual is a dimension of all social activity" (1987:101), observable by the symbolic dimension that it brings to bear on everyday activity.
Symbols are used by the social movement, in terms of symbolic codes (signs, language) that have common meanings for social movement members. Such codes serve to unify members and again connect their experiences to movement ideology. Discourse is "a particular configuration of possibilities for speech acts" (Alcoff and Gray, 1993:265). Foucault (1972) originally discussed discourse in terms of the use of speech acts as politics. Speech and the understandings underlying speech, are used to stipulate what is statable and what cannot be said, through uses of power and the enforcement of rules that classify and normalize certain understandings while excluding others and labeling them as deviant.

Gamson and Modigliani (1989) also discuss the significance of viewing social movement culture through discursive forms. The definition and construction of social reality about nuclear power are contested by the mass media and corporations versus anti-nuclear activists, using opposing "interpretive packages" or frames. Nuclear power is depicted in terms of "progress" and "energy independence" by the dominant culture, through corporations' use of the media, or it is castigated as "wasteful, dangerous, and not cost-effective" by those in the social movement culture. The latter then use media discourse to focus on problems with nuclear power using the "soft paths," "public accountability," or "runaway" energy frames. Discourse is thus used by the social movement culture to structure and voice movement beliefs which would otherwise be characterized as untrue, insane, unbelievable, or unspeakable by the dominant culture. Collective identity operates as a unifying sense of belonging. The social movement culture fosters collective identity among members by using its cultural elements to bring individuals' self-
conceptions into congruence with movements' conceptualizations of members, which fosters mobilization.

This dissertation contends that the self-help movement for incest survivors uses interpretive frames, emergent norms, rituals, symbols, discourse, and a sense of collective identity to forge a social movement culture which both empowers individual members and fosters mobilization. Collective identity remains one of the crucial factors in generating social movement culture and mobilization.

Collective identity has been viewed as "the shared definition of a group that derives from its members' common interests and solidarity" (Taylor, 1989:771). Recent studies have focused on how a sense of collective identity emerges from commonalities among members of a group due to a shared position in the social structure (Weiner, 1982; Melucci, 1985, 88, 89; Touraine, 1985; Giddens, 1991). Examples of this would be race/ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation, rather than social class or position in the economy. Mobilization around social class as a source of collective identity, however, can frequently no longer be construed separately from other dimensions of identity in modern civil society. Social class identity is intertwined with the locus of members in specific identities as rural or urban peasants, or as members of specific racial/ethnic groups, as exemplified by studies of peasants in Latin-American and Third world countries (Escobar, 1992; Seligmann, 1993). Under postindustrial society collective identity becomes the new counterpart to Marx's notion of "class consciousness."

Collective identity thus forms the basis for mobilization in these "new social movements" (Melucci, 1988; 1989). Actors have increasingly mobilized around a shared sense of collective identity in social
movements organized around social-structural features such as gender (e.g., Jensen, 1985; Stephen, 1993; Taylor and Whittier, 1994); social class (e.g., the British working class: Willis, 1977); race/ethnicity (Seligmann, 1993), or sexual orientation (S. Epstein, 1987; Kimmel, 1993; Seidman, 1993; Taylor and Raeburn, 1994). Collective identity construction has been documented in such new social movements as the New Left (Stryker, 1993), activism for ex-or current mental health consumers (Herman, 1993); the Solidarity trade union movement (Bakuniak and Nowak, 1987), or the U.S. or Dutch peace movements (Kriesi, 1989, Klandermans, 1989; Benford and Hunt 1990; Hunt, 1992).

A sense of collective identity has been argued to be either learned through cultural production or produced as an innate, inherent attribute of persons within a group. Social scientists tend to argue the "constructivist" or "social constructionist" position that one learns to become a feminine woman, a heterosexual, a gay or lesbian, etc. (e.g., Kitzinger, 1987; Gerson and Peiss, 1985; Stein, 1992). The radical implication politically is that anyone can be socialized to be a non-feminine woman, a lesbian, a feminist, etc. Conservative counterarguments can be made, however, that anyone can therefore "unlearn" such deviant behaviors and assimilated into normalcy through socialization processes. Conversely, sociobiologists tend to argue the "essentialist" position that persons with specific kinds of identities are "born different," or essentially differ from those with other identities. The radical implication politically is that people who essentially differ from others can form their own culture with values commensurate with their unique identity. For example, if gay/lesbian people are "born different," then they need and deserve to be protected.
from discrimination under the same civil rights laws that protect ethnic/racial groups. Gay/lesbian people also can form their own culture with unique "gay/lesbian" cultural elements, such as norms, symbols, language, etc. Conservative counterarguments are sometimes made, however, that those who differ from others on an innate, ascribed basis are "born deviant" or develop in a deviant way due to "defective" genetic, biochemical or neurophysiological material. The implication is that medical science needs to find a "cure" to get such deviants to "adjust" to normalcy or to prevent such aberrents from being born in the first place.

A sense of identity which is actually constructed within a social movement culture or within dominant state discourse, frequently becomes reified or made to seem real, natural, and immutable, through social interaction processes. Increasingly, socially-constructed and reified categories of collective identity produced within social movement frames have been made to seem essentialized categories of difference. The socially-constructed nature of these differences is then mystified via the movement encouraging movement members to engage in public displays or rituals that reaffirm their sense of "differentness" from others not in the movement. Social scientists have been critical of social movements' tendencies to essentialize collective identities, due to their own constructivist perspective on identity. This essentialization of collective identity within social movements, however, has rarely been viewed as a legitimate form of protest against the essentializing of such identities in discourse used by the state.

Omi and Winant (1986) and Lafer (1991) discuss the state's essentialization of socially-constructed racial categories in the U.S.
for political purposes. Bourdieu (1984) also discusses contested culture in terms of the hegemonic reification of a sense of discrete social classes and races, while Rubin (1984) discusses state discourse in terms of the social construction and naturalization of dominant frames of "normal" homosexuality and heterosexuality. State discourse as comprising essentialization of gender has been discussed by Stephen (1993). Agreeing with the social constructionism of Gerson and Peiss (1990), Stephen points out that gender is a reified social category which is enacted and re-enacted daily in micro-scale interaction. She (1993:33) notes that "gender roles are not uniform for all women within one nation, culture, or community." Yet by taking gender out of its sociohistorical context and emphasizing women's traditional gender roles of wives and mothers, the state essentializes gender. Women become considered as "a natural category (sex), whose permanent and unchanging essence is determined (by biology). Women are [considered] not subjects, but objects of history" (Stephen, 1993:38). However, women's participation in locally-based, grass-roots, indigenous organizations or communities may allow them to create a sense of collective identity as women participants in these organizations, which then can be used for political mobilization and to foster challenges to traditional gender and also ethnic/racial or class-based stereotyping (Seligmann, 1993; Stephen, 1993). Whisman (1992) and Kimmel (1993) also discuss the essentialization of gay and lesbian identity and its radical or conservative implications for the gay and lesbian movement, respectively, depending on whether the movement or the state has the power to access media discourse and hence public opinion. Thus the essentialization of collective identity need not be inherently conservative or
assimilationist and may depend instead on the discursive context in which the identity is situated.

The social movement culture that emerges from the use of frames, emergent norms, rituals, symbols, discourse and collective identity may thus challenge dominant frames of analysis by creating a culture of resistance. Thus socially-constructed and reified categorizations can be made to work against nondominant subcultures of minorities, when imposed from above (Bourdieu, 1977), or they can be "reclaimed" or confronted by these minorities' culture of resistance, a situation in which feelings of pride, integrity, and politicization are associated with the collective identity of the challenging group. Seligmann remarks that the process of self-definition "can become a political weapon of resistance to assimilation and integration" (1993:191). A sense of collective identity can be used as the basis for a culture of resistance to construct alternative categories of identity in opposition to those established by the state. For example "queer identity" has been established by the gay/lesbian/bisexual movement as an alternative to the deviant, "homosexual" identity described in hegemonic cultural frames (Seidman, 1993). The Quebecois nationalist movement and Rastafarianism also constitute examples of new categories of identity being used to create a sense of nationalist pride among minority groups resisting the power of the state (Campbell, 1980; Breton, 1988).

As another example, Seligmann (1993) discusses how Peruvian market women who are informal food vendors challenge the state's discrete categorization of race and ethnicity, in its attempt to cast the untidy diversity of Peruvian ethnic and racial groups into one mold of a pluralistic "Peruvian society" united by "Peruvian culture." Dominant
cultural frames also cast the society as legitimately stratified by
discrete, essentialized categories of race/ethnicity, biological sex,
rural/urban divisions, and social class. Urban "whites" and "Spaniards"
form the top of the hierarchy, while urban or rural, Indian-Hispanic
mestizos constitute the middle class, and rural, indigenous "Indian"
campesinos or peasants are cast as the lazy and undeserving "minority
poor." Seligmann discusses how these Peruvian urban market women use
language-switching, flamboyant and "mannish" personal dress, and
aggressive, counterfeminine behavior in personal interaction to construct
a collective identity of chola, when they are really rural campesinas
in origin. The constructed new identity of chola clashes with and
directly confronts dominant hegemonic categories of ideal femininity,
ideal Indian identity, and ideal campesina identity.

Seligmann notes that, "Despite the dominant class and ethnic
categories to which mestizos still subscribe, the indeterminacy of real
social relations provides a space for contentious reassessment of these
relational categories of difference, and for market women to reject them
deliberately or call attention to them, and thereby to appropriate and
acknowledge the construction of different relational categories in
opposition to those used by the dominant classes" (Seligmann, 1993:191).
Peruvian cholas' interactions are thus construed in this social movement
culture as ethnic and gender-based resistance to hegemonic frames.
Similarly, Willis (1977) discusses how British working-class students in
Hammertown express their opposition to their lowly social class "in
style, micro-interactions, and non-public discourses" (1977:22) and thus
"put their finger up" at the school and at the "ear'oles," their
conformist working-class counterparts.
Collective identity construction as a culture of resistance can be understood as being comprised of the 3 processes of creation of boundaries, consciousness, and politicization of everyday life (Taylor and Whittier, 1994). Boundaries demarcate SM culture from dominant culture spheres; consciousness operates as emergent, shared ideational frames that delineate the SM culture's views. Politicization operates by the social movement employing symbols and alternative assignments of meaning involving personal empowerment and a challenge to dominant views of otherwise-mundane lifeworld experiences. Thus the use of self-help and feminist culture and the power of women to define themselves as "incest survivors" may function as cultural protest within the self-help movement for incest survivors, through these processes of collective identity construction.

Conclusion: Integrating Studies of Structure and Culture

The rise of European "new social movements" theory sets an example of the marriage of structurally-focused and culturally-focused theories of SMs. European NSM theorists do not divorce micro and macro levels of analysis. Rather, their work illustrates how action in the cultural arena affects the state, and thus influences the structural level of society. Giddens (1991:209), citing Roszak, states that the private experience of identity exploration and meaning construction (thru a sense of destiny) has become a subversive political force of major proportions. He argues that the very nature of modernity, as characterized by institutional reflexivity, has fostered the rise of lifestyle politics epitomized by a search for self-identity, which in turn has radical implications for systemic change.
Individuals' participation in self-help movements and consequent politicization of their lifestyle choices and forging of a sense of collective identity, are having repercussions on the state, since the state delineates the moral boundaries, and constitutes the final arbiter of individual rights and obligations, even as individuals engaged in lifestyle politics push at these boundaries.

The revival of studies on culture does not preclude its linkage to the study of structural forces in social movement research. Wuthnow (1987:31-44) notes that we can look at structure in relation to culture without engaging in reductionism via a holistic approach focusing on symbols and meanings. This study contributes to an understanding of the connections between structure and culture by examining the expression of SM members' sense of collective identity through the ways in which they exhibit politicized everyday activities and its effect upon the state. This will also be explicated by examining how individual experiences are shaped by movement frames as expressed through "disruptive discourse" or as adopted into the dominant cultural discourse (Alcoff and Gray, 1993).

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

My first research question asks to what extent the master frames of feminist and self-help movements have had an impact on the culture of the movement. Social movements use frame alignment processes to link individual experiences with the movement's production of meaning to foster mobilization. The movement uses cultural elements in a creative way to bridge, amplify, extend or transform the individuals' "interpretive schemata" into a social movement culture which has common interpretive understandings for the group as a whole (Snow et al., 1986).
It does this by punctuating injustices and attributing responsibility for them, and by articulating how individual subjectivities are coherent via a shared, meaningfully-interconnected lens of interpretation or "collective action frame." A broader and more overarching frame which may link various social movements' ideology analogous to a paradigm linking theories, constitutes a master frame (Snow and Benford, 1992).

My second research question focuses on how a distinctive social movement culture creates and maintains a sense of collective identity in the movement. I contend that the self-help movement for incest survivors exemplifies one of the new social movements in its structure and cultural content, particularly considering its goal as members' freedom to define their own identities apart from institutionalized male sexual violence within the family.

Third, I hypothesize in this study that movement members, using elements of its culture, construct and disseminate images of themselves as "survivors" rather than victims and thereby enact effective strategies of resistance towards the dominant culture. A culture of resistance can be understood as existing when a subculture or social movement culture exhibits cultural elements that reject or oppose dominant cultural values and attitudes, particularly when the latter are oppressive of groups treated as deviants or minorities within the larger society (hooks, 1989; Taylor and Whittier, 1994). The social movement culture constructs and disseminates among members empowering images of themselves via the creation of "transgressive discourse," oppositional consciousness, and an empowering sense of collective identity in movement members (Alcoff and Gray, 1993; Taylor and Whittier, 1994; Van Willigen, 1993).
Lastly, this study explores how social movement members also use elements of its culture discursively to construct their lived experience as truth. Theorists of epistemology have noted that the acquisition of empirical knowledge, constructed as scientific truth, is a function of sets of agreements or paradigms among members of particular knowledge communities (Kuhn, 1970; Harding, 1987a, 1987b; Code, 1991; Stivers, 1993). Similarly, I hypothesize that members of social movement communities treat certain kinds of experiential acquisition as truth, using the alternative cultural discourse operating in their social movement's interpretive framework. Specifically, experiences are constituted as truth through the lens of social movement discourse on feminism, self-help, and male sexual violence within its affinity groups, through movement literature, and through shared talk. I hypothesize that the creation of specific "safe" spaces where women's emotional, confessional or narrative-type speech about their private experiences are uttered and collectively constructed as valid, may be one of the explicit or implicit tasks or consequences of the social movement culture for incest survivors.

CHAPTER OUTLINE
Chapter 1 outlines my theoretical analysis, discussing the resource mobilization and new social movements perspectives and the self-help and feminist movements as backgrounds for this study. It also discusses how this movement constitutes an example of an NSM which challenges dominant frames of analysis as a culture of resistance. Chapter 2 delineates how and why feminist methodology was employed. Chapter 3 examines the ideology, strategies, and tactics of the social movement organizations.
studied. Chapter 4 describes how movement members enter into a process of reconstruction of the self through movement framing of experiential processes. It also discusses their relation to dominant and social movement-cultural discourse. Chapter 5 commences with how the organization operates to support processes of collective identity in terms of the creation of symbolic strategies of resistance to social control. Chapter 6 addresses the backlash and countermovements. It concludes with implications for further study of social movements in terms of the mutual influences of social movement culture on social structure and of structure on culture.
END NOTES

1. Dr. Richard Ofshe is on the Professional Advisory Board of The False Memory Syndrome Foundation, according to footnote 27, page 327, of Robert B. Rockwell's "Insidious Deception," *Journal of Psychohistory* 22(3):312-328, Winter.

2. Quote from "The Welcome" read aloud at 3 different 1995 meetings in Columbus, Ohio of Survivors of Incest Anonymous. "The Welcome" is an official piece of literature of Survivors of Incest, Anonymous; Headquarters at P.O. Box 21817, Baltimore MD 21222-6817.

3. Guidelines for the structure of SIA are stipulated in part of "The Welcome" read aloud at meetings and also in pamphlets such as "Starting Your Own SIA Meeting," available from the World Service Office.

4. Observation made from 30 interviews conducted April 20-June 30, 1995 with social movement participants who engaged in voluntary, in-depth personal interviews. This is discussed further in chapter 4.
CHAPTER II
METHODS

Introduction
This chapter details the methodology employed in this dissertation, including epistemological approach and data collection and analysis procedures. In order to understand the epistemological and methodological stance of this dissertation as grounded in postmodernism and feminism, it is first necessary to elaborate on what is meant by the postmodernist and feminist challenges to traditional, positivist social science. Writers such as Gouldner (1970) have stated that we are providing the scientific community with better research when we explicate our domain assumptions, or the central premises upon which our theoretical approach to our research is founded. In this study I am using a feminist postmodernist methodology. Thus the domain assumptions underlying this dissertation are those of this researcher and are rooted in the premises of both postmodernism and feminism. Based on these premises I employ a multimethodological, qualitative approach to methods to explicate the framing processes and processes of reconstruction of self in the self-help movement for incest survivors.

The sections in this chapter are the following. First, I describe the traditional, positivist method in social science as "normal science" and then explicate the postmodernist critique of it. Secondly, I discuss feminist theory and methods, and how they are both applicable to, and
relevant for social-scientific inquiry. Thirdly, I detail how the synthesis of feminism and postmodernism into feminist postmodernism has resulted in a new critical stance towards not only traditional social science but also early feminist methodology. I then elaborate my epistemological domain assumptions underlying this dissertation. I then describe data collection procedures and characteristics of the sample. I also discuss the commensurability of the data collection procedures with feminist postmodernism. Next, I elaborate my data analysis procedures and how I arrived at my theoretical conclusions. I then summarize and discuss potential biases in both the data and sample.

POSITIVISM AND POSTMODERNISM

Traditional sociological methodology is based on a positivist paradigm associated with the Enlightenment ethics of rationality, logic, and disembodied individualism (Agger, 1991). The modern ideals of the civil public and civil society are founded upon these ethics (Young, 1987). The project of modernist science is based on the Enlightenment assumptions of science and rationality as providing humankind with benefits and freedoms which had been previously reserved for royalty, the aristocracy, and the landed gentry, or with new benefits and freedoms previously unheard-of. Thus the new methods and inventions of science were viewed as part of a new era of history. Modernist science's positivist epistemology and methods thus became linked with the idea of historical social relations and ideas making "progress" by evolving into their current state (Foucault, 1972). Antipositivist paradigms argue, however, that the current state of existing institutions and their associated belief
systems are then falsely experienced as necessary and immutable institutions representing the pinnacle of progress (Stockman, 1984; Agger, 1991).

Epistemologically, positivism is based on the premises that linear thinking, evidentiary-based reasoning, objectivity or value-neutrality, empiricism, rationality, and distanition from the research "subject," provide the bases for good science (Longino, 1990). Methodologically, positivism holds that the use of hypotheses and deduction to formulate theories, dispassionate observation of researcher-induced cause-effect relations, and rigid adherence to the experimental method, constitute the appropriate methods of science (Kuhn, 1970; Harding, 1986). Scientific research accumulates, linearly, as scientists engage in replication of old studies or conduct new studies based on this nomothetic, "hypothetico-deductive model" (Kuhn, 1970). New studies are examples of good science if they conform to these epistemological and methodological guidelines and if their conceptualizations of the data have both reliability and validity.

In contrast to positivism as the ideology of modernism, postmodernism has been said to be the ideology of postmodernity, where the latter is identified with postindustrial society and the failure of science to improve the overall human condition as manifested in global starvation, warfare, male domination, and poverty, and First World economic exploitation of Third World peoples Postmodernism thus is comprised of a cynicism about the promises of science and modernity to promote a new era of evolutionary progress and well-being for all (Bernstein, 1992; Borgmann, 1992; Crook et al., 1992; Hall and Neitz, 1993). History is no longer viewed as a linear progression of steps towards the apex of
"civilization" and "enlightenment" but is seen as a social context in which various features of power and dominance are played out (Foucault, 1972; 1980). Instead of the objective, the rational, and the linear, postmodernism emphasizes the subjective, the symbolic, and the metaphorical (Sarup, 1989).

Postmodernism questions the positivist claim that social-scientific research can "reflect the world without presuppositions, without intruding philosophical and theoretical assumptions into one's work" (Agger, 1991:106). The positivist model is thus founded upon the assumption that what constitutes "normal" science is without bias; that is, that no political or ideological assumptions intrude upon it. Weber (orig. 1946; rev. 1973) originally articulated the need for a "value-free" or objective sociology, stating that this should be the goal of sociology. Thus, he was putting social science methodology squarely within the tradition of positivist science. By contrast the postmodernist critique, in conjunction with the hermeneutic tradition in social science, states that it is a false premise to claim that one's research can reflect the world free from philosophical assumptions (Nielsen, 1990). Thus in the interest of creating better science, postmodernists state that we as scientists must self-consciously and reflexively examine and expose our domain assumptions for the scrutiny of the community of scientists and our research subjects. This reflexive stance is necessary because both the overall paradigm of positivist Western science, and individual conceptualizations, theories and research reflect the presuppositions of their formulators and the underlying cultural values of their particular society in its particular sociohistorical site, and may thus have unconscious political agendas (Kuhn, 1970; Rosenberg, 1989;
Longino, 1990; Stivers, 1993). Thus to fail to acknowledge that such agendas exist is to be complicit in their hegemony or to be blind to potential methodological problems of bias in one's research.

Postmodernism also critiques the positivist view that "truth" is independent of the viewer and is readily discernible when the scientific method is applied to observation, and that this truth will appear the same to all viewers (Alcoff and Gray, 1993). While positivism comprises the belief that scientific reports of findings directly reflect the "truth" of the research, postmodernists contend that the facts do not "speak for themselves." Rather, the interpretation of data and scientific discursive practices influence these "facts." With respect to the interpretation of data as research findings, postmodernists have noted that all raw data is channeled through a lens of interpretation. This lens is that of the researchers themselves and the sociohistorical context, and in particular the personal and sociohistorical assumptions underlying the theory, which then influence researchers' perceptions and thought processes in interpreting the data. Thus scientific reports and findings reflect researchers' values and domain assumptions, since the latter affect how theory is constructed and how constructs are conceptualized. With respect to scientific discursive practices, what is constituted or reported as scientific "truth" or findings is shaped by discursive practices as structured by power and knowledge (Foucault, 1972; 1980; Agger, 1991; Alcoff and Gray 1993).

Some writers in the philosophy of science, writing prior to the advent of postmodernism, challenged the process of accumulation of scientific evidence, and discussed how new paradigms come to replace old ones within science. Scientists will overlook evidence or data which contradicts the
beliefs of the dominant scientific paradigm as "anomalies" to the conduct of "normal science," until enough contradictory evidence accumulates that a scientific revolution occurs (Kuhn 1970). However, such writers did not question the process of evidentiary reasoning (logical interpreting of evidence using the positivist method) itself, saying instead that scientists must not ignore a "valid" datum just because it is not commensurate with the dominant scientific paradigm. Such exhortations amounted to apologetics for positivism and not a critique of the latter, according to antipositivist writers (Longino, 1990).

Postmodernists have provided a more radical critique of science, saying that positivist science is not necessarily good science. Postmodernists view science itself, among other social institutions, as a social construction in which the modernist values of the given society and/or its researchers (which are influenced by societal values), influence the practice and findings of scientific methodology (Longino, 1990; Nielsen, 1990). These values are then reified in the society and among the community of scientists, so that the values about what constitutes good science and their underlying premises are unquestioned (Harding, 1987a; Longino, 1990).

Postmodernism also is critical of positivism as a basis for scientists creating totalizing and universalistic ideologies (Butler, 1992). Antipositivist theories critique paradigms such as Marxism or positivism for their totalizing claims, meaning that the latter "attempt to identify axial structural principles explaining all manner of disparate social phenomena" (Agger, 1991:116). Antipositivist writers also question the positivist tenet of universalism, meaning that the latter presumes that scientists can infer general principles of social structure and
organization based on identities and behaviors (ostensibly) shared by people around the world. Thus positivism assumes we can use constructs such as "mankind," "cultural universals," etc. in our theories since (supposedly) everyone's experiences of life are the same, or universal. Postmodernists, however, state that we cannot generalize about social life using universalistic theories since in the world today people have "fragmented identities" based on different locations in the social structure (Harding, 1986; Agger, 1991). Thus the experiences of all women are not the same, the experiences of all men are not the same, etc.

Finally, postmodernism has been vocal in its criticism of positivism as non-liberatory. "[Positivism's] notion that knowledge can simply reflect the world leads to the uncritical identification of reality and rationality: One experiences the world as rational and necessary, thus deflating attempts to change it...Positivism functions ideologically where it promotes passivity and fatalism" (Agger, 1991:109). Postmodernist writers thus assume that the purpose of good theory is to serve humanity via its emancipatory ethics and challenge to distorted communication (Agger, 1991; Eastland, 1994).

FEMINIST METHODOLOGY

The original rationale behind the development of a distinctive feminist approach to sociological research, was to provide a more comprehensive and less distorted view of the social world and of social life which encompassed the views and experiences of women as fully as those of men (Cook and Fonow, 1986, 1991; Harding, 1986; Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1990; Reinharz, 1992). Feminists have seen the project of envisioning a feminist methodology as involving two tasks
(Cook and Fonow, 1986). These tasks are still salient features of feminist sociology today, but new features have been subsumed under these tasks as feminist theory has developed in conjunction with postmodernism. First, we must uncover and critique the underlying epistemological assumptions of traditional sociology and attempt to formulate new ones in accordance with the way women experience the world. Secondly, we must articulate and practice new methods of garnering data and interpret them in ways that depict women’s experiencing of the world, rather than using positivist methods.

A necessary first step towards envisioning a feminist methodology, is to critique the traditional epistemological assumptions underlying traditional, nonfeminist sociology (Cook and Fonow, 1986). This critique was (and is) necessary since the questions we ask about the social world and even the cognitions that we use to formulate these questions, structure our theory-making. The formulation of our theory then in turn influences the choice of method used to gain information on our topic of study. Feminists have stated that we need to examine traditional sociological concepts and understandings for androcentric bias, or conceptualizations of the world which are not based on women’s experience. For instance Pagelow (1979) has discussed how the traditional categories of violence, as sometimes collected by sociologists but then used in reports of FBI crime statistics, combine marital rape with other forms of family violence that is not against women, such as violence between siblings. In addition, nonmarital rape has been lumped together with other "crimes against the person" so that its nature as a crime mostly of men against women, has thus been disguised. Moreover, sociologists traditionally have preconceived categories for their
statistics which reflect a male bias; for example, a slap by a man is
equated with a slap by a woman in assessing domestic violence (Straus,
Gelles and Steinmetz, 1980).

Feminists cannot be satisfied with critiquing or "picking holes in"
the positivist paradigm, however, in striving for comprehensive social
science. Feminist methodologists have also been clear about the
necessity for feminists to stipulate new feminist epistemological
assumptions and to experiment with new methods of research in the quest
for better science that also empowers women (Cook and Fonow, 1991).

Feminist research has been described as being "contextual, inclusive,
experiential, involved, socially relevant, open to the environment, and
inclusive of emotions and events as experienced" (Nielsen, 1990:6).

Thus feminist theorists and researchers promulgated five epistemic
assumptions as underlying the new field of feminist methodology. First,
feminists must emphasize consciousness-raising as a tool for empowering
both the researcher and her "subjects." Consciousness-raising is
an important feminist methodological tool, because women as a
marginalized group in society are then uniquely qualified to understand
how they have a unique perspective on the world as women, and how this
relates to the perspective of men as men (Westcott, 1979; Hartsock, 1983;
Reinharz, 1983; MacKinnon, 1982, 1987; Cook and Fonow, 1986). Women have
been able to formulate unique new theories in sociology about gender
stratification or other aspects of women's experiences only after
achieving this sense of self as part of a group with a unique perspective,
and seeing that their problems are not "personal" but "political." Hence
feminist methodology also focuses on needing to be experiential, or
reflecting women's experiencing of the world (Reinharz, 1983).
Secondly, we must critique the positivist notion of objectivity, because the traditional subject-object distinction in sociological methodology reduces women to objects rather than subjects of history and science, denying them a "voice" or silencing them (Smith, 1978, 90). For instance Paget (1990) discusses how women's evocative phrases, particularly in something she wrote, were edited out of a text by an editor because its emotionality was not "appropriate" for sociological discourse. The traditional positivist methodology contributes to women's objectification, even to the objectification of the researcher herself as a subject, and should therefore be eschewed (Smith, 1987).

Thirdly, we need to attend continuously and reflexively to the significance of gender relations as an important feature structuring all of social life. Fourthly, we need to examine the ethics of our methodology and our findings, in accordance with an ethic of care and nurturing (Gilligan, 1982; Benhabib, 1987). Finally, we need to focus our research on eradicating patriarchy and empowering women, since the traditional institutions of society, including sociology as part of the institution of education, disempower and silence women, and treat them as second-class citizens (Cook and Fonow, 1986; Smith, 1990; Fonow and Cook, 1991).

Early feminist methodological writings of the 1970s and early 1980s thus focused on the primacy of gender as a stratificatory feature of social life, with other locations in the social structure subsumed under this and relegated to lesser importance (e.g., Firestone, 1970; Daly, 1978; MacKinnon, 1982). This early approach also assumed that the experiences of women globally had more commonalities than differences, and that "woman" was therefore a unifying category of identity (Butler
and Scott, 1992). However, early feminist theory and research via its focus on gender stratification and male dominance laid the groundwork for the expansion of feminist theory and research into new domains.

As feminist theory has broadened as a critical stance, it has moved beyond the articulation of new epistemic assumptions, into devising new epistemological positions, or groupings of epistemological assumptions. The mutual, inductive-deductive nature of feminist theory has played a role in the formation of these epistemological positions. Thus feminists have developed theories and then revised them based on the specific findings of feminist research, as they have sought to address various new issues in science. These issues include the underrepresentation of women in the sciences, the role of positivism in androcentric science, and the effect of modernist assumptions on science as a social construction.

Three basic feminist stances have emerged: feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint epistemology, and feminist postmodernism (Harding, 1986, 1987b; Nielsen, 1990; Tuana, 1992). I will describe each of these stances and then elaborate why I have chosen to adhere to a feminist postmodernist stance.

Longino (1990) is an example of feminist empiricism, which views traditional science as biased and as "bad science" because it is androcentric. However, this theory does not critique positivism itself. Stricter adherence to the tenets of positivist science and the admission of more women into the research endeavor will (supposedly) overcome the androcentric bias of science, according to this view. Feminist research has been shown that the inclusion of more women into doing science has reduced gender bias (Harding, 1986). However, this particular critique of science is incomplete, since it fails to address the problem of
objectivity as objectifying or silencing women's experiences, fails to see the connection between politics and science, and as traditional science is not amenable to addressing questions of racism, classism, and other types of biases (Tuana, 1992).

Secondly, feminist standpoint epistemology takes a Marxian view in discussing how feminist sociologists can redo the work of upper-middle-class, white, heterosexual men (Smith, 1979, 87b, 90; Hartsock, 1983; Rose, 1983). These men's privileged position in society has blinded them to the biases associated with their high status, according to this second feminist stance. Feminist standpoint epistemology states that scientists can achieve a more comprehensive and better theory (i.e., theories which better fit the data), if they adopt such critiques. For example, Tanner and Zihlman's (1976) re-working of traditional, androcentric "man the hunter" data, found that their "woman the gatherer" theory fit the data better. The androcentric theory had postulated men as the "founders of civilization" since isomorphic chip patterns in stones were interpreted as indicative of their use as (male) hunting tools. Male tool use in turn fostered bipedalism, increased intelligence, and group sociability. The gynecentric theory uses the same data but suggests that females used the stones to hammer roots and leaves. This view provides a more comprehensive view of changes in hominid behavior because it links the female tool use to contemporaneous changes in male dentition and fossilized osteological remnants. Smith (1987a) talks about how a focus on the local, particularistic, and immediate relations of women can allow us to deconstruct the gender subtext in sociology texts. This will facilitate an overview of how the agenda of sociology is in keeping with "the ruling relations of men." Smith (1990) has also discussed how the
various subfields of the domain of sociology reflect a male experience of the world in terms of privileging of the public sphere and in terms of notions of power and relationality. She locates her critique of traditional sociology squarely within a critique of the social relations of production and says that we need to bridge the "line of fault" between the experiences of women and sociological discourse. There are problems with this perspective in that it seeks to establish a unitary view of women's experiences (Hekman, 1990). It also seeks to locate women's experiences squarely within the private sphere, which does not accord with some women's experiences of the social world. This perspective has also been critiqued as being aligned with modernism in a search for universalistic knowledge (DiStefano, 1990).

Finally, feminist postmodernism as a type of critical theory critiques modernist positivism for its empiricism, universalistic meta-narratives, valuation of objectivity, rationality, linearity, dualisms, and autonomously-individualistic approach to science (Tuana, 1992). Nielsen defines a theory as "critical" if it "departs from and questions the dominant ideology, creating at least the possibility of being "outside" of that ideology" (1990:9). More specifically critical theory is identified with the antipositivist, antimodernist views of the Frankfurt School, but the term is also generally used to refer to other antipositivist paradigms such as poststructuralism and postmodernism (Agger, 1991).

The feminist postmodernist critical approach has expanded exponentially in the past decade, critiquing not only positivism but also other dominant ideologies. For instance Kelly-Gadol (1987) critiques the traditional periodization of history as divided into linear segments.
which liberated men from the oppression of other men, but did not liberate women. The Renaissance, Kelly-Gadol notes, was not a liberatory period of "progress" for women. Thus she is challenging both androcentric and modernist paradigms of history. Haraway (1988) discusses finding a nonunitary, nondualistic approach to knowledge which recognizes situated subjectivities or the "situated knower." Tuana's (1992) revised or "fundamentally-altered empiricism," constitutes a type of feminist postmodernism, which, due to its emphasis on membership in subcommunities-as-knowers, best fits my preferences for studying social movement communities and the ways women are empowered by their participation in communities which foster for them a sense of collective identity. I also agree with the feminist postmodernist argument that the underlying political-theoretical assumptions of feminist empiricism and feminist standpoint epistemology are those of the universalistic theories of modernist liberalism and modernist Marxism, respectively (Harding, 1987b). These perspectives’ focus on liberatory projects remains questionable.

With the advent of feminist postmodernism, feminist sociological theory has been re-defined as "a systematic and critical evaluation of sociology's core assumptions in the light of discoveries being made within another community of discourse--the community of those creating feminist theory" (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1990:316). The new emphases are thus on discursive practices, knowledge/power systems, a critique of positivism, and a nonuniversalistic view of who/what feminists and women are (Harding, 1987a). Feminist theory itself portrays the social world and its ideas from a woman-centered perspective, in three ways. First, a woman-centered perspective makes
woman the primary object of study, asking to what extent women’s roles in the active production of the social world in both the public and private spheres, have been excluded or marginalized in studies of the social world.

Secondly, a woman-centered feminist theory makes women’s experience of social life, their subjectivity, a lens from which the world is viewed. The rationale for this argument is that, by bringing in women’s subjectivity, the community of social scientists is presented with a "larger picture" of the social context in which social-scientific knowledge is produced. When we analyze how the concept of "absolute knowledge" has been reified in the social scientific community, we begin to recognize that it is actually a masculinist social construction, or "the relativized ideology of a particular group" which is developed in discursive contexts based on males’ dominant experiences of gender and power (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1990:317). This feminist postmodernist examination of "normal" science, will therefore allow us to recognize and correct our epistemological and methodological biases and thus create better science.

Thirdly, a woman-centered feminist theory critiques the operation of the social world and takes an activist approach for change in accord with other, antipositivist, critical theories in social science, such as neo-Marxian, critical, and post-structuralist theories (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1990). The latter all share the epistemological assumption that the purpose of sociology is to create theories and conduct research which will foster social change in terms of a more humane, just, and egalitarian world. This liberatory ethic is often cited as originating in the works of Karl Marx, whose critiques of early
capitalism and of the social relations endemic to it, are regarded within sociology as one of the primary bases for the social conflict paradigm. Feminist sociological theory is commensurate with this emancipatory theoretical tradition of critical theories within sociology, because of its sound methodology (rooted within the qualitative methodological tradition) and critical-epistemological stance to the social world (Lengermann and Niebrugge-Brantley, 1990).

Early feminist theory developed various feminist methods commensurate with the development of these feminist epistemological points or stances. Cook and Fonow (1986) initially discussed the use of visual techniques, analysis of spontaneous events, and conversational and textual analysis. Visual techniques involve such things as photonovelas of women's consciousness being raised, women learning to read and being in a rap group, or Diamond's (1977) videotaping of gender differences in communication reflecting differing conceptualizations of such constructs as motherhood, and relation to the Deity. Triangulation (Cook and Fonow, 1986,91) or what is also called a multimethodological approach (Reinharz, 1983, 1992) has been discussed as a more feminist approach to sociology, which can integrate various qualitative methods together, or integrate qualitative with quantitative methods, and thus more comprehensively capture women's experiences. I will discuss narrative as a feminist postmodernist method in the next section.

FEMINIST POSTMODERNIST METHODOLOGY

In this section I discuss feminist postmodernism in more detail and discuss its relation to my domain assumptions and methods. Feminist postmodernists, critiquing positivism, have been critical of the
They have taken the postmodernist emphases on discursive practices, knowledge/power systems, institutions as social constructions, reflexivity, the contextuality of ideas, a liberatory system of ethics, and the critique of positivism, and applied them to feminist critiques of patriarchal social institutions, androcentric thought paradigms, and male exclusionary patterns in social life. They have thus formulated a new synthesis which takes a critical stance toward both traditional social science and early feminist methodology. Feminist postmodernist theory continues to question the epistemological assumptions and methodological practices of all social scientists, including those of feminist theorists and feminist postmodernists themselves (e.g., Butler's (1992) critique of Benhabib (1989).) Thus feminist postmodernist theory fits appropriately within the context of critical theories within sociology which assume that good social research questions the social order, including the assumptions and structure of sociology itself.

Postmodernist feminist writers have critiqued positivist "normal" science for its linear, Eurocentric, masculinist epistemological and methodological bias (Butler and Scott, 1992). Epistemologically, normal science is regarded as having an implicitly masculinist bias since the theories of normal science are said to reflect the political assumptions of its makers. This is problematic since, if we base our theories on white, heterosexual, middle class, Western-scientific male experience and then assume that such theories have general applicability to women, people of color, working-class, nonwestern, or gay/lesbian/bisexual people, we are applying a false template to others' experiences, a
pattern which may not fit their social reality (Hartsock 1983, 1; Harding, 1987a,b; Smith, 1987b).

Postmodernist feminists have thus advanced the postmodernist critique of positivist scientific thought and practice by noting how the interpretation of data and scientific discursive practices are influenced by structural features such as race, social class, sex, and sexual orientation. For instance postmodernist feminists have noted that the values and domain assumptions in androcentric sociology affect the field's conceptualization of certain topics. That is, by using male experience of the world as the basis for social-scientific conceptualizations, women's experience of the social world is not reflected in the structure or content of sociological theory or research findings (Smith, 1987a). For instance in the classic work on the occupational structure in the U.S., Blau and Duncan (1967) based the socioeconomic status of women on that of their husbands or fathers, but feminists have debunked this, noting its racial and class-based assumptions that women were not working outside the home (Acker, 1973). I will now examine the postmodernist feminist critique of positivist epistemology in more detail before commencing with a discussion of the postmodernist feminist critique of positivist methods.

One of the central epistemological tenets of positivism is the idea that objectivity is both possible and desirable as a goal for the sciences. The belief in objectivity manifests in the assumption that there is an objective reality "out there" to be studied; i.e., that the knower is separate from, and even must strive to be separate from, that which is to be known or explored, in order for social science to be effective. By contrast postmodernist feminists contend that objectivity
is neither possible nor desirable. A state of complete objectivity, or value-neutrality, is impossible since all research reflects the values of its formulators. We should also not aspire to such a goal, according to feminist postmodernism, since it would result in distortions of the data. Feminist postmodernists note that the idea of objectivity is based on a privileged, Cartesian notion of the "self as knower" (Bordo, 1987). This Cartesian self is tied up with the notion of a mythologically-autonomous male self who is independent of the social world (Benhabib, 1987; Hekman, 1990). Postmodernist feminists have been critical of this individualistic, modernist self. They note that the knower is influenced by her social background and the social context of her life and science. Moreover, they state that women's experience is not reflected in this mythological "Kantian/Cartesian" self, as the latter finds his identity in individualistic competition and achievement in the public sphere, since women's experience of daily life is immersed in both the public and private spheres. Women's lives are also more cooperatively-based and less dependent upon external sources for notions of "success" than men's (Benhabib, 1987; Markus, 1987).

The traditional, positivist notion of objectivity is based on a presumed need to distance the knower from the known in order to be objective, known as subject-object distanciation. The postmodernist feminist critique, however, assumes that the knower is not separate from the known and does not know more than the interviewee (or "object"), since she inhabits the same social world as the interviewee. Subsumed under the idea of subject-object distanciation, is the positivist assumption that a unidirectional flow of information yields the most objective results in research. Thus the subject or knower elicits
information from the object or source of knowledge, but the object cannot
by definition know as much about social science or the topic of research
as the knower (usually because the knower or scientist has "higher
education" and book-based, "superior" knowledge). Thus "good"
interviewees should not ask too many questions or deviate strongly from
the researcher's interview schedule, since the purpose of such
interviewing is to serve the interests of the researcher in gathering
knowledge and not to "waste time" answering interviewees' irrelevant
questions (Oakley, 1981). By contrast, the postmodernist feminist
approach assumes interviewing to be a mutually-informative, interactive
event between the researcher and her interviewees. Writers such as
Oakley (1981) or Lopata (1980) found that they produced more-in-depth,
better science when they did not conform to a rigid schedule of preset,
structured interview questions from which interviewees would not be
allowed to deviate.

Methodologically, feminist postmodernism views "normal science" as
biased due to its emphases on the unit of analysis and quantitative
methods. For instance according to positivism we should base our method
on the "unit of analysis." The positivist method thus assumes that we
need to break the perceived world up into disparate, linearly-measured
amounts of things or people grouped into homogeneous categories, in order
for us to be scientific. Cook and Fonow (1986) note that the term "unit
of analysis" implies that the scientific method must be predicated on the
analysis of social phenomena as separate "units," but that this
assumption rests on the male experiencing of the social world as context-
independent and not on any inherently "scientific" laws of nature.
Feminist research has instead shown that women experience the social
world as more contextual and rooted in social relations than men do (Gilligan, 1982; Benhabib, 1987; Markus, 1987). Sociologists contend that this sense of relationality is due to gender socialization processes and not an innate feature of women's biology. Moreover, the positivist emphasis on grouping people into homogeneous units is exhibiting modernist bias by taking a universalistic, totalizing approach to the experiencing of identity (Harding, 1986; Butler and Scott, 1992). Positivists also assume that a quantitative approach to methodology thus best embodies the goal of measuring the social world through discrete categories of things distanced from the knower. However, this reducing of the world to things which can be counted ignores the depth of experience which can be shared through qualitative methods. It also reduces women's participation in the production of social science, due to their gender socialization that they "can't do math" (Reinharz, 1992).

I contend that this feminist postmodernist approach creates "better science" since it yields a more comprehensive and less distorted view of the social world than adherence to positivist methodology does. Feminist postmodernist researchers have noted that we are creating better science when we question the social-contextual values of science, and the methodological practices that proceed from these values, in that we frequently may then come up with theories and interpretations which better fit the data (Tanner and Zihlman, 1976; Knorr-Cetina, 1981; Longino and Doell, 1983; Keller, 1985; Flax, 1987; Harding, 1987a,b; Haraway, 1988; Longino, 1990).

Feminist postmodernist theory goes beyond the original explorations of feminist sociological theory to consider how feminist theory itself risks becoming a universalistic, totalizing ideology if we assume a unitary
identity surrounding the concept "woman" (Dill, 1987; Harding, 1987a; Ladner, 1987; Hooks, 1989; Spelman, 1989). For instance Butler and Scott (1992) propose that we need to deconstruct the notion of identity and identity categories for women. "There appears to be a belief that without an ontologically grounded feminist subject there can be no politics. Here, politics is understood as a representational discourse that presumes a fixed or ready-made subject, usually conceived through the category of "women." As a result, analysis of the political construction and regulation of this category is summarily foreclosed. What are the political consequences of such foreclosure? And what political possibilities does a critique of identity categories make possible?" (1992:xiv). With respect to my own research, I have attempted not to foreclose on the political construction of categories of identity. I hope to open up dialogue on this political construction with my focus on women's processes of reconstruction of self with regard to their identities as incest survivors.

Feminism is also in danger of becoming such a totalizing, biased paradigm if we exclude the voices and experiences of some people or groups construed as "Other." Traditional feminist theory, for instance, conceptualized Third World women as a unitary group who shared a common culture and a common subjugated, lived experience as "victims" of First World oppression. This fails to take into account the rich diversity of the cultures of Third World countries. It also precludes, by its very assumptions, an examination of the everyday modes of resistance to domination practiced by women in these cultures (Seligmann, 1993). Thus feminist postmodernists have questioned early projects within feminist methodology, citing it as a "particularistic account" which privileges
white, western-european, middle-class women in academia and has therefore been steeped in assumptions of colonialism, imperialism, and Eurocentric bias (Lorde, 1984; Mohanty et al. 1991; Krouse, 1993). The solution to these problems of bias is therefore not to create a universalistic feminist theory but to use post-structuralism and postmodernism to explore "how...universal theories of "patriarchy" or phallogocentrism need to be rethought in order to avoid the consequences of a white-feminist epistemological/cultural imperialism" (Butler and Scott, 1992:xv).

Feminist postmodernist theorists, particularly women of color and/or members of less privileged groups, have addressed the biases of early feminist theory by pointing out that although gender oppression was seen as the primary mode of male domination, by white, heterosexual, middle class feminist women, this neglects the relevance of classism, racism, and heterosexism in the lives of women whose identities are different from this (Combahee River Collective, 1982; Lorde, 1984; Dill, 1987; Ladner, 1987; Collins, 1990). These feminists pointed out that white, Western, heterosexual, middle class women experienced the social world as oppressive solely due to patriarchal social relations, because of the latter's privileged location in the social structure, with respect to their identities being the "unmarked," normative categories of women's experience in the social world, i.e. how various women are seen from the perspective of the dominant culture (Lorde, 1984; Collins, 1990; Mohanty et al. 1991; Krouse, 1993). My adherence to postmodernism is also strongly rooted in these critiques. For if we fail to adopt a critical stance toward feminist theory itself, we risk methodological and
epistemological blindness and are violating the liberatory ethic of critical social science.

Thus feminist postmodernist theory has emerged to encompass the diverse writings and experiences of women construed as "Other," including Third World women of color, and women with alternative sexualities and notions of desire (Snitow et al., 1983; Rubin, 1984; Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1986). It has also increasingly acknowledged that many women's location in the social structure is such that they are simultaneously oppressor and oppressed, both colonized and colonizer (Butler, 1992; Ault, 1993; Krouse, 1993).

With respect to my domain assumptions about the purpose of social science, this dissertation adheres to antipositivist assumptions about the purpose of social science. The purpose of social science in the positivist tradition is to explain the social world so that we may predict and control social chaos (Nielsen, 1990). Postmodernist feminism evinces a wariness of binary oppositions or dualities, seeing in them a reversion to the Cartesian black/white, mind/self dichotomy which is characteristic of modernistic positivist epistemology (Harding, 1986; Butler and Scott, 1992; Hinkle, 1995). Thus the positivist tradition with its implicit false dualisms, has tended to view the social scientist in masculine terms and the social world in feminine terms. The social world is seen as untamed nature, identified with irrationality, subjectivity, passion, and chaos, as something to be conquered and controlled (Christ, 1987; Young, 1987). This tradition has been followed most closely in sociology by structural-functionalists such as Talcott Parsons. However, for feminist postmodernists, the purpose of conducting research is to create an emancipatory social science. By opening up
dialogue and communication with the disenfranchised, the goal is to
achieve a liberatory ethic which provides the latter with access to
knowledge and hence power with respect to their own position in the
social world. In this respect, my approach to the study is based on a
postmodernist feminist view of the social world, since I likewise assume
that the purpose of sociology is to create better social science, which
necessarily involves an emancipatory ethic.

My approach to interviewing women and men in the self-help movement
for incest survivors also closely follows an Afrocentric feminist
epipistemological approach. Collins (1990) takes an Afrocentric feminist
approach to epistemology, stating that we must look at how paradigms of
thought and social institutions create and reinforce interlocking systems
of race, class, and gender domination. This is known as the matrix of
domination. An Afrocentric feminist approach to social scientific
inquiry will focus on how marginalized peoples have created systems of
resistance to interlocking systems of race, class, and gender domination
through systems of community, kinship, and power (Collins, 1990). Both
Third World and Afrocentric feminist writers have noted that feminist
theory itself also risks becoming a universalistic, totalizing ideology
itself if we fail to address how the reification of notions of
"community" and "culture" excludes disenfranchised groups and subcultures
(Butler and Scott, 1992). This approach is relevant to my own research
in that the social movement culture of the self-help movement for incest
survivors, drawing from feminist frames, seems to implicitly validate
members' creative construction of alternative notions of power,
family/kinship, and community. Social movement members are building
these alternative belief systems and actual structures of power.
family/kinship and community in opposition to dominant hegemonic frames and constructions. In doing so they are rejecting dominant institutions' casting of them as Others and creating their own culture and networks of resistance.

In contrast to the positivist belief that creative but rigorous scientific inquiry ensures that what gets studied and researched is all there is to research, i.e. that all "worthy" topics for research will be studied, feminist postmodernists contend that topics construed as research-worthy are social constructions reflecting the access to scientific discursive practices of Western, White, upper middle class, male researchers (Harding, 1986). Thus I assume that it is important to study a social movement for incest survivors since such a topic would usually be considered unworthy of study in androcentric science. Also, in the tradition of critiquing traditional feminist approaches, another part of my motivation for studying the self-help movement for incest survivors was that previous feminist studies had seemed to pathologize incest survivors as "victims" to be helped or pitied, as had been done to some extent with battered women. Schechter's (1982) and other feminists' studies of the battered woman movement (Gagne, 1993) helped to address this situation, when they viewed the movement as founded by and for battered women. However, as mentioned in my first chapter, the only studies I have found of the incest survivor movement have either addressed them as victims or been critical of the movement for depoliticizing feminism. In this study I hope to elaborate how survivors have been successful in developing coping strategies in their social interactions with others and how they share these strategies in the context of a rich social movement culture.
According to feminist postmodernism discursive practices are used to produce knowledge, but this is always effected in the context of power and therefore has political implications (Foucault, 1980; Collins, 1990; Butler, 1992; Pathak and Rajan, 1992; Alcoff and Gray, 1993). Discursive coherence is achieved by those in power setting limits on, denying access to, and excluding the disenfranchised from participation, in the construction of discourse or speech acts surrounding particular issues (Pathak and Rajan, 1992; Alcoff and Gray, 1993). In this way what the general public "hears" about an issue becomes limited, which then restricts the possibilities for the expression of alternative thoughts about the issue or for open dialogue. Power and knowledge are thus combined intentionally and systematically to constitute certain things as "truth" while other issues are excluded or regarded as untrue or nonsense (Alcoff and Gray, 1993; Stivers, 1993). For example the voice of "expertise" is equated with having a "sound" scientific mind, which in the context of power/knowledge systems usually means a white male trained in positivism (Smith, 1987a). Power/knowledge systems are thus used to oppress others and prevent their freedom of expression, their power to dispel myths about themselves as deviant "Others." As postmodernist feminists we must analyze how using specific discursive practices then precludes the usage of other discursive practices and prevents other conceptualizations from being formulated or expressed, particularly with respect to how Others are cast as "deviant" and stigmatized for their identities. Postmodernist feminism counters this stigmatization via its focus on discursive practices of naming (Hinkle, 1995). It is important to be able to name the self according to one's own experience and identity and not allow others to usurp this role. Hence I refer to the
people I studied as "incest survivors," since that is what they want to be called, in contrast to calling them "incest victims," which is what they are frequently called in media discourse (Harding, 1987a).

Becker (1967) has stated that we need to make sociological disclaimers, beyond what we usually say, about the approach we took in our research to our "subjects." The decisions that the researcher makes about whom to interview, for instance, have important implications for the body of knowledge which accumulates on the topic of research. Traditionally, social scientists adhered to the unquestioned assumption that superordinates, "experts," "managers" and others in positions of power would "know more" than others about the workings of institutions studied by social scientists. There was also an implicit assumption that these superordinates were, due to their position of power and "higher education," more believable, more accurate, more respectable, and thus more worthy of being research subjects, than those in subordinate and relatively uninfluential positions or statuses. Becker contends that we must not blindly adhere to this epistemological "hierarchy of credibility," since it has been shown that interviewing those in nondominant social structural positions can result in better and more accurate research. Thus, following Becker, a central tenet of this dissertation is that those in positions of social marginality with respect to social power factors, are often more aware of the underlying power dynamics of social interaction than those in positions of power. Thus in-depth interviews with socially marginalized, stigmatized groups can provide us with a more comprehensive picture of the social world than interviews conducted with those in positions of power and dominance.
Demographic profiles were not taken of respondents' perpetrators, but judging from interview material, a comparison between the social power characteristics of the incest survivor versus her/his perpetrator, shows that the perpetrator has those characteristics which translate into higher credibility due to higher social power characteristics, on most structural features of power, compared to the incest survivor herself/himself. For instance, the average perpetrator was a parent of the respondent. This perpetrator was usually white, married, and either in a professional occupation or married to someone who was, or both. In the U.S., being white, being married as a "normative status" (indicating heterosexuality), and having higher income, occupational prestige, and educational attainment as a "professional," translate into higher social power characteristics and "truth value." Parenthood and motherhood in particular are also particularly revered in this society and traditionally viewed as more "normative" than being childless. Motherhood is socially constructed as even being incompatible with physical, sexual, or emotional violence against one's children, so incest survivors are considered deluded, mentally ill, or engaging in fabrication if they say their mothers have been their perpetrators. Yet mother perpetration does occur and is just beginning to be studied by feminists (Kasl, 1990).

By comparison, the average interviewee was a 33-year old, white, never-married, nonpartnered, single lesbian/bisexual woman with a college education working in a paraprofessional clerical occupation, who has no children and lives by herself in an apartment. The mean annual household income was $27,500; however, when we leave out married or partnered women whose household incomes were substantially higher than the nonmarried women (due to husband's or partner's high income), the mean annual
household income was $20,007. In addition, 3 respondents had master's degrees and worked in professional occupations, which led to their having higher annual household incomes. When we leave out graduate-level-educated women, the mean annual household income was $18,752. This translates into lower social power characteristics for incest survivors, compared to their perpetrators, whose household income was not known by respondents but was uniformly reported as being substantially higher than that of the respondent.

However, with respect to truth and validity claims, postmodernist feminism involves an "entrusting of legitimation and validity to the actual participants, the subjects, and the researchers" (Hinkle, 1995:433). Thus with respect to the sample, I felt it would yield a more comprehensive, accurate view of the experience of incest survivors to interview women and men who survived perpetrators' assaults, and who are stigmatized by the backlash as "crazy," "dupes of therapists implanting false memories," or "pathological liars," than to interview the (alleged) perpetrators who are usually white men of relatively high social standing and who are in a commanding position with respect to current mass media discourse on the issue of incest (Bloom, 1995).

Those in power might even be said to be assuming a fatherly, authoritative role towards the public by constructing the discursive practices used in media dialogue on incest survivors. Media images usually cast the latter as "pathological, suicidal victims" and perpetration as the unusual deeds of "psychologically sick" people, when incest has been undeniably shown to have occurred. Alternatively, they cast incest survivors as "easily beguiled, hysterical women" "exploited by a trendy social movement" or by an "exploitative therapist" (when the
media can cast doubt on whether incest occurred by relying on the manufacture of artificially-constructed illnesses such as "false memory syndrome"). Thus by also focusing part of this dissertation on how the self-help movement for incest survivors uses discursive practices to oppose dominant constructions of themselves and their perpetrators, I hope to show how survivors use oppositional consciousness and other elements of social movement culture to dispel such false, dominant constructions. In this respect I am following the postmodernist method of "deconstruction" of discursive practices to reveal their underlying political agendas and to give Others a chance to speak for themselves. For example Pathak and Rajan (1992:260), state that there are several discourses operating around the issue of Muslim women's need for economic support and protection if she is divorced from her husband. "These discourses are marked, and unified, by the assumptions of an ideology of protection. Our notion of a "subaltern consciousness" assumes an operative "will" that functions as resistance; it destabilizes the family's ideology of protection and the law's ideology of evolution. Thus a space is created from which a woman can speak" (1992:260).

The postmodernist challenge to positivism has been critiqued as too relativistic and for not being unified by any kind of cohesive thread of critique of modernity (Butler, 1992). However, adherence to feminist postmodernism does not mean that we need to succumb to the despair of absolute relativism, or the idea that nothing is really true. Postmodernism also involves a "prioritizing of situated knowledges over abstract knowledge" (Hinkle, 1995:433). Haraway (1988) also discusses how we can make claims to truth based on our own partial or situated knowledges, recognizing their limitations and underlying presuppositions.
Such a perspective of the "situated knower" can also be used to critique modernity from varying positions, depending on one's own identity as situated in the social structure. Feminist postmodernists have also contended that critiques of postmodernism are part of the political agenda of the backlash against feminism and multiculturalism. For example, Butler and Scott ask, "To what extent is the outcry against the "postmodern" a defense of culturally privileged positions that leave unexamined the excluded domains of homosexuality, race, and class?" (Butler and Scott, 1992:xv).

The triangulation of methods employed in this research (interviews, participant observation, textual analysis) follows a feminist postmodernist approach. This feminist postmodernist approach focuses on qualitative methods, triangulation, experiential processes, and the construction of narrative accounts (Fonow and Cook, 1991). Reinharz notes that "The multimethod approach increases the likelihood that these [feminist] researchers will understand what they are studying, and that they will be able to persuade others of the veracity of their findings. Multiple methods work to enhance understanding both by adding layers of information and by using one type of data to validate or refine another" (1992:203). Thus the feminist researcher engages in a multimethodological approach in order to evince a commitment to thoroughness in her approach to revealing women's experience with some social issue in its full complexity. Barry's (1979) study of pornography and prostitution also uses a multimethodological approach to contextualize the personal nature of prostitution, placing its causes in the realm of the economic profitability of sex trafficking in women for men and capitalism, and how female sexual slavery thrives because of male violence and institutional
domination. Thus a multiple methodological approach is often useful because it connects the individual to the structural-level factors impinging on her (Reinharz, 1992). Thus triangulation helps feminist researchers put "individual troubles" into the context of "social issues" (Mills, 1959). It is also important to let women's experiential processes in feminist postmodernist research, since the positivist focus in social science precludes this (Fonow and Cook, 1991).

Other reasons for conducting a multimethodological approach include the fact that during a study of lengthy duration new approaches to doing research may be discovered, or the structural and/or personal roles of our interview "subjects" may be discovered to have changed over time. Also, a researcher may begin to be able to use more in-depth, intimate methods of research if she is known to be working on a particular research topic with commitment and passion for a lengthy period of time. This occurs because "word gets out" in the community of people being studied that the researcher is committed, serious, and non-exploitative of her subjects, thus inspiring trust and opening the researcher to a wider network of information and community informants (Etorre, 1980).

Feminist research is also important as feminist activism (Reinharz, 1992). Feminist research has been conducted using reflexive interviewing, oral/life history approaches, community ethnographies based on participant observation, narrative accounts, biographies of the life cycle processes of feminist women, and videotaping of interactions, or has used a combination of these approaches (e.g., Ladner, 1972; Diamond, 1977; Etorre, 1980; Krieger, 1983; Lorde, 1984; Gagne, 1993; Gordon, 1993; Van Willigen, 1993; Whittier, 1993; Lempert, 1994; Bannister, 1991). Gordon (1993) discusses how feminist ethnographies "attempt to be
a form of social action where research extends in two directions--toward informing feminist academics of cultural meanings in gender politics and sharing of privilege in relation to disenfranchised communities of women" (Gordon, 1993:430). Ethnographic research is also important in that it can "create and sustain alternative relations of emotionality and community support for women" (Gordon, 1993:434). Feminist scholarship is important as activism since it gives research subjects access to voice and to participating in the creation of discursive practices about their own experiences (Lorde, 1984; Alcoff and Gray, 1993). Thus feminist research fits with other critical theory in social science due to its critical stance and focus on liberatory ethics and opening up communication with the disenfranchised.

Postmodernist feminism, drawing from Afrocentric and nonwestern modes of communication, and from postmodernist critiques of positivist methodology, also centers much of its attention on individual and personal narrative (Polkinghorne, 1988; Richardson, 1990; Hinkle, 1995). Various feminist writers have discussed how speaking out or using one's voice is important to self-affirmation (Lorde, 1984; Stivers, 1993). Writing or speaking one's own life helps the narrator to undertake a process of self-understanding, "to bring to light individual and collective dimensions of the self as they are created in and revealed by the subject's relationship to larger, intersubjective phenomena such as a family or an industry" (Stivers, 1993:412). The use of one's voice for narrative is particularly important for women who have been abused by means of intimate, interpersonal violence, since it "makes the violence coherent to self and others" (Lempert, 1994:411). Sharing one's story with others is a first step in both the "normalization" of the prevalence
of abuse, and in the validation of one’s life actions in the face of violence and abuse. The more that women have shared their stories of survival of violence and abuse from others in "the family," the more they have become personally empowered and have seen that violence against women and children is normative, common, usual, and frequent, but hidden in our society (Celles, 1987; Dobash and Dobash, 1992; Lempert, 1994).

Thus the narrative format is particularly salient for incest survivors' process of self-affirmation, since they were often threatened with harm if they told anyone, or told they would not be believed if they did tell, and thus silenced (McNaron and Morgan, 1982; Alcoff and Gray, 1993). On a personal level, the narrative format provides them with validation as to their own powers of survival. Structurally, the sharing of narrative accounts helps incest survivors who voice or listen to such accounts see that incest is a widespread problem within U.S. families and that their own common techniques for survival were normal, rational, and understandable in response to this problem. Sociologically, it also provides a link between the personal and structural levels of society. Thus the use of narrative as one of our methods in sociology helps us to develop the "sociological imagination," to see how individual "troubles" may actually be "social issues" or "social problems" (Mills, 1959; Tierney, 1982; Lempert, 1994). In this context it means that sociologists must normalize incest as a common feature of U.S. families, stop viewing people with mental health or other problems stemming from the abuse as "deviant," and view the self-help movement for incest survivors as a legitimate response to a discounted or misrepresented social problem.
The use of narrative is also important for affirmation of others who share one's identity. Collins describes how "the act of using one's voice requires a listener" (1990:98). She suggests that for African-American women, "the listener most able to move beyond the invisibility created by objectification as the Other in order to see and hear the fully human Black woman is another Black woman" (1990:98). This is because only those objectified as Other can fully understand these "Others'" voices and experiences. Similarly, although this dissertation is by necessity a document written for the academic professional "listener," I hope that its audience will also be composed of other survivors who want to read this, to listen to my interviewees' narratives. I also hope that the "experience, strength, and hope" expressed in the narratives in this study will empower other survivors, who are uniquely qualified to be "listeners" to the words of the people in this study.

THE DATA AND SAMPLE

This section of the chapter details my data collection procedures and description of the sample. This dissertation was based on triangulation of methods. The three methods involved were participant observation of group meetings, personal semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions, which encouraged personal, narrative format, and analysis of movement documents. The sample consisted of thirty people, who were interviewed in person or by telephone. People in the sample were self-identified as members of the self-help movement for incest survivors. All interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed and coded.
Participant observation was conducted at group meetings from June 1994 to June 1995. Since I made a "non-meeting" announcement at the beginning of each meeting that I would be interested in interviewing volunteers as soon as my interview questions had been approved by the university's Human Subjects Review Committee, and that my dissertation was on the topic of the self-help movement for incest survivors, meeting attendees were aware that I was attending as a participant observer. I did not take notes during any meetings or in front of the movement members before or after meetings. This was because I wanted to avoid the "Hawthorne effect" of subjects altering their behavior if they knew they were being scrutinized. I believe that movement members were not altering their behavior during group meetings while I attended them, since I am a survivor myself and had been attending these meetings semi-regularly in that capacity before I began doing participant observation. Thus it seemed to me that movement members were aware that I had other reasons for being there at meetings other than just to observe them. Field notes were written down after each group meeting, after I went home.

I had discovered the location of group meetings since they had been advertised in various recovery-oriented newsletters and in local community newspapers. I also found and attempted to attend another all-women's meeting but it became defunct right after I began conducting participant observation. I was also unable to attend another, all-men's group. Such meetings are understood to be closed to women, even (or perhaps especially) to women researcher-sociologists. An all-men's meeting creates a "safe space" for men to talk freely with other men without the intrusion of problems that occur in mixed-sex groups. This
group had met briefly and then become defunct due to lack of regular attendance.

I also did not attend another mixed-sex twelve-step program group which was a composite meeting for incest survivors, sex/love addicts, and overeaters/eating disorder survivors, since it seemed that it would be difficult for me to sort out movement members' experiences of each of these 3 phenomena separately. Also, I did not attend the composite meeting since this is also not a comparison study of the experiences of members in different twelve-step groups but an ethnography of the self-help movement for incest survivors, specifically.

I had notified the headquarters or "world service offices" of these meetings that I was going to do this study, before I started my research. A representative of the office agreed that I could study local groups or interview volunteer interviewees nationally, as long as anonymity and confidentiality were preserved, no one was being deceived or traumatized, and participation was completely voluntary. The headquarters would not furnish me with a list of meetings nationally, as I had originally intended to write to meetings and solicit volunteers through such a list. I had told the headquarters of my intention to use the national mailing list to solicit volunteers, since one of the meetings I had attended had once received a similar researcher's solicitation for volunteers in the meeting's mailbox. I agree fully with the headquarter contact person's argument, however, that the purpose of the national meeting list would be violated by my using it to solicit volunteers for a study of the movement. The "sixth tradition" states that the movement should not attach its name to any outside enterprise and that movement members must remain confidential "at the level of press, radio, television, and film."
It does not specify "dissertations," but a dissertation probably should be subsumed under the level of "press." Thus this dissertation does not reflect the views of the world service office, nor does the latter attach its name to this study. I thus decided to ask for volunteers at meetings and (later) to advertise in recovery newsletters.

Interviews were solicited through personal contact at meetings in a local, midwestern U.S. city in late April, May, and June 1995, or through recovery newsletters in late April-June 1995. With respect to the gender distribution of the meetings I attended and solicited for volunteers, one was an all-women's meeting. The other two were mixed-sex meetings. I conducted open-ended, semi-structured interviews with a total of twenty-six women and three men. (The problem of the skewed gender distribution is discussed in the section of this chapter on sample characteristics.)

I solicited prospective interviewees by making a brief announcement before the meeting. I solicited telephone interviews through advertisements in various women's recovery newsletters locally or nationally, indicating that I was doing a dissertation on the self-help movement for incest survivors and including my name and phone number. These newsletters included Women's Recovery Network, The Word is Out, Lesbian Connection, and Lesbian Health News. I attempted to find other local or national newsletters in which to advertise, but did not hear of any others, except The Healing Woman, whose editors did not respond to my mailed request for advertising rates. I also (with the approval of the supervising psychologist in each case) put up notices in two local counseling centers, that I was conducting a research dissertation on the self-help movement for incest survivors and was seeking volunteer respondents. However, I did not receive any responses from these
counseling office sources. (This typed, posted solicitation for volunteers had also previously been approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee.)

Once people had been informed of the study through my verbal announcement to "talk to me after the meeting if interested in being in my study" or my newsletter announcement to "call me and leave a message if interested in being in my study," interviews were solicited by my reading one of two scripts verbatim to the prospective volunteers who came up to me after the meeting or called me. These scripts were read aloud only to those indicating interest in being interviewed, to prevent coercion or my potentially subjecting unwilling movement members to hearing a long solicitation script if they were not interested in being participants. The oral script was read aloud to prospective volunteers who came up to me after meetings and said they would be willing to be interviewed in person or on the telephone. The telephone script was read aloud to prospective volunteers who had called and left a message on my answering machine in response to one of my newsletter advertisements. The scripts had already been approved by the Human Subjects Review Committee of a local midwestern U.S. university at the time they were read. I then set up a time to interview the respondent later in person or on the telephone. In each case of personal interviews I asked the prospective respondent where she or he would feel most comfortable and safe being interviewed, and what the most convenient time would be, for them to be interviewed.

Respondents were interviewed in person wherever they felt comfortable being interviewed. Three personal interviews were conducted in the respondent's home. One of these respondents lived alone and the other two
interviews were conducted at a time of day when other household members were not present, to preserve confidentiality and prevent bias in the form of household members' presence influencing subject responses. Another three interviews were conducted in my own home, since there are no other household members there, also to preclude the introduction of bias. Another six personal interviews were conducted after the group meeting was over, at the meeting site (usually a church basement), since everyone else had gone home. Thus confidentiality and privacy were assured. One interview was conducted sitting on the curb outside a local coffeehouse, at around midnight. On this particular occasion the group meeting site was unavailable, the respondent did not want to go over to my house nor did he want me to go to his house, and he said he felt it was both comfortable and private to be sitting on the sidewalk. (The coffeehouse was closed by that time, so no one else was around.) The other 17 respondents were interviewed by telephone at a time of day when other household members were not around, or else at a convenient time (if the respondent lived alone).

In terms of sample characteristics, respondents ranged in age from 23 years old to 49 years old, with a median age of 33. All of the respondents (N = 13) who participated in personal, face-to-face interviews lived in a local, midwestern U.S. city. They had been attending meetings of one of the two movement organizations for at least six months. The other 17, telephone respondents lived in other places in the same state of the U.S., or in other states. They had also been attending meetings of one of the two movement organizations for at least six months. Some of them were no longer attending meetings due to the meeting becoming defunct, transportation problems in getting to the
meeting, or ill health. Some respondents were also disillusioned with meetings, or were just "tired of going," and had dropped out in the past few months.

Interviews varied in length from 40 minutes to 4 hours. I asked people specific questions from an interview guide. However, in keeping with the tradition of postmodernist feminist narrative, I also let them talk about their experiences of self or recovery in tangential ways, following the new tradition of interactive, reflexive feminist interviewing (Oakley, 1981; DeVault, 1987, 1990; Reinharz, 1992). In the interview I asked respondents questions about the main topics of social movement organization and recruitment processes, the respondents' level of participation, commitment, and their effects; cultural elements of the movement; sense of self as related to collective identity; the influence of feminist and self-help frames on members and on the social movement in general; and some general demographic questions.

Postmodernist feminism also focuses on dialogical interviewing in qualitative research (Richardson, 1990; Hinkle, 1995). Thus respondents were free to ask me any questions they wanted, and frequently asked me whether I had read certain books myself, and what some of my own experiences were with recovery. This resulted in a mutually interactive, more egalitarian way of relating to the respondent than if I had used positivist methods and tried to just elicit responses from subjects (Oakley, 1981). Subjects were informed before the interview and also reminded during interview questions, if they seemed slow to respond to certain questions, that they could terminate the interview at any time, did not have to answer all the questions, or could tell me to skip certain questions and come back to them later if they liked. I was very
explicit and even redundant during interviews on this point, since this seemed to me to be more in keeping with a feminist ethic of subject empowerment than to insist that subjects answer all questions in a specific order according to my research agenda. Also, respondents as incest survivors had already been "subjects;" i.e. they had already been subjected to coercion, or to the idea of following someone else’s agenda and having to do things they did not really want to do without the power to say "no," from people they had been led to trust during their childhood. Thus I deemed it of the highest importance to let the respondents feel they were in control of the way the interview went, and that I as interviewer be sympathetic, nonjudgmental, and nonauthoritarian. I did not have any respondents terminate the interview early, get angry or hostile, although a couple became tearful. I suggested to both that we stop the interview if they liked, but both wanted to continue. In both cases respondents talked about their extremely painful experiences growing up and I listened attentively. My respondents uniformly said something positive at the conclusion of the interview about the interview experience, which seemed to indicate that they had not been traumatized by it and had enjoyed it. Respondents used words like "fun," "interesting," "enlightening," or "helpful, to get a chance to talk about it," to describe their response. I am extremely grateful to all of my respondents and feel a sense of humility in hearing their stories and knowing their courage.

Movement literature included literature which is usually read aloud at the beginning or end of meetings as part of the meeting agenda, pamphlets and brochures written and published by the world service office headquarters, and movement newsletters and mailings to local groups.
Literature was coded as is described in the data analysis section of this chapter.

DATA ANALYSIS

Glaser and Strauss (1967) discuss how we can employ inductive and deductive methods mutually in order to arrive at grounded theory. I first employed the two approaches to social movements discussed in chapter 1, new social movements and resource mobilization, to operate deductively in my methodology. However, in using qualitative methodology it is also helpful to then allow for induction as the data is collected. This means that the researcher garners new ideas and conceptualizations about the topic as the data accumulates. Thus field notes, data from movement documents, and data from interviews were initially coded into broad categories such as "social movement culture," "movement tactics," "recruitment through networks," "organizational ideology," etc. These broad categories were then broken down into more concrete, sociological-theoretical ones, such as "movement discourse," "collective identity," "feminist framing," "self-help framing," "culture of resistance," "rituals used as symbolic resistance," etc. I then examined and sifted the latter to synthesize overall theoretical perspectives on the self-help movement for incest survivors. In particular, overarching social patterns among respondents' coded responses were used to frame and conceptualize the various themes discussed in each chapter of this study.

SUMMARY AND LIMITATIONS

There may be bias introduced into the study in terms of how strongly my sample is representative of people in the movement as a whole. Due to
my focus on twelve-step programs I interviewed people who were in either of two social movement organizations for incest survivors based on the twelve-step model of Alcoholics Anonymous. I sought but did not find any other social movement organizations fitting this description. However, some members of the self-help movement for incest survivors may have been precluded from participation in my study if they do not attend meetings of these movement organizations. The self-help movement for incest survivors includes those people who participate in self-help activities for recovery from incest and probably also their therapists, not just people in these two movement organizations.

There may also be geographic bias in my study. All of the personal, face-to-face interviews were conducted with respondents who live in a midwestern U.S. city. All of my telephone respondents live in the Midwest, on the East Coast, in the Appalachian states, the New England states, Florida or Georgia. None of my telephone respondents live in the Western United States, the Southwestern U.S., or the Northwestern U.S. However, there are members of the self-help movement for incest survivors in all fifty states of the U.S. As confirmation, I have seen the national mailing list at meetings and it lists groups in all fifty states. Also, an interview with one of the people in the world service office confirmed this. I am not sure why my sample has this kind of geographic bias, except that possibly people in the West, Southwest, or Northwestern U.S. are less likely to subscribe to recovery newsletters or to answer advertisements in them. Limited funding precluded my being able to travel to cities in these other areas to attend meetings or seek respondents. Also, all of my respondents live in the U.S., but there are also members of the self-help movement for
incest survivors in many countries internationally. I again attribute this sample bias to the demographics of people who answer advertisements in newsletters.

Also, based on preliminary analysis of interviews, although all of the respondents to personal, face-to-face interviews were urbanites, the majority of telephone respondents lived in rural areas. Most of the rural inhabitants did, however, state that they attended meetings in urban areas, but that they resided on a farm or in a home in a rural area. My scanning of the location of groups on the national mailing list, comments in movement newsletters, and comments in other women's recovery newsletters, seems to indicate a dearth of available recovery meetings in rural areas compared to urban areas. Thus it is possible that the average person attending meetings of the self-help movement for incest survivors is an urbanite, while almost half of my respondents were living in rural areas. Thus it is likely that my study over-represents people living in rural areas. I again postulate that this sample bias is due to the demographics of people who answer advertisements in newsletters.

My study also over-represents whites, middle-class or college-educated people, women, and native English speakers. It also overrepresents people in fair enough mental health to participate in a group meeting or telephone interview, as well as people with telephones, access to transportation, and permanent places of residence. However, these characteristics reflect the demographic biases of the movement as a whole. In terms of race/ethnicity, twenty-eight of my respondents were white/Anglo; one person was Asian-American and another was Latina. Although some African-American women and men attended group meetings in
which I conducted participant observation, none volunteered for my study. There were not any African-American people who attended group meetings regularly, although some attended sporadically. No African-American women responded to any of my advertisements in newsletters. This may reflect the white middle class bias of newsletters. It seemed to me that it would be intrusive and inappropriate to try to track down African-American women who are incest survivors to interview them on this topic. In reading this dissertation, it is important to remember that research has documented that women of all racial/ethnic backgrounds have reported surviving incest (Russell, 1986). Also, most of my respondents had a college education and were employed full-time in paraprofessional clerical occupations, which then gave them middle-class status by my definition.

Probably the most significant bias in my study is that the majority of my study’s participants were female (N = 27). This reflects the demographics of the self-help movement as a whole and also of the self-help movement for incest survivors in general (Hochschild, 1993; Armstrong, 1994; Feldman, 1995). Due to my strong beliefs about the importance of men’s issues as incest survivors being addressed, I now discuss this issue in some detail. I was only able to interview three men since very few men attend the meetings regularly, and some of the men in the mixed-sex groups I attended did not want to be interviewed. I respect their privacy. This lack of men in meetings may also be specific to the demographics of meetings in the particular midwestern city in which I conducted participant observation, but I doubt this. I agree with other self-help authors that this dearth of males in the movement reflects societal socialization of men into traditional gender roles, the lack of
self-help books and other resources for male incest survivors, and the
taboo nature of discussing female perpetrators for society in general and
the women's movement in particular (Kasl, 1990; Lew, 1990). I will now
discuss these three factors in relation to how they have an impact on the
gender distribution of membership in the self-help movement for incest
survivors.

The self-help movement for incest survivors has more women than men
due to male gender socialization making men not want to disclose about
the incest or their feelings about it, especially in mixed-sex groups. Male
gender socialization prevents men from talking about their feelings,
especially with other men (Pleck, 1989; Lew, 1990). Men are taught to
develop a mystique of toughness and invulnerability, but the self-help
movement for incest survivors' meetings encourage expressivity of
emotion. This probably makes it even more difficult for men to "keep
coming back" to group meetings to talk about their feelings, than it is
for women. Gender socialization for men prevents men from being able to
address even to themselves, much less to anyone else, how much they have
been hurt or feel vulnerable due to childhood experiences of incest. Thus
the self-help movement for incest survivors may have fewer men than women
since men fear being seen as "emasculated" if they have been victimized
(Lew, 1990). Also, due to gender socialization, male incest survivors,
more than females, might have particular difficulty expressing their
feelings in mixed-sex groups, either because of the presence of the other
men or the women in the group. The presence of other men might be
problematic since men are more used to talking about their feelings
privately with one woman (Pleck, 1989). Conversely, men might worry
about being oppressive or exploitive of women and thus have trouble
expressing their feelings, particularly about sexuality, because of the women's presence in the group (Lew, 1990). Yet there was only one all-men's survivor meeting in the city in which I attended meetings, and this meeting became defunct after a short time. The result is that men who want to work on recovery from incest through self-help in this city, must by necessity attend mixed-sex groups.

Men also have difficulty, due to their gender socialization to be tough and self-reliant, to talk to anyone at all about any of their experiences of childhood sexual assault (Lew, 1990). This results in an under-reporting of the extent to which boys have been sexually assaulted (Finkelhor, 1984; Froning and Mayman, 1990). As a result men who are survivors may feel that they will not be believed if they discuss incest with anyone. Thus male gender socialization may again be affecting men's representation in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Thus the prevalence of women in this self-help movement may not show that females are perpetrated more often than males in U.S. society, but that females more often are encouraged to seek help and do engage in self-help-seeking behaviors than men.

Also this gender socialization of men may make them worry that they will be labeled gay if they were forced to be sexual by other men (Froning and Mayman, 1990; Lew, 1990). Even though some studies have shown that reports of being an incest survivor from a male perpetrator affected the male survivor's perception of his sexual orientation and functioning, (e.g., Johnson and Shrier, 1987), we cannot conclude that all or almost all male incest survivors are gay or bisexual. Only one of my three male respondents was gay. Also, it is important to note that
psychologists agree that being gay, lesbian, or bisexual is not deviant but societal homophobia is the problem.

Self-help books or clinical-psychological books on the topic on male incest survivors are rare, but the issue is beginning to be addressed (e.g., Hunter, 1990a,b; Lew, 1990). The idea of men being sexually assaulted has not been addressed enough by society, the media, or the anti-sexual assault movement, resulting in male incest survivors not having enough therapist-led support groups, self-help groups, self-help books to read, or male therapists trained in these issues, to meet male survivors' needs. As I will show in Chapter 4, all of these things together create for women in particular a self-help social movement culture based on feminist and self-help frames, which supports them in their recovery. Yet if such resources are missing for men, men will not be able to recover as effectively. I hypothesize that the lack of other resources besides self-help groups for men may be sending a message to them that incest does not happen to men, or is not important, which then affects their willingness to attend meetings of the self-help movement for incest survivors. This then results in a predominance of women in the movement. I would like to see male incest survivors given more credibility and their issues given more access to public consciousness than has occurred as yet.

Also, gender socialization of men into notions of male initiative in sexuality matters may make male incest survivors feel embarrassed that they were "not forceful enough" if as boys "they allowed" a woman to be a perpetrator, or may make them feel that they should consider themselves "lucky" to have been "seduced" by an older woman (Froning and Mayman, 1990; Lew, 1990). (The men whom I observed attending group meetings or who
were respondents did not always have a female perpetrator, but they seemed to mention this more often than women whom I observed at meetings and/or who were respondents.) The result is that men may not want to attend meetings if they cannot talk about their female perpetrators.

The reticence of the larger feminist anti-sexual assault movement to address this issue, also affects the gender distribution of membership in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Feminists may be reluctant to admit that women perpetrate sexual abuse, for various reasons (Kasl, 1990). First, women’s self-image of themselves as cooperative, nurturant, and innocent is challenged by the knowledge that women are perpetrators. Secondly, women do not want to give men ammunition to attack or dismantle hard-won feminist programs addressing women sexual assault and incest survivors. Thirdly, women fear incurring other women’s wrath if the latter believe that we are apologists for male violence or are discounting male dominance by addressing the issue of female perpetrators. Kasl notes that we must address this issue because female perpetration of both male and female children does occur, and because addressing this issue will also affect future generations of female children, since her questioning of therapists found that "the highest incidence of people surviving female sexual abuse occurred in male perpetrators" (1990:259). Thus male incest survivors from female perpetration, will be less likely to become perpetrators against their future daughters or other females, if their issues are addressed early on. The self-help movement for incest survivors does not ignore this issue, but it does not address it enough, in my opinion. Both men and women respondents in my study who had female perpetrators, said that they felt less support for talking about this issue in meetings than for other
issues. The neglect of this issue may be another reason why the self-help movement for incest survivors has a gender bias in terms of having more women than men. Thus following Kasl (1990), I would like to see the issues of female perpetration against children of both sexes addressed more within the anti-sexual assault and women's movements.

Twenty-eight of my thirty respondents spoke English as their native language. For purposes of confidentiality I cannot reveal the native languages of the other two speakers. All of my respondents, whether interviewed by telephone or in person, had access to a telephone at home and had a permanent place to live. Thus I did not interview any homeless people or migrant workers. The movement as a strongly white, middle-class movement, unfortunately favors those with telephones, (in terms of using the phone list for support), those having some means of transportation, and a permanent place to live. The emphasis in the meetings on following certain rules of communication and communicating in a particular way, also precludes people who have more severe forms of mental illness such as schizophrenia from participating. As a worker in a homeless shelter for several years I have seen many homeless people and/or people living in shelters become discouraged and quit going to meetings for these reasons. They quit going due to not being able to call people for support, not being able to get to a meeting due to lack of transportation, or not being supported due to their obvious homeless status (such as mismatched clothing), or due to having the more obvious kinds of mental illness (schizophrenia, active bipolar disease, hallucinations). It is my perception also that some people were also more likely to drop out due to lack of support for being a person of
color, or not speaking English as a native language. I regret these biases and hope to do more inclusive studies in the future.

Most of the women in my sample were lesbian or bisexual women. All of my newsletter-based, telephone respondents are lesbian or bisexual. It is questionable whether the self-help movement for incest survivors is more strongly composed of lesbian or bisexual women than others, however. Probably heterosexual women in the meetings were less likely to have the time to be interviewed, since more of them seemed to have partners and/or children than the lesbian or bisexual women respondents.

Probably another one of the strongest reasons for my having such a high response rate of lesbian, bisexual or nonheterosexual women is that I advertised for respondents in three lesbian newsletters. I did this based on the suggestions of friends, when I had accrued 13 respondents locally but was not getting any more local volunteers. I had difficulty finding any other newsletters. It did not seem likely to me that a mainstream publication like Psychology Today would print my request for respondents, particularly since I am not a psychologist. Also, all four of the newsletters in which I advertised were women's newsletters. Thus it also seems likely to me that the reason my sample has over-represented lesbian or bisexual women is that I obtained about half the sample, the telephone respondents, from women's newsletters. It seems plausible to me that lesbian or bisexual women in recovery are more likely than men or heterosexual women in recovery to be activist-oriented. Thus the lesbian or bisexual women in recovery are more likely to be the ones writing, publishing, and disseminating (or receiving) recovery newsletters, since they view reading or writing them as a form of activism. If they are more likely to be writing, publishing, or receiving a recovery newsletter,
then they are more likely to see and respond to an advertisement in such a newsletter soliciting respondents for a study. My evidence for this hypothesis, is that the women who self-identified as lesbian and/or bisexual respondents (some identified as both), were more likely than other respondents to self-identify as feminists and as activists. They also were more likely than the heterosexual women in the study to mention networking with other lesbian/bisexual women in recovery or in "the women’s community" as a form of activism. This is discussed more in Chapter 4.

I cannot give an exact number of how many respondents were "lesbian" vs. "bisexual" vs. "heterosexual," (even though the majority of my respondents did not report exclusively being heterosexual), since many respondents identified as being in more than one category. For instance some respondents said things such as "I’m lesbian/bisexual" or else said "I’m heterosexual in terms of who I’m living with but I’m really usually lesbian," when asked. As a sociologist of gender and sexuality I don’t regard such responses as indicative of "sexual confusion" or "mental illness." I will recapitulate both of these arguments to explain my stance. One popular argument is that incest causes "sexual confusion" among survivors about their sexual orientation, or even causes lesbianism due to the woman survivor’s rejection of her mother as a figure who was powerless to protect the survivor. In psychology such theories are usually based on Freudian-based "object relations theory," which posits the girl as having her "pre-Oedipal bond with the mother" broken by the father (e.g., Starzecpyzel, 1987). According to this popular argument, incest may "influence sexual preference" by encouraging heterosexual or bisexual women to be "open to experimentation with female partners as
part of their healing process" (Maltz and Holman, 1987:72). The latter argument seems to imply that some women are "essentially" heterosexual or bisexual women who will then return to "normal" heterosexual relations with men once they have healed from incest. However, studies have shown that the same proportion of lesbian women reported being survivors of incest as women in the general population. If incest "caused" lesbianism, there would be a disproportionate number of lesbians compared to heterosexual women reporting being survivors of incest, but studies of both populations have shown that 38% of lesbians or heterosexual women report being survivors of incest (Russell, 1986; Loulan, 1987).

A second popular-cultural argument is that people who report being "bisexual/lesbian" must be confused about their sexual identity or be mentally ill, since supposedly one is either heterosexual, gay or lesbian, or (more recently) bisexual. Again as a sociologist of gender and sexuality I do not regard such responses as indicating mental illness, or as an aberration. Rather, research starting with Alfred Kinsey indicates that many if not most people's sexual behaviors may be different from their sexual identities (Bell and Weinberg, 1978; Ponse, 1978; Golden, 1987). Thus it is common for currently self-identifying lesbian women to be or have been involved with men at some point in their lives. Nichols (1987) notes that, "The vast majority of lesbians have had some sexual involvement with men before coming out: More than 90 percent have had sex with men, and one-third have been married" (1987:106). Some bisexual women writers have also contended that their lesbianism was a stage of sexuality that they went through, in their "coming out" as bisexuals (Orlando, 1984). Research has also documented that some women who feel an allegiance to feminism, activism, and female intimacy call
themselves "bisexual lesbians" (Schuster, 1987). Golden (1987), as a
lesbian therapist, comments that she senses that gay men do not
experience their sexuality in the same fluid manner that some lesbian and
heterosexual women do. Thus it seems to be a hallmark of the honesty of
my respondents, that so many of them told me about this fluidity that
they feel about their sexuality. I will report on how many respondents
self-identified as "bisexual/lesbian," "bisexual/heterosexual," or even
"lesbian/heterosexual," when I finish data analysis.

In sum, my study may over-represent people living in the Midwest, East
Coast, Appalachia, New England, Florida, or Georgia. My study may also
overrepresent people living in the U.S., people living in rural areas,
whites, native English speakers, lesbian/bisexual women, women in
general, and people affluent enough to have telephones, transportation,
and permanent housing compared to others in the movement who were not in
my sample. It is possible that rural, white, English-speaking,
lesbian/bisexual women in recovery in certain areas of the U.S. who
possess telephones, are more likely to answer advertisements in women's
recovery newsletters than others in recovery.

I regret that lack of funding and demographic limitations in the self-help
movement for incest survivors itself precluded a more broadly-based study of
survivors, particularly in terms of race and gender. I would like to conduct
further studies including the construction of self and meaning construction
surrounding recovery among African-American women and among men in general. It
remains essential that further studies be conducted on incest survivors which
are able to give us a comprehensive picture of the means by which gender,
race, social class, and sexual orientation structure the meanings, strategies,
and opportunities surrounding recovery.
END NOTES

1. Some of the ideas included under the idea of "feminist standpoint epistemology" are also included in my arguments for using feminist postmodernism, as some of the feminist standpoint authors have moved into explorations of feminist postmodernism. Harding (1987b) calls both positions "transitional epistemologies," since both are still evolving.

2. The term "parent" is used rather than "father," since interviews yielded a high number of respondents stating that their mother was their perpetrator, or that both parents were. Participant observation field notes from over a year's worth of group meetings also indicated that a substantial percentage of respondents either had a mother as perpetrator, or both parents were. This flies in the face of various feminist studies contending that male dominance and gender stratification contribute to a substantially higher rate of sexual assault and incest being committed by male rather than female perpetrators (e.g., Russell, 1986). I do hypothesize later in this chapter that female perpetration may be as common as male perpetration, but vastly underreported. However, my actual findings cannot be extrapolated to the general population of incest survivors in the U.S. or to the population of all incest survivors in the self-help movement for incest survivors, due to the small size of the sample, its qualitative methodology, and its (potentially) nonrepresentative nature.

3. The term "reflexive interviewing" was suggested by Dr. Gia Hinkle via personal communication on 6/1/95.
CHAPTER III
THE SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS STUDIED

Introduction

This chapter discusses the nature of success, structure, goals, tactics, strategies, resource mobilizing processes, organizational history, problems encountered, and relationship to established institutions, of the two social movement organizations (SMOs) I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Recent research has viewed self-help as a social movement and self-help groups as social movement organizations. An organizational approach to this movement will therefore illuminate how this movement’s SMOs acquire resources for movement mobilization and maintenance, and resolve problems of recruitment, conversion, commitment, conflict resolution, and structural-ideological commensurability for the movement. A study of this movement’s SMOs is salient to this study, since SMOs operate on the "meso" level to provide linkages between the movement’s individual members and dominant institutions.

The sections in this chapter are the following. First, I describe the resource mobilization (RM) approach to social movements, particularly in terms of examining self-help groups as social movement organizations. I also use the RM approach to discuss how these two SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors solve various organizational problems. Secondly, I document how the twelve-step recovery movement’s SMOs served
as pre-existing organizational bases for the founding of these two SMOs. Thirdly, I detail how the two SMOs' locally-based self-help groups solve problems endemic to collectivist, self-help organizations. Fourthly, I elaborate how the U.S. women's movement has influenced the self-help movement for incest survivors. Finally, I discuss the relationship between this movement and various societal institutions, including the politico-legal system, capitalism, and medicine.

RESOURCE MOBILIZATION AND SELF-HELP SOCIAL MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONS

The resource mobilization (RM) focus on social movements (SMs) as social movement organizations (SMOs) draws from economic, sociological, and political-scientific theories on the structure and politics of organizations. In contrast to the classical collective behavior perspectives, which emphasized the micro-level, social-psychological processes and factors involved in the emergence of social movements, including the individual as the unit of analysis, RM takes a macro-level approach by making the SMO the unit of analysis in examining the processes of social movement growth, development, and decline or transformation. RM emphasizes social movement actors' rational activity and utilitarian use of resources in engaging in social movement activity as a legitimate challenge to the political system (McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 77; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1988).

RM scholars suggested analyzing social movements by means of organizational activity since the classical collective behavior approaches had not addressed how social movements aggregate resources, organize social movement actors, make tactical choices, and devise
structures necessary for success (McCarthy and Zald, 1977). RM theorists defined a social movement (SM) as, "a set of opinions and beliefs in a population representing preferences for changing some elements of the social structure or reward distribution, or both, of a society" (McCarthy and Zald, 1977:1217).

In keeping with my own belief in actively working for change, however, I use Smith and Pillemer's definition of a social movement as "a set of isolated individuals, informal communication networks, informal groups, and formal groups all working for some kind of significant change in a sociocultural system (that is, in a society's social structure or culture)" (1983:214). Thus when I am defining the self-help movement for incest survivors as a social movement it means "those people in the U.S. or internationally who alone or in groups or by means of informal communications networks, actively support or provide recovery services for incest survivors and/or who are themselves engaging in such recovery processes, as part of sociocultural transformation."

Some feminists have contended that twelve-step recovery programs depoliticize feminism by encouraging change in the self rather than in the sociocultural system (Armstrong, 1990, 94; Tallen, 1990). The implication of the latter argument is that twelve-step recovery programs are not a social movement. However, I believe that "working for significant change" can include "recovery work" or intensive transformative work on the self, since changing micro-level personal interactions and reified constructions can result in changes in macro-scale social institutions. In addition, the aftereffects of incest in adult life may significantly interfere with one's ability to engage in institutionalized forms of feminist or other types of political activism,
since aftereffects may include various physical illnesses, self-mutilation, severe depression, mood disorders, sleep disorders, life-threatening eating disorders, problems with attaining or maintaining employment, chronic dissociation, physical harm from battering partners, panic attacks, personality or other psychiatric disorders, fear of interpersonal interaction, compulsive and hazardous risk-taking, substance abuse, engaging in prostitution, or ultimately suicide (James and Meyerding, 1978; Silbert and Pines, 1981, 83; Gallagher and Dodds, 1985; Russell, 1986; Maltz and Holman, 1987; Courtois, 1988; Kelly, 1988; Gannon, 1989; Poston and Lison, 1989; Lew, 1990; Briere and Runtz, 1988, 91; Davis, 1991; Herman, 1992; Kasl, 1992; Wilson, 1994).

Thus recovery work sometimes must precede or substitute for institutionalized forms of activism. The privileging of institutionalized activism in critiques of self-help denigrates and stigmatizes survivors, who are struggling with incest’s aftereffects too much to be out marching, canvassing, demonstrating, etc. However, I also agree with Kasl (1992) that recovery work must also address changes in the social system by incorporating a critique of the sociocultural system’s means of oppression. I also assume as a personal domain assumption that recovery work cannot be separated from activist consciousness. Therefore one must recognize that as one’s self becomes healed, one’s energy will become freed-up, which can then be used for more overt, institutionalized forms of activism. I also agree with Riessman (1990:43) that “recovery is a collective action” and that “dealing with one’s own addiction through self-help groups could be the first step in politicization about the social factors contributing to an addiction” (1990:48). Self-transformative work is thus a symbolic mode of collective action which
survivors use to change their lives, and self-help for incest survivors thus constitutes a social movement.

RM theorists define a social movement organization (SMO) as: "a complex, or formal, organization that identifies its goals with the preferences of a social movement or a countermovement and attempts to implement those goals" (McCarthy and Zald, 1977:1217). Smith and Pillemer take a more informal approach and define SMOs as "groups, usually voluntary groups, that can be viewed as part of, or as having the quality of, a social movement" (1983:214). I prefer a composite definition in keeping with the varied organizational forms, some collectivist and some bureaucratic, in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Thus, I am defining a social movement organization in the self-help movement for incest survivors as "a formal organization or informal, voluntary group that identifies itself as being for incest survivors, or that identifies its goals in terms of the provision of support and/or services for the recovery of incest survivors." My definition of SMOs here integrates a formal-organizational approach to SMOs with an informal, voluntary self-help approach to SMOs. This composite definition is consonant with my theoretical approach to the self-help movement for incest survivors in this study, which synthesizes resource mobilization and new social movements perspectives. Thus this composite definition of SMOs acknowledges self-help groups as social movement organizations which produce social movement culture and transformative changes in the self for members.

I will now briefly explicate bureaucratic and collectivist organizational structure, before describing the structure of the two SMOs I studied. The extent to which organizational structure is
formal/bureaucratic vs. informal/collectivist, varies along a continuum. The most formally-organized, bureaucratic groups are characterized by hierarchy of offices, written rules, and selection for office by competence (usually on standardized tests). Such formal organizations operate on the basis of instrumental tasks and relationships, with monetary selective incentives providing rewards for participation. By contrast, informally-organized, collectivist groups are characterized by a deliberate lack of hierarchy in decision-making, rotating leadership, consensual decision-making, unspoken rules agreed-upon by mutually-shared values, and selection for position based on (initially) micromobilization contexts and friendship networks, or (later) task rotation. Such informal organizations operate on the basis of expressive ties and relationships, with purposive or solidary incentives providing a substitute for the lack of material rewards. There is a strong valuation of egalitarianism, participatory democracy, and sharing of one’s whole self with others in the organization, not just in terms of one role only (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979).

The self-help movement for incest survivors as a social movement, comprises several large SMOs, which vary in the extent to which they are formally-structured in terms of being bureaucratic, hierarchical, and institutionalized. The two SMOs I studied are at the far end of the bureaucratic-collectivist organizational continuum, meaning that decentralization and collectivism are strongly emphasized. Although there are no regional, state, or city-based levels of organization, the national offices do exhibit some qualities of centralized, bureaucratic structure. The two SMOs each have a national office to coordinate information flow among the local groups. These national offices send out
newsletters, stipulate rules with respect to the format, membership, and general content of meetings, maintain a mailing list of locally-based groups internationally, and also to some extent inform members of issues relevant to them, such as information on new kinds of therapy. Beyond this vestige of centralization, however, the two SMOs each consist of locally-based, independent, collectivist self-help groups. These are all modeled on the twelve-step format of Alcoholics Anonymous (hereafter AA), and similar to the other twelve-step SMOs such as Overeaters Anonymous (OA), Adult Children of Alcoholics (ACOA), Al-Anon (for spouses of alcoholics), Narcotics Anonymous (NA), or Co-dependents Anonymous (CODA).

Thus the first social movement organization which I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors (hereafter SMO#1), includes, as an aggregate, all locally-based self-help groups which call themselves "meetings of [SMO#1]," and which conform to the guidelines of the national office of SMO#1 in terms of format and beliefs, plus those (volunteer) personnel who work at the national office of SMO#1. The same definition holds for SMO#2. Thus the SMOs' locally-based collectivist self-help groups, are not SMOs themselves, in my opinion, but they are collectivist organizations which are subunits of either SMO#1 or SMO#2, respectively.

Self-Help Groups As Social Movement Organizations

I now discuss how self-help groups can be considered social movement organizations. Smith and Pillemer (1983) view self-help groups (SHGs) as a form of voluntary group which is based on a small-group model for mutual, "therapeutic" aid of members. They identity "the use of "Anonymous" organizational format (1983:207) as one of their seventeen "typological categories" of SHGs. Local self-help groups may be seen as
SMOs for several reasons, according to Smith and Pillemer (1983). First, SHGs are SMOs since they use therapeutic personal interaction rather than institutionalized means to help participants with their personal problems. The notion of self-help, comprising the notion of non-professional individuals, convening with other such individuals in a collectivist group, to discuss and solve their problems on an experiential basis, provides an alternative to modern society's professionalization and bureaucratization of health and welfare services (Smith and Pillemer, 1983). Thus self-help groups are SMOs seeking social change in the style of provision and in the epistemological assumptions of health-care services and service-care providers. Although most individual members of the self-help movement for incest survivors currently were seeing or had seen a therapist for their problems, the groups in this movement qualify as SMOs since they challenge the traditional medical/mental health establishment by getting non-professionals together in a collectivist structure to help each other problem-solve about the aftereffects of incest in one’s adult life.

Secondly, self-help groups operate as SMOs since they provide social support to people with stigmatizing problems (Smith and Pillemer, 1983). Thus they help the stigmatized to receive emotional support and engage in self-affirming personal interaction, and thus to experience being treated as non-deviants for a change. This is certainly true of the people in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Societal denial of the extent of incest and childhood sexual abuse, together with prevalent attitudes that people who admit to surviving incest are mentally ill, deviant, engaging in fabrication or fantasy, or were promiscuous as children and thus "deserved" their abuse, combine to stigmatize incest survivors. Many
respondents said that they got all or most of their social support from other survivors, which helped them to feel that they were not "crazy," "bad," or "sick."¹

Thirdly, self-help groups are "strong in social movement orientation," if they emphasize the following six factors: sociopolitical advocacy, negative relationships with professionals, disaffiliation with established treatment institutions, establishing an alternative lifestyle or culture for the stigmatized, internal participatory-democracy in group structure, and financial and material independence of the self-help group from outside sources (Smith and Pillemer, 1983:215). The two SMOs I studied, appear to manifest the latter three of these six factors, in their locally-based collectivist groups. For instance in terms of establishing an alternative culture, these local groups collectively establish an alternative social movement culture with its own language, emergent norms, discursive practices, rituals, and symbols, which survivors do not use in public interaction but use frequently in private interactions with other known survivors.

The groups also emphasize a collectivist, participatory-democratic internal group structure, encouraging all members to participate in meetings in talking about their experiences but not forcing them to do so. The "group conscience" decision-making format also encourages internal group democracy and participation. This "group conscience" format is based on the second of "twelve traditions," which along with the "twelve steps," forms the basis for the ideology of the movement. These are based on the twelve steps and twelve traditions of AA (see Appendix.) This "second tradition" states, "For our group purpose there is but one authority--a loving God as he may express himself in our group
conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern."²

It then specifies: "Our decisions come from the group conscience, which is a majority vote on any given subject, after a group discussion has taken place."³ In terms of consensual decision-making, participatory-democratic structure is maintained but strictly unanimous collectivist structure is not. In order for the group to make a decision on anything, one person has to make a motion that the group hold a "group conscience" on the issue, and this move has to be seconded by someone else. The chair then asks for a verbal vote on whether to hold a conscience, which could pass based on majority rule but which is made to appear to function in terms of group consensus. This aggregate sense of collectivity is discussed later in this chapter. Not all members of the group attend group consciences or business meetings, since attendance is not mandatory. This results in the problem of oligarchy, also discussed later in this chapter. There were four group consciences among the three groups I attended, over a year's time.⁴ These covered issues of: group response as a collectivity to a survey by the national office; whether to change some of the wording in the "Welcome" read aloud at the beginning of meetings; and whether the group wanted to schedule a "lead" format every fourth weekly meeting. The usual format per month was one "step meeting," (focused on one of the twelve steps); one "literature meeting," (focused on a movement document); and two or three "discussion meetings" (focused on a particular group member's personal problems).

In terms of financial independence, the groups in both of these SMOs, adhere to AA's seventh tradition of explicitly rejecting "outside material support," making the organizations have a more anti-institutional stance.
Solution of Organizational Problems in This Self-Help Movement

The two SMOs in the movement must solve organizational problems including achieving success, attaining goals, solving structural problems, developing tactics and strategies, and securing and maintaining resources for the movement. I address each of these in turn.

Resource mobilization as a perspective has highlighted the significance of SMO structure to social movement success. However, as research on social movements has proliferated, so have definitions of SMO structure and SMO success. Some scholars of social movements say that hierarchical, centralized formal organizational structures are prototypical of SMOs (e.g., Freeman, 1979; Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy and Zald, 1973,77; Gamson, 1990). Others contend that decentralized movements that are polycephalous, segmented, and reticulate, meaning informally- or nonhierarchically-organized, indigenous, mass-based movements at the local level that engage in extensive networking with each other, constitute a more typical SMO structure (e.g., Gerlach and Hine, 1970; McAdam, 1982; Morris, 1984; Taylor and Whittier, 1994).

These resource mobilization theories about the "ideal-typology" of SMO structures have then also been applied to the concept of social movement success. Thus social movement scholars favoring centralized, entrepreneurial SMOs as more prototypical, tend to emphasize their success as SMO structures. Conversely, scholars studying decentralized structures insist that these indigenously- or mass-based movements are more successful. The findings on this research can be summed up by saying that liberal social movements that strive for the goal of structural reform of institutions will be more successful if employing a
bureaucratic, hierarchical SMO with a centralized decision-making structure, since this structure matches that of the institutions it is striving to change, while radical social movements striving for the goal of complete transformation of persons, cultural practices, or institutions will be more successful using locally-based, informal, decentralized groups (Freeman, 1979; Jenkins, 1983; McCarthy and Zald, 1973, 77; Gamson, 1990).

Based on these findings, we might then argue based on this resource mobilization perspective, that since the self-help movement for incest survivors is a "recovery" movement with the goal of attaining transformative change in the individual, that the two SMOs' nationally-based central offices, with their elements of centralized authority, are counterproductive to the movement's attainment of success as a "radical social movement" with an overall collectivist structure. However, in examining whether centralized or decentralized SMOs are more successful, we need to consider four factors. The first two factors have to do with the definition of success, the third with the centralized/decentralized typology, and the fourth with the liberal/reform versus the radical/transformative typology.

First, whether we find centralized or decentralized movements more successful, depends on how we are defining "social movement success." Gamson (1990) defines success in terms of outcome variables, including self-acceptance (e.g., successful displacement such as winning offices via a third political party), acceptance by the antagonist which the group seeks to displace, acceptance by an antagonist other than the one being potentially displaced, and/or the gaining of new advantages for the group's beneficiary. Success is thus not an all-or-nothing assessment,
and it is not necessarily synonymous with the group accomplishing all of its goals. The self-help movement for incest survivors does define success overtly in terms of the attainment of one goal, which is "tradition 5" of the twelve traditions: "Each group has but one primary purpose: to carry its message to the incest survivor who still suffers;" and, "Our primary purpose is to help those who have been sexually abused." The movement also seems to implicitly assume, however, drawing from AA as the original model, that success involves members' conversion to a belief in and dependence upon their "Higher Power," and radical transformation of the self (Donovan, 1984; Pittman, 1988). Thus if we are seeking to measure the success of the self-help movement for incest survivors, we cannot say it has been uniformly successful or unsuccessful. The movement's organizations provide help to survivors, but they have not "carried its message" to every survivor who still suffers. Also not all those who attend local groups undergo conversion to the belief system of the movement. On the other hand the movement has demonstrated some clear successes in terms of its goals of transformation of the identity of members, since it is helping survivors engage in reconstruction of the self as recovering survivors rather than victims.

Secondly, in defining success by outcome measures, reflecting the group's condition at the end of its challenging period, the underlying premise is that we cannot measure a group's success until it ceases to exist, ceases mobilization and influence activity, or achieves acceptance as a spokesperson for its constituency (Gamson, 1990). However, some social movements have been regarded as achieving success even though they did not meet these three criteria. For instance the U.S. women's movement
has not ceased to exist but instead has achieved continuity over time. The U.S. women's movement also has not ceased mobilization or influence activity, although its peak periods of mass mobilization have alternated with nadir periods of being "in the doldrums" or in abeyance, when it survived as an elite-sustained movement (Rupp and Taylor, 1987; Taylor, 1989). The U.S. women's movement has also fluctuated over the past century and a half in terms of the extent of its acceptance as a spokesperson for its constituency, women, depending on whether it was surrounded by a concomitant, favorable political opportunity structure and the contemporaneous extent of anti-feminist movement backlash (Rupp and Taylor, 1987; Taylor, 1989). Yet social movement scholars have regarded the women's movement as successful in terms of other criteria, such as its influence on public consciousness, its contributions to other social movements, and its fostering of the current plethora of feminist movement organizations and alternative women's groups (Stacey, 1987; Taylor and Whittier, 1992a,94; Meyer and Whittier, 1994; Ferree and Martin, 1995).

Analogously, the self-help movement for incest survivors has not ceased to exist, nor has it ceased mobilization and influence activity, and currently is in abeyance as a spokesperson for its constituency of incest survivors, due to negative depictions in the mass media and the backlash from countermovement SMOs. However, as I argue in more detail in other chapters, this movement has been successful in terms of its influence on public consciousness, its contributions to other social movements such as women's spirituality collectives, and its influence on women as artists, through the creation of a social movement culture.
Therefore for some social movements, we cannot use these outcome measures as the sole criteria for social movement success.

Thirdly, some social movements such as the U.S. women's movement are comprised of an amalgamation of both collectivist groups and centralized SMOs which have grown more similar to each other over time, so that we cannot employ dichotomous labels such as "centralized-bureaucratic" or "decentralized-collectivist" to them anymore (Taylor and Whittier, 1993; Ferree and Hess, 1994; Ferree and Martin, 1995). Likewise we cannot categorize the self-help movement for incest survivors or its two SMOs which I studied as either formal-bureaucratic or decentralized-collectivist, for two reasons. First, similar to the U.S. women's movement, the overall self-help movement for incest survivors as a social movement contains both formal-bureaucratic, institutionalized SMOs and informal, nonhierarchical, collectivist groups, even some of the latter of which are not affiliated with any "official" SMO. Secondly, we also cannot typify the two SMOs themselves as strictly formal-bureaucratic or informal-collectivist, since their respective national offices have some centralized features while their local self-help groups themselves are decentralized and collectivist.

Fourthly, the SMOs' locally-based self-help groups have achieved success using liberal/reformist ideological elements of mainstream liberal individualism and Protestant Christianity, as I will explain later in the chapter. So we cannot equate the success of liberal reform movements with their formal-bureaucratic SMO structure or of radical, transformative movements with their informal-collectivist structure, since many contemporary social movements' structures do not fit squarely within these categorizations.
The resource mobilization approach to social movements also emphasizes the significance of social movement organizational structure to social movements' accomplishing their goals. Potential structurally-based, organizational problems include bureaucratization, cooptation, conservatization of goals, routinization and oligarchization. I will discuss each of these in turn. Weber (1946b, in Gerth and Mills) emphasized the inevitability of the process of rational-bureaucratization of organizations under modern society. According to Weber, organizations would thus become more hierarchical over time, increasingly adopting formalized rules and structures, in which rational-instrumental modes of interaction would prevail. Resource mobilization theorists, drawing from the approach of activists, viewed cooptation as the ensuing concomitant of rational-bureaucratization. Social movement scholars described collectivist, anti-hierarchical organizations as undergoing cooptation if they achieved acceptance, an institutionalized position, or recognition by societal institutions without gaining new advantages for their beneficiaries (Gamson, 1990). For example in the 1980s, U.S. feminist organizations which were predominantly bureaucratic, hierarchical, and institutionalized, or which had adopted bureaucratic or hierarchical forms in response to funding demands, were viewed as coopted (e.g., Ahrens, 1980; Andler and Sullivan, 1980; Johnson, 1981).

Some radical feminist collectivist organizations of the 1970s developed a specific administrative staff, including an executive director, and/or Board of Directors, which had hierarchical decision-making power, in response to 1980s governmental funding agencies' requirements that the organization be bureaucratically structured to receive grants. This ultimately led to dissatisfaction within these
collectivistic organizations, as the administrative staff thus began to make decisions without consulting the other staff, leading to the demise of consensual decision-making and ultimately of the collective (Morgen, 1990). The critique of bureaucratized feminist organizations as coopted, stems from the assumption that a truly "feminist" organization is egalitarian and collectivist (Ferguson, 1984). According to this view, instrumentally-oriented, hierarchical organizational structures reflect instrumental, masculinist modes of relationality and the hierarchical structure of male dominance over women. Bureaucratized feminist organizations were thus said to have lost sight of the original feminist goals of societal transformation, because of their structure. However, more recent theorists have noted that we must examine feminist movement organizations in terms of their successful survival strategies in an atmosphere of women's movement abeyance, view organizational maintenance as a means to an end rather than an end, and alter our preconceived notions about institutionalization, seeing it as a means of addressing other organizations and influencing their structures, rather than as merely cooptation (Ferree and Martin, 1995). In addition, institutionalization of SMOs does not necessarily imply deradicalization at all levels of social interaction (Reinelt, 1995; Spalter-Roth and Schreiber, 1995). Organizational theorists taking a feminist approach must also ask whether the lives of the activists involved were transformed, whether the larger society was transformed, and whether the organization has had a continuing impact on social life (Ferree and Martin, 1995).

When we examine the two SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors, we note that they have not succumbed to the processes of
rational-bureaucratization or cooptation due to the emphasis on expressive, emotive modes of relationality as a means of recovery, and because of the emphasis on maintenance of collectivist organizational structure, as described in the first, fourth and ninth traditions. For instance movement documents on these traditions state, "We structure our meetings so that all members have an opportunity to facilitate and all members have a chance to share their experiences and feelings."\(^7\), p.23; "While all groups follow the same steps and traditions and use the same basic format, each group is autonomous."\(^8\), p.27; and "[SMO\#2], as such, ought never be organized, but may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve...An [SMO\#2] groups needs little organization. Each group elects members to carry out duties, such as Chairperson, Secretary, Literature, Group Representative, Treasurer, etc...Also, rotation of offices, set by a schedule and agreed upon by the group conscience, protects the continuous, harmonious, inner workings of the group. The service boards and committees spoken of...refer to the service arms of the [national office] and local Intergroups. These functions hold no control over the groups they serve. It is quite the opposite...It is not contradictory for [SMO\#2] to remain non-professional and in turn create service boards and maintain service staff. [SMO\#2] has to function as a whole, or the individual cannot be served. Tradition 9 is what makes [SMO\#2] a true fellowship, a society without organization, motivated by the spirit of service alone.\(^9\) The SMOS also have not succumbed to cooptation due to adhering to the "seventh tradition" of not accepting outside funding or material support.\(^10\)

The structural problems of goal conservatization, routinization, and oligarchization are frequently intertwined in RM organizational analyses.
Such analyses are based on the work of Weber and Michels. *Goal conservatization* means that the organization alters its original, societal-transformational goals, exchanging them for more conservative, liberal-reformist goals over the life cycle of an organization (Weber, 1947). Weber described *routinization* in organizations as a process involving the transformation in authority from reliance on a charismatic leader to reliance on rational, formalized rules, concomitant with structural transformation in the direction of increased hierarchy and bureaucracy (1947:363-371). Michels (1959) described *oligarchization* in organizations as a process involving the concentration of power, over time, in the hands of an elite cadre, who would then blunt the organization's goals in the direction of organizational maintenance, in an attempt to sustain their control. Goal conservatization in the Weber-Michels model is thus viewed as an inevitable process in which any organization will eventually seek to accommodate the larger society by transforming its goals to be in accord with the dominant societal consensus. Later social movement scholars have, however, contested the inevitability of these processes, contending that SMOs may become more radical over time (e.g., Zald and Ash, 1966). Moreover, those SMOs that resist bureaucratization may be more likely to have their demands for concessions granted (Piven and Cloward, 1977).

*Goal conservatization* has not occurred in the SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors, although the institution of medicine under capitalism is exerting cooptive pressure on the movement. This relation between the overall movement and medicine as an institution is discussed later in this chapter. Those who critique self-help could argue that the twelve-step based SMOs in the self-help movement for
incest survivors do not articulate goals of radical societal transformation, and that the two SMOs' focus on "preservation of the fellowship" at all costs, as one of the twelve traditions, constitutes a conservative, "organizational maintenance" orientation. However, if we define "radical societal transformation" as occurring at the micro-level, we note that twelve-step programs are engaging in such transformation since they provide a "group-induced process of identity transformation" (Donovan, 1984:416). Various authors have noted that recovery programs as a means of identity transformation seems to be transforming society on a mass scale (Riessman, 1990; Kasl, 1992). Such identity transformation processes are characteristic of the "new social movements" under postindustrial society. Moreover, these two SMOs' goals have not changed since their inception, and thus have not become more conservative over time, according to movement founders. The SMOs' adherence to A.A.'s twelve traditions, stressing the preservation of the movement's goals and structure above all else, obviates potential problems of goal conservatization.

Similarly, the two SMOs' adherence to the traditions prevents routinization problems, since the movement's primary emphasis is on expressivity of emotion and maintenance of the autonomy of collectivist groups rather than instrumental relationships or a strong bureaucracy. The founders of SMO#1 and SMO#2 also are not regarded as the charismatic leaders of the movement, so that routinization of charisma as a type of authority inherent to founding leaders of movements specifically, has not ensued. At meetings I observed that, in practice, all twelve-step programs place "principles before personalities," and thus do not hold their founders in reverence. However, informally, "Bill W." and "Dr. Bob"
are well-known as the founding leaders of AA and are almost folk heroes, to those members of the self-help movement for incest survivors who were in AA first. Some even had "Honk if you love Bill W." as bumper stickers on their cars, making the founder a symbol for the AA movement. By comparison, none of my respondents knew who had founded SMO#1 or SMO#2 in the self-help movement for incest survivors (except the founders themselves). There are not any bumper stickers reverencing any leaders of either of the two SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors, thus downplaying the role of charisma in the founding of the movement.

This same adherence to the twelve traditions regarding not having movement leaders or a hierarchy of offices ("our leaders are but trusted servants they do not govern," as mentioned above), prevents oligarchization at the national office level. Movement literature also encourages the locally-based groups to schedule group consciences and business meetings regularly, since this (potentially) precludes problems of oligarchization at the local level. Movement documents on tradition #2 state, "It is suggested that if an especially emotionally charged issue is being discussed, talk about it one month, and vote on it at the next business meeting. In this way, all members have a chance to think carefully through the issue and no one person or minority will make a decision for the group." (p. 24). This document also states, "Groups have had problems because the older members did not attend business meetings, and new people and/or a minority will make a decision for the group...Some members may have an inherent tendency to dominate and control. If this goes unchecked, it is up to the group conscience to correct the situation...If problems are not addressed, the group may find itself controlled by one individual or clique." (p. 24). In actuality
some groups have had problems with dominating individuals or cliques at the local level, attending the business meetings and group consciences and, due to sheer numbers, outvoting the others. This problem of oligarchization has not been addressed at the local group level enough, according to some respondents, who felt that the only way the problem could be resolved was by them abandoning the group for another local group permanently, or leaving for a short period of time (e.g. a few months) and then returning periodically to see if the members of the oligarchy themselves had dropped out.16

The resource mobilization perspective also discusses the salience of tactics and strategies for social movements' success and goal attainment. They are the means by which SMOs mobilize resources to attain their goals. The goals of the SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors, are: engaging in outreach to survivors, and helping the recruited survivor who suffers. Engaging in outreach to survivors is accomplished via recruitment processes. Helping recruited survivors is accomplished by getting them to undergo conversion to movement beliefs, to become committed to "recovery," and to "help themselves" by engaging in certain self-transformational strategies. These self-transformational strategies are called "tools for recovery" in both SMOs.

These strategic tools include, but also go beyond, the strategies for self-evaluation, self-criticism, and self-transformation found in AA (Donovan, 1984). The AA program is based on a male model. Founded primarily by males for males, AA's strategies for self-transformation are grounded in a harsh critique of the old self as a dysfunctional addict who has transgressed against others because of selfish, even egocentric and abusive behavior focused on getting a steady supply of alcohol to
drink (Donovan, 1984; Kasl, 1992). By contrast the two SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors, even though they are based on the "Anonymous"-format, are based on a female model. Although some incest survivors are recovering alcoholics, not all of them are. Most self-reported incest survivors are also female, which is reflected in the predominantly female composition of the movement. Thus these women's addiction to self-victimizing, dysfunctional behavior, not substances, has primarily hurt themselves, not others. Thus the self-help movement must differ from AA in its transformational strategies, due to gender features.

Feminist authors have thus suggested that the twelve-step, male-oriented AA model, in which the convert must make reparations to others for his abusive behavior, may not be appropriate for incest-survivor women (Swan, 1989; Kasl, 1992). This is because incest-survivor women have been socialized to have weaker or underdeveloped "ego boundaries" and their primary addiction encompasses self-harming, not other-harming, behaviors (Mason, 1991; Kasl, 1992). Some respondents were also aware that SMO#1 and SMO#2 must necessarily have different self-transformational strategies than AA because of these two SMOs' predominantly female membership and the different type of "addiction" that these SMOs address. These respondents themselves said they are "addicted to their perpetrators," "addicted to self-destructive behavior," or "addicted to dysfunctional behavior and relationships," as opposed to being addicted to a substance such as alcohol.

SMO#1's self-transformational strategies for survivors are called "tools for living in nonviolence." These include, beyond using AA's twelve steps and twelve traditions, "doing inner child work, hugging a
cuddly, writing with both hands, staying centered and grounded in one's chronological-age adult, and leaning on God's unconditional love and support.\textsuperscript{21} The "leaning on God" concept derives from AA's focus on spiritual conversion as the heart of the twelve-step programs. "Writing with both hands" synthesizes early neurophysiological studies showing memories to be inaccessible to the nondominant brain hemisphere, with later art therapy studies showing that drawing or writing can assist in recovering repressed, traumatic memories (Risse and Gazzaniga, 1978; Bowers, 1992; Glaister, 1994; Simonds 1994). Thus survivors engage in writing or drawing with the nondominant hand (which is linked to the nondominant brain hemisphere) to access repressed memories of incestuous abuse and for creative expression. The other three strategies revolve around the concept of the "inner child", used in the broader self-help movement and in the mental health field for recovery. These are discussed further in chapter 4. However, the main point is that they are all symbolic strategies used for transformation of the self. The "eight tools of recovery" for SMO\#2 are also strategies for reconstruction of the self, but they are more directly strategies for keeping the survivor committed to SMO\#2. These strategies are: survivorship, sponsorship, attending meetings, using the telephone list to talk to other survivors in SMO\#2, writing in a journal, reading SMO\#2 literature, engaging in service [outreach] work to other survivors, and keeping anonymity.\textsuperscript{22}

Social movements must mobilize specific resources for attaining their goals, including funding, publicity, meeting space, and members. The SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors stress complete detachment from outside funding sources, and thus rely on members' voluntary donations for organizational maintenance, based on the seventh
Publicity is eschewed in keeping with the eleventh tradition, which states, "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films, and television." Local churches, hospitals, or mental health centers usually provide meeting space for meetings of the two SMOs, for a low monthly fee. Due to little funding and rejection of publicity as a resource for recruitment, the two SMOs rely heavily on members as resources for acquiring new members and for organizational funding.

All movements face membership problems of getting people to attend their group gatherings, known as recruitment; getting people to accept their belief system, known as conversion; and getting people to return to group meetings on a regular basis, investing their time, energy, and sometimes money in group activity, known as commitment. RM theorists frequently talk about SMOs' use of selective, purposive, and solidary incentives to solve these problems. Olson (1965) points to the importance of analyzing the use of selective and purposive incentives in solving the "free rider" problem in organizations. Here I agree with Smith and Pillemer, who note that, "Olson's (1965) theory of collective action...applies only partially to the situation of SHGs. Where it would argue that mere solidary (fellowship, companionship) incentives are too weak to generate group commitment in most instances, with purposive (goal attainment) and especially material incentives generally necessary, SHGs tend to generate very substantial commitment to the group largely from solidary incentives, with some admixture of purposive incentives, and very little in the way of material incentives in most cases. Yet the theory is applicable in the sense that the solidary and purposive..."
incentives that are offered to SHG participants are clearly selective incentives that one can enjoy only as a member of the group, by and large" (1983:219).

In terms of membership, both SMO#1 and SMO#2 have all men's groups, all women's groups, and mixed-sex groups nationally and internationally. In SMO#1, membership is open to anyone eighteen years or older who is an incest victim and who is not an "initiator, perpetrator, or Satanist." (An initiator is someone who initiates sexual abuse with a child.) This also means that members cannot have previously been in any of these categories at any time. In SMO#2, membership is open to anyone eighteen years or older who is a victim of child sexual abuse, who desires to recover from it and who is currently not offending (i.e., currently not being a perpetrator of physical, emotional, or sexual abuse), with local groups autonomously deciding if they will allow past perpetrators.

Although the two SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors are modeled after the pattern of Alcoholics Anonymous, their modes of recruitment differ. Recruitment to AA operates on the basis of five factors: newcomers attending meetings after finding out about them via telephone referrals from the AA Central Office or A.A. Intergroup (the coordinating center for local calls from people asking for assistance), referrals by a friend or relative with no prior AA contact; referral by a local AA member ("Twelfth Step call"); transfer from another local group, or transfer from an out-of-town group (Gellman, 1964:75). AA recruitment may also operate via referrals from personnel in alcoholism treatment centers or hospitals (Gellman, 1964).

By contrast, the predominant mode of recruitment to the two SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors is friendship networks from
other twelve-step programs. For instance one of the founding members of SMO#2, said:

We [SMO#2] had gotten so large that we were dividing into two groups [at the meeting site.] We had people driving in from [neighboring state], and parts of [other neighboring state]. It was the only [SMO#2] meeting anywhere, at the time. Most of them coming in, were in another twelve-step program, A.A. and O.A. being the most common. Most people coming in, are still, I think, in at least one other twelve-step program.28

The founding member of SMO#1 also mentioned that "word got out then, through other twelve-step programs" that certain women "twelve-steppers" had founded a twelve-step program for incest survivors, which is how the first meeting of SMO#1 expanded and other, locally-based group meetings of SMO#1 were founded and then expanded.29 Although two of the respondents said their therapist referred them to SMO#1 or SMO#2, most of my respondents (total of 28 including the founders), also discussed how they were referred to the two SMOs by already being in other twelve-step programs. For example one woman said:

Interviewer: How did you hear about the [SMO#2] meeting?
Respondent: I was at an AA meeting and I was just talking about whatever was going on [with me], because I didn’t have any place else to talk about it. And this woman there came up to me, and told me that there was this survivor group, and that’s how I ended up getting into [SMO#2].

Interviewer: Have you ever talked to other people in your group about how they got into recovery?
Respondent: Yeah. I’ve heard several of their stories. Most of the people I know got introduced to [SMO#2] through AA. They were in AA, and then they met other people through AA, and then the person who was their sponsor or their friend who was also in AA said, "You know, you should try going to this [SMO#2] group; you sound like this would be helpful." That kind of thing. And also, like, at Al-Anon and OA, most of the people that I’ve seen come in and out of the groups have [already] been introduced to the twelve steps in one way or another.30

Friendship networks’ operation as the major mode of recruitment in these SMOs probably reflects the predominance of female membership in self-help in general, and also in the self-help movement for incest survivors.
Gender socialization teaches women to be focused on relationships and ties to others. Notably, all of the women respondents who reported being recruited into SMO#1 or SMO#2 via twelve-step programs, stated that another woman came up to them and recommended that the respondent try going to incest survivor meetings. This finding points to the salience of women’s friendships with other women, particularly in self-help, for helping women incest survivors get into recovery for their incest issues. The operation of recruitment to self-transformative, religious movements via extramovement interpersonal ties and networks has also been documented by researchers taking a microstructural approach, who then view recruitment as operating primarily via micromobilization contexts (Snow, Zurcher, and Ekland-Olson, 1980; McAdam, McCarthy, and Zald, 1988).

I would contend that conversion processes in the two SMOs I studied are the same as those in AA. Conversion in AA is based on the founder Bill W’s belief, from reading James’ The Varieties of Religious Experience (1902), that only a deep, personal, spiritual conversion experience could quell the alcoholic’s cravings for alcohol. According to James, ecstatic spiritual conversion replaces the fundamental sense of emptiness and unfulfilled need for joy which are at the root of alcoholic addiction. "Bill W." deliberately incorporated this belief into twelve-step programs, when he wrote the twelve steps (Pittman, 1988). The twelfth step stresses this "spiritual awakening" in all twelve-step programs, including AA and both of the SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors. As I will discuss in chapter 4, those respondents who seemed to be recovering more from the aftereffects of incest in adult life, seemed also to be the most committed to the twelve
steps and twelve traditions of the SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors and to have undergone the kind of "spiritual awakening" seen as requisite for recovery in this movement.

Donovan (1984:411) notes that Alcoholics Anonymous "is systematically organized around the processes of sacrifice, investment, renunciation, communion, mortification, and transcendence," in order to generate members' commitment to the organization, which then allows AA to be successful in the treatment of alcohol abuse. Similarly, since both SMO#1 and SMO#2 are based on the ideology and structure of AA, they also rely on some of these commitment-generating processes. However, as mentioned, the predominance of women in these two SMOs and the different nature of their addiction from alcohol addiction, makes it plausible that communion and transcendence are more important factors in generating commitment among women than the other four factors.

Sponsorship is also encouraged to generate commitment. Sponsorship is analogous to a mentoring relationship in academia, where a more experienced person helps a protegee. To get a sponsor, the novice asks someone, usually at the same weekly meeting, to be her/his sponsor. That person may refuse or accept. If the potential sponsor declines to be a sponsor, the novice may ask someone else. Most respondents in my sample had already had a sponsor mentoring them in another twelve-step program before they joined the self-help movement for incest survivors. Novices are socialized into movement norms by attending meetings, using the phone list of currently attending members, calling their sponsor if they are having problems, and reading movement literature.

The self-groups in the self-help movement for incest survivors, however, still have problems maintaining membership and motivating people
to show their commitment. One example is through the dearth of "leads." A.A. and the two SMOs I studied, emphasize using the evangelical Protestant Christian tradition of "testifying" followed by group affirmation as a method of sustaining group commitment. However, to make this tradition more ecumenically appealing, this tradition is not called "testifying" or "witnessing" but "giving a lead."

At a "lead," one person who has been "in recovery" for a year or more, spends about 45 minutes talking about her/his past and how getting into this particular SMO as part of twelve-step recovery programs, has changed her/his life. Ahlstrom (1972) discusses how Protestant Christianity took on the form of a spiritual social movement that spread rapidly throughout the white, rural, Protestant population of the U.S. at the time of the Great Awakening in the 1730s. This movement flowered again in the nineteenth century as Gospel revivalism. Itinerant ministers went from town to town, preaching the Gospel in tents and encouraging processes of conversion to evangelical Christianity through ecstatic conversion experiences in which people felt "filled with the Holy Spirit." Some of these converts then joined this traveling camp revival movement, speaking when the reviver called upon them, as to the power of Christianity and how it had changed their lives. This was known as "witnessing for Jesus" or "testifying to the power of the Lord." People in the tent surrounding the "witness" would then speak about how they could see evidence of the Holy Spirit in the "witness," affirming the witness's testimony. Similarly, in the two SMOs I studied, the "lead" speaks in front of a podium or sitting before the group, and then individual group members affirm how they have "seen recovery" in the lead person since she or he joined the movement. People give leads if the chairperson asks them several weeks beforehand,
however, so this tradition has thus evolved into a more formal and intellectural, less spontaneous format over the past 150 years, making it more appealing to urban, white, middle class audiences in twelve-step programs. Since the person requested to "lead" can thus refuse the chair's advance request, this resulted in a problem of a dearth of leads, since a "lead" was listed as a meeting format for every fourth week, but meetings only had two leads during the one-year period during which I observed.31

OTHER TWELVE-STEP SMOs AS PRE-EXISTING ORGANIZATIONAL BASES FOR THESE 2 SMOs

In order to understand this particular self-help movement in its sociohistorical context, we must analyze how other social movements may have contributed resources for founding this movement's SMOs. Resource mobilization theory points to the importance of other social institutions and/or social movements in supplying the incipient, fledgling social movement with resources to help it "get off the ground." These resources may include a meeting site, publicity, members, leaders, organizing skills, or ideological elements related to the generation of movement commitment or structure. RM theorists such as Freeman (1973b), Morris (1984), and Oberschall (1973) have discussed how a crisis and organizers, a pre-existing organizational base, a cooptable communications network, and movement halfway houses are resources important to the formation of a social movement in its early stages of development. When an already-existing social movement serves as a foundation for an incipient social movement by giving it such resources, it is called a pre-existing organizational base for the incipient movement. Ferree and Martin (1995) note the importance of pre-existing organizational bases to the
resurgence of the women's movement in the 1960s: "Many long-
institutionalized organizations of the earlier feminists, such as the
National Women's Party, the League of Women Voters, and the American
Association of University Women, provided organizational resources and a
sense of history to the nascent [women's] movement and were themselves
revitalized by the new mobilization" (Ferree and Martin, 1995:5).

Thus I first give a brief organizational history of the two SMOs I
studied, and then I discuss in this section the influence of Alcoholics
Anonymous (AA) and other twelve-step SMOs, on the founding of these two
SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Later in this
chapter I discuss the impact of various feminist movement organizations
(FMOs), on the founding, organizational maintenance, and structural
meanings employed in the self-help movement for incest survivors.

I conducted personal, in-depth interviews with two women founders of
these two organizations. Founder #1 is a heterosexual, divorced woman
with children, who started SMO#1 in 1980, after fifteen years in other
twelve-step programs (AA, Al-Anon, and OA). Founder #1 said that she does
not consider herself a feminist or an activist and thus was not
influenced by other social movements to start SMO#1. She started holding
meetings in her living room when other women in the same twelve-step
programs that she was in, expressed interest in having incest survivor
meetings based on the twelve-step, AA model. Other local groups formed
when members of the first group started their own groups in other cities
and eventually in other states and countries. The group membership also
expanded after a local newspaper ran a one-page story on the group.³²

Founder #2 is a heterosexual, married woman with three children, who
started SMO#2 in late 1981, after "several years" in other twelve-step
programs. She had heard of SMO#1 [which was in a different part of the U.S.], but says she did not use it as a model for SMO#2. She also started the first SMO#2 meetings in her living room, when she and two other women from her other twelve-step programs wanted to start an incest survivor program based on the twelve-step, AA model. Other SMO#2 groups formed when people who had been driving in from out of state, formed their own groups in their home states. The membership expanded when recovery newsletters began publicizing the first SMO#2 group’s hotline number, which was originally located in founder #2’s basement.

We can see the influence of AA and other twelve-step programs, as a pre-existing organizational base for the founding of both SMO#1 and SMO#2, when we examine the words of the founders of each. For instance Founder #1, who founded SMO#1, said,

I have no involvement with the women’s movement, or the peace movement, anything like that, I was just in a lot of emotional pain. I had been in twelve-step programs before [starting SMO#1], such as AA, Al-Anon, and OA. But nothing was available within twelve-step programs for me [for incest issues.] Then God gave me a vision to start this [SMO#1] program. So I started a meeting, it was just women, in 1980 in my living room. The ladies who came to the first meeting, did not want a twelve-step, twelve-tradition meeting that was exactly the same as AA. We wanted the principles of the twelve steps and twelve traditions to heal us from [the effects of] our abuse, though. So I started [SMO#1] based on the twelve steps.

Likewise, Founder #2 said:

I started in another twelve-step program when I was very young, when I was 19. And I really think that that program took care of a lot of the weeds, but it didn’t take care of the roots. And eventually, I called a rape crisis center, not that I would give them my name, nor would I come in and visit the center, because I was too ashamed and too scared. But I just started talking to [x, the phone counselor], every week. She told me that there was a group there, for incest survivors. And I got involved in that, although I still didn’t think that it was incest, you know, I didn’t want to believe that this abuse from my mother counted. And in that group therapy I met [y], who said she was in another twelve-step program. And I kind of latched onto her real quick. I said to her, “Here’s my name and number, I need to talk to you. My first twelve-step program seems to be saying all the wrong things.” It was like having a sinking
life-preserver. It had saved me in so many other areas, and helped me so tremendously, but now when I started talking about the [incestuous] abuse, with people in these programs, they were saying all the wrong things. Like "Just live one day at a time," and "You have to forgive and forget," very simplistic answers to very complicated questions. And [Y] and I got very close. Then [Z] came in [to the rape crisis center therapy group]. She said at one of the first meetings, she was sexually abused by her father. And the three of us got very close because we had all learned to depend on twelve-step programs. And we said, "Why not work the twelve steps on incest," that we had worked in other areas of our lives. And that's really how it got started. The first meeting was at my dining room table. And we started meeting in each other's homes, taking turns, and we met for a few months, maybe six months. And at that point we opened it up to the public.\footnote{35}

Contrary to my expectations, both founders and long-time members of the self-help movement for incest survivors said that it was not the presence of males in their original twelve-step groups which precluded their discussing incest in such groups. I had expected this since research indicates that many women survivors may have difficulty relating to men as an aftereffect of incest (e.g., Briere and Runtz, 1991). Both women, said, notably, that the twelve-step programs that they were already in, were insufficient to address their needs specifically as incest survivors, since these programs exist to address other addictions. These two women and other respondents who were in other twelve-step programs first, said it was both male and female "old-timers'" focus on "twelve-step" ideological purity that made it hard to discuss incest. That is, long-time members of Alcoholics Anonymous and other twelve-step programs for substance abuse addictions tend to emphasize that such meetings are exclusively for working on issues of that particular addiction, and to give negative sanctions in or after such meetings to incest survivors talking at such meetings about their incest-related issues.\footnote{36}

We can also see the influence of AA and other twelve-step programs as pre-existing organizational bases for the two SMOs I studied in the
self-help movement for incest survivors, when we examine the criteria used by both SMOs for people to start their own, new, locally-based meetings for SMO#1 or SMO#2.

For instance, Founder #1 said that there are four requirements stipulated by the centralized national office, for starting a local group of SMO#1. First, there is a requirement "that the alcoholic or addict be clean and sober for two years' minimum, before starting a meeting." This assumes that incest survivors are alcoholics or addicts. Secondly, the founder of SMO#1 said that, "to start a meeting a person must be qualified; he or she must have at least two consecutive years of recovery in AA, OA, or Al-Anon before starting a [SMO#1] meeting." This assumes that incest survivors are alcoholics, food addicts, or people married to substance abusers, respectively, since these are the respective purposes of the AA, OA, and Al-Anon meetings. It also assumes that people must be socialized into the twelve steps and twelve traditions in their "pure" form, specifically in the programs for addicts, since this founder said that being in ACOA (for Adult Children of Alcoholics, who are not necessarily addicts themselves) was "not good enough," since it "was not a pure form of the twelve steps." Third, this founder said that the person who wants to start a meeting "must live and work the twelve steps and twelve traditions in their own personal life on a daily basis." This again ensures that the new meeting will be strongly based on the commitment-generating devices of the twelve steps and twelve traditions. Fourth, the person who wants to start a meeting "must be able to state that she or he is not an initiator [of sexual abuse], perpetrator, Satanist, or victim who became an initiator." This assumes that people in these categories do not belong in twelve-step programs. It also assumes
that people who were ever initiators or perpetrators cannot heal from sexual abuse enough to start a meeting. It also assumes that they should not be at a meeting for incest survivors, where they would likely meet people to victimize, a fact supported by some research indicating that past perpetrators are likely to be repeat offenders (Hunter, 1990a,b). Overall here we see an emphasis on people having been in other twelve-step programs themselves for quite a while before they can go on to start their own twelve-step meetings for SMO#1 or SMO#2.

I contend later in this chapter that factors associated with the women's movement provided the additional impetus, in addition to the support and organizational model of AA and other twelve-programs, for the founding of the two SMOs I studied. Thus both other twelve-step programs and the women's movement existed as pre-existing organizational bases for the founding of these two SMOs, but it was specifically a pre-existing, cooptable communications network from other twelve-step programs that contributed to the expansion of the self-help movement for incest survivors.

PROBLEM RESOLUTION IN COLLECTIVIST SELF-HELP ORGANIZATIONS

A full understanding of the problems of this social movement at the local level requires an examination of how the movement's locally-based self-help groups operate as collectivist organizations. Thus I discuss in this section how these locally-based, collectivist self-help groups resolve the problems of collectivist and self-help organizations, exhibiting particular resourcefulness when these local collectivist organizations' problems are complicated by their ideological commitment to a twelve-step, spiritually-based self-help model.
Self-help groups as SMOs based on principles of self-help, face the specific problem of reaching out to stigmatized populations and then attempting to integrate them into support networks (Smith and Pillemer, 1983). Members of stigmatized populations may not want to disclose their stigmatized identity to anyone else, fearing negative sanctions and disapproval. It is easier for someone already sharing with others about one source of stigmatized identity within self-help, such as that of alcoholic, to share another stigmatized identity, such as incest survivor, with those already in self-help, hence the importance of recruitment networks into the twelve-step SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors from other twelve-step SMOs.

However, the stigmatized person’s resistance to disclosure precludes the stigmatized from getting into self-help in the first place. Potential friends may share the same identity and may be already in self-help groups for that identity, but the stigmatized person who is not yet a recruit to self-help does not know this. Medical or mental health professionals have thus also been sources of referral for getting people with stigmatized identities into support groups or self-help SMOs (Riessman, 1990; Herman, 1993; Lempert, 1994). Two of my respondents also mentioned this. For example, one respondent said:

I didn’t really identify as a survivor until I started seeing a particular therapist and I was telling her about what I’d been experiencing. And she encouraged me to go to an incest survivors’ meeting. And I thought that wasn’t going to be okay, because all that I thought had happened to me was an emotional level of incest, not a physical level. But I went to the meeting, and I just started saying, “My name is [x] and I’m an incest survivor.” And then I kept on going [to meetings], because I could relate to it. I think that was the beginning [of identifying myself as a survivor.]

In addition, self-help groups as collectivist organizations have encountered six other problems which other collectivist organizations in
the U.S. have had to confront. These six problems include the problems of
time consumption, dealing with heightened emotions in intense settings,
unacknowledged intrinsic patterns of inequality, conflict avoidance,
sexual intimacy among members, and resolving dilemmas of individualism
versus collectivism. I now address these problems' resolution in the
self-help movement for incest survivors.

One of the problems noted by those who have participated in
collectivist organizations, is that consensual decision-making processes
take a lot of members' time (Mansbridge, 1973; Morgen, 1990). This is
because there is a lot of emphasis on hearing each member of the
collective's point of view on the issue on which a decision is to be
made. In the case of the self-help groups in the two SMOs I studied, this
problem was resolved by the groups' use of majority vote in the "group
conscience" or in the monthly group business meeting, rather than on a
unanimous vote, as a means of decision-making. It could be argued that in
adopting majority-vote as a decision-making process in the group
conscience, this self-help movement is abandoning the collectivist model
for a more individualist model. Certainly voting operates on different
principles than consensual decision-making, since in voting the group is
no longer conceived as unitary but as composed of different individuals,
some of whose preferences may be overridden or dismissed in a vote.
However, both voting and decision-making by consensus are based in
beliefs in participatory democracy, and verbal votes made in both the
group conscience and group business meetings are frequently constructed
in meetings as having achieved consensus even if a vote was involved.
This is discussed more later in the chapter.
Secondly, collectivist groups face the difficulty of highly-emotionally-charged meetings. This intensity sometimes results from trying to achieve unanimous consensus as a decision-making process (Freeman, 1973a; Mansbridge, 1973; Morgen, 1990). However, emotional intensity in a twelve-step group in particular usually results from one of three factors: from one person going on and on about an issue, a member bringing up a particularly disturbing issue, or group members’ being divided in their opinions about an issue. Movement documents address these issues, providing basic guidelines on a theoretical level.

For instance on the issue of emotionality due to one person talking too long, movement documents construct eviction of a monopolizer from the group as a group decision made in accordance with tradition #1. Movement documents first state tradition 1: “Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on unity,” (p. 23), and then state, “An important part of the meeting’s unity is talking and listening. But, an extreme of either can deprive others of help. When we have something to share, we share it, but when members use up limited meeting time to go on and on about personal grievances, they are not helping anyone, not even themselves. Some things are better dealt with in private therapy or with a sponsor...If someone is disruptive to the group (i.e., monopolizing), that member may be asked to leave (based upon a decision made by the whole group). It is important to remember to put principles above personalities when coming to this decision.” (p. 23).

Movement documents also emphasize to members the importance of accepting anyone who may bring up new, disturbing topics about their past for discussion or in the course of a discussion. For instance the
frequently-used pamphlet on the twelve steps and twelve traditions (written and printed by people at the centralized office) states, "We close the door to no one (except current perpetrators). You will not be condemned in these rooms because you think your abuse was too horrible or not as bad as someone else's. Socially, we may have been stigmatized because of promiscuity, prostitution, alcoholism, food or drug addictions, or institutionalization. We are not afraid of you or repulsed by you. Who dares to cast judgment and play judge, jury, and executioner with a fellow survivor's life because of where they have been or are now?...So, to the newcomer frightened of rejection or damnation, please know it is YOUR choice to be a member of [SMO#2]. Remember, though you may not like all of us, you will come to love us in a very special way--the same way we already love you."

We also see in this passage the emphasis on being tolerant and accepting that characterizes political liberalism, together with an emphasis on the individual making "choices" as the basis for empowerment, which characterizes the philosophy of individualism. The statement also seems to warn other members to resolve the issue of high emotionality quietly and on an individual basis, via this passage condemning others who would "dare to cast judgment." This latter statement is also reminiscent of Protestant Christianity, in terms of being analogous to biblical New Testament passages about not judging others since we all fall short of perfection. These themes are woven together in this twelve-step movement's ideology to resolve issues of emotional intensity and to generate movement commitment. Problem resolution thus becomes associated with the individual's acceptance of movement beliefs, which the movement
has produced by constructing its own broadly-appealing syncretism of Protestant-based, ecumenical, Western, liberal-individualist thought.

I also observed high emotionality to be a problem in meetings when group members are divided in their opinions about an issue. Yet here again movement documents use liberal individualism as the basis for problem resolution, in this context meaning the rights of individuals to their own opinions, as long as they keep them to themselves. Members are not supposed to argue and the issue of "incest" itself supposedly generates no controversy. For instance movement documents state, "Many members of [SMO#2] have opinions about treatment for survivors and offenders, cultural roots, etc. However, the tenth tradition warns that to preserve [SMO#2] unity and to keep our focus on support for survivors, we ought not (as a group) express opinions on any of these outside issues. A centered, unbiased, unchallenging atmosphere is the right of each member. Having been wounded by the affects [sic] of incest, we come seeking comfort and understanding, not dissension...What individuals do or say in defense of their own beliefs is fine, as long as it is not done or said in the name of [SMO#2] or discussed at meetings. In [SMO#2], let us leave ourselves a place free to concentrate on our common bond, leaving our individual views on outside issues as just that--individual. Though we may have differing political or ideological beliefs, we find mutual respect as we share from our common denominator--incest" (p.31). (emphases added). Some members who were also long-time members of other twelve-step SMOs, said they appreciated this deflection of controversy and emphasis on civility and consensus. However, others said that they felt that they could not express opinions different from that of the apparent "dominant consensus of the group" in meetings.
Thus although movement literature resolves these issues in theory, in practice in the local group, if problems of emotional intensity are not resolved, group members sometimes drop out as a result, or avoid going to meetings for a while.

In addition, sometimes a hierarchical leadership structure develops within a supposedly egalitarian, collectivist group due to some members' advantages over others such as more education, articulateness, charisma, etc., resulting in an unacknowledged hierarchy or "tyranny of structurelessness" (Freeman, 1973a; Mansbridge, 1973). However, this did not seem to be a consistent problem in the two SMOs I studied, for two reasons. First, movement documents actively encourage egalitarianism and discourage hierarchy, such as in the above examples stressing the unity of the group. This constant repetition of the theme of egalitarianism, also present in the literature which is read aloud regularly at meetings, serves as a reminder to would-be leaders to blend in with the group. Secondly, as a movement of predominantly white middle class, mostly college-educated para-professional women, there seems to be a dynamic of self-selection that implicitly discourages professional women from coming back to meetings and which ostracizes women of color and women of less privileged educational backgrounds, as I discussed in chapter 2. Members also gave negative nonverbal sanctions to would-be leaders in meetings.

Conflict avoidance, or group members' unwillingness to address group dynamics or group issues which need to be discussed for the group to be sustained, are another problem of small groups, particularly participatory-democratic groups (Rawls, 1993). Movement literature encourages members to address conflict in group dynamics or group issues by means of the group conscience or business meetings. The literature
also implicitly asks members to resolve interpersonal conflicts outside of the group, to avoid dissension. However in practice, conflicts may ensue between group members if it splits into factions, or between one individual and the group, which can cause factionalization. Conflict avoidance has led to the near-demise of two of the local groups I observed, as members flee to other groups to escape having to confront members or issues that they do not want to address.

Problems of sexual intimacy among members can also develop in small, expressive groups. Starhawk, a feminist activist, has discussed this in terms of her "Three Laws of Small Groups." She elaborates, "In any small group in which people are involved sexually, sooner or later there will be grave conflicts. In any small group in which people are involved, sooner or later they will be involved sexually, even if only in fantasy. Small groups tend to break up" (1982:129).

This has also been a problem of twelve-step groups (Donovan, 1984; Kasl, 1992). In twelve-step groups, sponsors typically develop a strong emotional bond with their "sponsee," which helps the sponsee learn to develop bonds of trust and intimacy. Issues of trust and intimacy and being "safe" are particularly important for incest survivors, since their trust in being safe and protected was violated by someone in their family at an early age, and they were frequently told, or had communicated to them, that sex was the same as love, or that their only value was as a sexual outlet for someone else (Maltz and Holman, 1987; Bass and Davis, 1988). Thus a good sponsor will provide emotional encouragement and support to the novice member without becoming sexually involved with her/him, since it would violate trust and re-establish the message to the novice that people only want to have contact with her/him for sexual
purposes. The sponsor is usually a person of the same sex as the "sponsee" or "sponsee," due to premises that most people are heterosexual and that same-sex friendships will thus preclude sexual intimacy (Donovan, 1984). I did not ask my gay/lesbian/bisexual respondents specifically about sponsorship so I do not have data on how sponsorship operates among gay/lesbian/bisexual people. Sexual relationships among other members of the locally-based groups, besides those between the sponsor and sponsee, are also discouraged, though not prohibited or regulated, in all twelve-step programs, based on the AA model (Donovan, 1984). This discouragement of intra-group involvements is designed to prevent divisiveness and group conflict and also to encourage nonsexual friendships and networking which encourages trust and emotional, as opposed to sexual, intimacy.

The prohibition against sponsors or other long-time movement members is so strong that its violation has a specific symbolic name: "thirteenth-stepping." (Donovan, 1984). The idea is that someone is violating the sanctity of the twelve-step model by practicing a "thirteenth step" of getting sexually involved with the novice, thus preying on the novice's trust for their own selfish ends. A few respondents briefly mentioned thirteenth stepping as a problem of small groups and that they knew of others whom this had happened to. The symbolic strength of this taboo, however, seems to prevent most members from "thirteenth-stepping." I only observed this to occur once among the three groups I observed.

Another problem of U.S. self-help, collectivist organizations is the reconciliation of the ideologies of liberal-individualism and collectivism. Individualism as an ideology stems from Enlightenment-era
beliefs about the importance of individualistic pursuits of happiness while liberalism stems from beliefs about the importance of open-mindedness, freedom, and devotion to democratic reform (Kappeler, 1990; Brown, 1993). Under modernity in civil society, individualism became closely allied with political liberalism (Brown, 1993). Liberal individualist themes thus express the primacy of the self over the group, and champion the rights of the self to individualistic expression, liberties, and freedoms. Collectivist structure emphasizes the primacy of the group over the individual, and encourages the individual to merge her identity into that of the group (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979; Morgen, 1990).

Liberal individualism has been said to be one of the cornerstones of the belief system and social organization of U.S. society (Bellah et al., 1985). Collectivism has been said to be the foundation for community structure in nonwestern tribes and for communitarian impulses in western, alternative communities (Svensson, 1979; Morgen, 1990). Self-help groups in the U.S. must then achieve a balance between these two ostensibly disparate ideas, where liberal individualism is the language of the dominant-hegemonic culture while collectivism is the structure of anti-hegemonic countercultures. The self-help group as a collectivist group thus must struggle to maintain its anti-institutional collectivism while using its ideology either to resist or to assimilate to the dominant culture of liberal individualism.

The ideology of the self-help movement in general in the U.S., comprising both twelve-step and non-twelve-step models, has been said to draw from both individualism and collectivism, but individualism is construed as the dominant contributor because of its links with dominant.
hegemonic beliefs (Williams, 1989; Morgen, 1990). Collectivism has been said to be a lesser contributor because when it is politicized as a group structure, it has been used by disenfranchised or alternative groups whose power does not match that of the hegemonic state.

The collectivist or participatory-democratic group structure has been claimed as the invention of Leftist intellectuals, radical feminists, and "Americans" in general. It is debatable who "invented" it, but more importantly it is clear that different groups will politicize this structure differently as a form of resistance, depending on how their respective social movement culture constructs definitions of "resistance." Thus I first discuss the different symbolic meanings of collectivism and participatory democracy in each of these three contexts. Then I discuss how A.A. in particular, as the role-model group for the two SMOs studied, developed its own meanings for this group structure.

The Marxian/Leftist political tradition emphasizes collectivism as a political tradition, meaning taking collective action or engaging in collective protest for the good of the group or the society. This political tradition questions the authority of the state (and those in power in the state's polity) to dictate what is good for the society as a whole. Thus it critiques hierarchy as the basis for decision-making, and emphasizes the importance of people as a social unit or collectivity, working for social change. Western-European societies with political parties with strong ties to labor and a history of socialism, have particularly emphasized this politicized notion of collectivism. In the U.S. despite the lack of a socialist/Leftist political party, this Leftist collectivist tradition has been carried by the labor unions, activists in the Old Left and New Left, and radical feminists.
U.S. Leftist intellectuals are likely to view collectivist organizations as alternatives to dominant structural forms (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979). Such Leftist organizations burgeoned in the 1970s as "alternative institutions" or "collectives," which were consciously structured on a collectivist basis, to match their anti-hierarchical, anti-bureaucratic, Leftist, "alternative" ideology. As such they were defined "in terms of their members' resolve to build organizations...parallel to, but outside of, established institutions, and which fulfill[ed] social needs (for education, food, medical aid, etc.) without recourse to bureaucratic authority" (Rothschild-Whitt, 1979:510). Collectivist organizations were (and still are) frequently collectively-owned and managed by the workers in them, making them social experiments in the communitarian or socialist tradition. Due to the extensive involvement of many Leftist, Marxian, or socialist men in such groups in the 1970s in particular, many U.S. Leftist intellectual and/or activist men politicize collectivist structure as a 

Leftist mode of resistance to imperialist/hegemonic institutions.

U.S. radical feminist theory comprises another mode of meaning-construction regarding collectivism. Many men in the New Left and early 1970s Leftist organizations, had used the collectivist structural-ideological format but had then unconsciously (or sometimes consciously) left sexism and male dominance out of their critique of hegemonic, enslaving institutions and modes of relationality (Morgan, 1970; Evans, 1979). The result was that Leftist men emphasized empowerment and liberation while dominating Leftist women, viewing them as sex objects and relegating them to low-status positions, such as typists, within Leftist organizations (Evans, 1979). Many Leftist women used their
Leftist organizational experience to then create their own radical feminist, women-only collectives in the 1970s. Lesbian-feminist or "cultural feminist" scholarship, developed in women's studies programs, produced theories viewing women's naturally cooperative, egalitarian ways of interacting as conducive to creating collectives (Taylor and Whittier, 1993). Together, U.S. Leftist and radical feminist women who wanted to work and live in nonhierarchical, egalitarian, "women-only, safe spaces" created their own all-women's collectives.

Radical feminists thus refined the Leftist notion of collectivist ideology and structure by adding their own emphases on feminist consciousness-raising, empowerment of women as women, and a critique of male dominance and global sexism (Morgen, 1990; Faver, 1994). Radical feminists thus view collectivism as not just as an alternative to "bureaucratic hierarchy" but also a critique of male-dominated institutions, organizations, and masculinist, instrumental modes of relationality. This also has led to the commensurate claim that feminist organizations are neither bureaucratic nor hierarchical (Ferguson, 1984). These radical feminists have thus claimed their own version of collectivism as a radical feminist creation (Morgen, 1990). The result is that feminists politicize collectivist structure as a radical feminist mode of resistance to androcentric/hierarchical institutions (Morgen, 1990).

Collectivism has not just existed as a group structure since the 1960s, however. Alcoholics Anonymous' collectivist, participatory-democratic structure was devised in the 1930s by a couple of white, male alcoholics in Akron, Ohio (Pittman, 1988). Because of the U.S. lack of history of socialism and focus on individualism as self-actualization,
twelve-step movements in particular with their focus on the self, and their view of collectivism as participatory democracy, may be more popular in the U.S. than in other countries (Katz, 1993). In support of this the U.S. mass media have portrayed the use of participatory democratic, self-help structure in Alcoholics Anonymous as an "American" structure based on American values of participatory democracy, self-reliance, pragmatism, and mutual aid. For example, the editors of *Fortune* magazine said, "The American tradition of adverse beginnings was fulfilled by this organization which today equally fulfills the tradition of success after struggle. By birthplace, heritage, traditions, habits, looks and tone of voice Alcoholics Anonymous is unmistakably American...Of formal organization it has almost none and it avers that it ought never to have any" (*Fortune* 1951:147, cited in Gellman, 1964:12). The media thus politicize participatory-democratic structure as an "American," pragmatic alternative to European-aristocratic or European-welfare-state-based means of providing aid to citizens.

Some sociologists also suggest that U.S.-based self-help groups such as Alcoholics Anonymous use collectivist structure because of the distinctly "American" values of democracy, independence, pragmatism, and self-reliance, based on the U.S. historical tradition of establishing voluntary associations, mutual aid societies, and small-group town or community meetings for settling problems (Katz, 1993). However, although I acknowledge the sociohistorical nature of mutual aid, self-help, and voluntary associations in the history of the U.S. as a means of charity, welfare or philanthropy, we must also examine the meanings that members of self-help groups themselves attach to this group structure. Neither the founders of Alcoholics Anonymous nor the founders of the two
"Anonymous-format" SMOs I studied, construed their collectivist, participatory-democratic structure as "American."\(^48\); (Gellman, 1964; Pittman, 1988). Neither literature on the history of A.A. nor interviews with my respondents indicated that people in twelve-step programs had a sense of the sociohistorical importance of self-help as an "American" development.

In actuality A.A. does not politicize collectivism as Leftist, feminist, or American, but as anti-institutional-Christian. The group structure is not called "collectivist" or "participatory-democratic" but "unorganized"\(^49\) (Pittman, 1988). This means that it is anti-institutional, anti-bureaucratic, and decentralized. This participatory-democratic group structure is politicized as the original Christian form of religious organization, viz, that the first-century Christians used it and the development of a later, institutionalized church hierarchy is not the "true" Christian format for spiritual fellowship (Pittman, 1988). This use of egalitarian small groups in AA dates from the founder "Bill W"'s experience with the anti-institutional, evangelical Christian "Oxford Movement" in the early 1930s prior to his founding of AA. This was based on small group structure and egalitarianism (Pittman, 1988).

The founders of SMO#1 and SMO#2 in the self-help movement for incest survivors seem to have adopted A.A.'s participatory-democratic group structure for the structures of their respective SMOs "because it worked" for them in their involvement in other twelve-step programs prior to founding these two SMOs. They seem not to be cognizant of the Christian history or radical political implications of such group structure, since they did not mention it in their interviews.
Thus the resolution of liberal individualism and collectivism occurs within the twelve-step self-help movement for incest survivors by the movement viewing collectivism both as an outgrowth of anti-institutional versions of evangelical Christianity, from the historical tradition of A.A., and as a group structure which forms a unitary group but based on white, middle-class, Western European notions of collectivism, which thus does not pose a radical challenge to the dominant language of individualism. I will first examine the use of the dominant language of liberal individualism in the movement and then critique its view of collectivism from my perspective of feminist postmodernism.

The two SMOs use the dominant cultural language of individual choices, rights, freedom, and liberties as a major theme in their literature. For instance, the concepts of choices and rights are used to explain perpetrators' behavior and as a rationale for survivors' empowerment. For example, one movement document states, "We are conditioned to pardon our parents' responsibility [for abuse] because they gave us life. [But] they gave up their parental rights when they violated our boundaries by damaging instead of nurturing us," (emphasis added). This same document also states, "Many of us are awakened to reality when we calculate our abuser's age at the time of the assaults: "My God, he was older than I am now!" As an adult, he WAS responsible for the choices he made."51

In terms of empowerment, movement documents put it in the context of being an individual right, one which would probably be subsumed under the civil right to the pursuit of happiness. Movement documents for instance note that, "Respecting another’s anonymity means preserving their confidentiality. Also, we learn to place principles before personalities

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and find that we are all equal before God and all deserving of recovery," page 1, and "We all have a right to our feelings and our pain, and we all have the right to recover." (emphasis added).

Using liberal-individualist themes, movement documents also emphasize that the individual survivor has both the choice and the responsibility to recover, but also that she needs to be given the opportunity to recover. Movement ideology defines this opportunity as being provided through working the steps, being in a twelve-step program for incest survivors, and [in the case of SMO#2], having a good therapist. Recovery is then made up of the individual making choices about her self and how she wants to interact with others. For example, one movement document says, "We grew up with limited choices; either we could become a perpetrator or a victim. [SMO#2] encourages us to actively choose a new way of being. Survivorship helps us to abstain from falling into either role, but instead to choose the path in which we can become all that our Higher Power has intended for us." This (probably unconscious) use of the dominant language of liberal individualism gives the movement an ecumenical, pluralist tone which helps the movement to have mass appeal to so many incest survivors, particularly to white, middle class women.

Various respondents also espoused this liberal-individualist view of the right to the self, and to make choices, by referring to incest as "invasion of the self" or "theft of opportunities." For instance one respondent said:

There's this feeling of complete and total invasion of one's self, when there's sexual abuse. It's just a total invasion of one's self...and the aftereffects never go away.

Another respondent said:

I feel like my perpetrator just stole my life away when he did that. Sometimes I feel like I could have done all these amazing things,
and now I'll never get the chance. He just stole my soul, my self, and took away my choices, my rights to be myself without the incest screwing everything up. But then when I go to [SMO#2], I don't feel like it's totally gone.

Other pieces of movement literature combine early liberal feminist theory with this self-help language of individual rights. Self-help analyses link the idea of the individual helping the self to the dominant U.S. ideology of individual choices, liberties, and rights, while early liberal feminist theory discusses the liberation of the individual woman in society, and her right to equality with men within dominant institutions. These two philosophies of self-help and feminism might appear to be diametrically opposed, but both have roots in the Enlightenment project of modernist liberal individualism. For instance Morgen notes that not only is the dominant, white middle class culture based on liberal-individualist assumptions, but also (liberal) feminist ideology itself contains many individualistic beliefs (1990:51). Morgen says that the two individualist postulates of feminist theory are the salience of the self or individual in feminist analysis, and the individualistic conception of freedom or liberation held by many feminists. She states that these are conceptions consistent with the liberalism of western political thought.

Liberal feminist theoretical analyses link individual women’s micro-level experiences of inequality or victimization to women’s inequality in societal institutions, attributing the blame to unequal gender socialization practices and emphasizing personal empowerment of women as individuals (e.g., Lever, 1978). Feminist research on sexual violence also has linked women’s gender socialization to be passive, feminine, and submissive, to women’s personal experiences of victimization by male
sexual violence, including incest (Russell, 1986; Edwards, 1987; Dinsmore, 1991).

Together, some of the literature in the self-help movement for incest survivors thus produces a new feminist, liberal individualist self-help synthesis. This synthesis appeals to women survivors who have grown up with the expectations of liberal feminism while still invoking Western liberal-individualist, democratic themes. For example, one movement document says, "Many of us received the message that women were to care for men. We were to be passive and self-sacrificing. As children, we didn't know we had any rights. We were raised to respect our elders and not talk back. It was our responsibility to care for others' needs and ignore our own. Now as adults, we still struggle with our role as women. Old habits are hard to let go, and some of us still compromise ourselves so that others can have their needs met. We say "yes" when we mean "no." 57

In this passage, a more radical feminist analysis of the structural nature of male dominance in the family being translated into sexual violence is absent, even obviated, by the use of passive voice. "Many of us received the message," for instance, does not tell us who is giving us that message prescribing female passivity. However, the liberal feminist critique of gender socialization into feminine passivity is clearly present. Also, the passage leaves us with a clearly liberal-individualist theme by saying, "As children, we didn't know we had any rights... Now as adults, we still struggle with our role as women." I see two underlying implications from this last statement. First, the statement implies that children do have rights, for instance to "say no" to sexual abuse, but society does not teach them this. Secondly, there
is the implication that adult women incest survivors also have "rights," including the right to "say no," but that Woman's prescribed role as provider of others' needs may prevent women from enjoying those rights. This passage also seems to assume that women have a unitary identity as nurturers in the family, based on modified (socialization-based) essentialist notions of woman's identity.

Some of my respondents when asked about their identity as feminists, responded by contextualizing it in the frame of liberal individualism. For instance one woman said:

Interviewer: Do you consider yourself a feminist?
Respondent: Sure. I'm interested in women's rights.
Interviewer: What's your definition of feminism?
Respondent: I think that it's about equality, it's about freedom, it's about ... acting in a way that is respectful and honoring of other women, and of other people in general. I think that it's about fighting for women's rights, and for [fighting against] all sorts of inequalities.

The dominant rhetoric of liberal individualism is sometimes used as a guise in dominant hegemonic western culture for sexual abuse and exploitation of women and children, particularly when this rhetoric is used in discursive practices on behalf of "sexual freedom." However, due to twelve step programs' use of liberal individualism to appeal to people with a variety of political orientations, this critique of liberal individualism itself appears to be lacking in movement literature. However, the radical feminist critique of liberal individualism-as-sexual-freedom is espoused by my respondents, in their processes of reconstruction of the self. This is discussed further in chapter 4.

The beliefs in individual rights and liberties and the salience of the self as grounded in liberal individualism shows liberal feminism's traditional white, middle class bias (Morgen, 1990). Morgen notes that we must examine the "cultural fabric of middle class life, and especially
white American life" (1990:52), if we are to understand the women's movement's focus on the self and individualism. The work of some Black feminists has also supported this. Black feminists have critiqued liberal individualism as the ideology of the dominant, white culture (hooks, 1989).

Black feminists have also critiqued collectivism as having a white, middle class bias. For instance Mama (1989) states that Black women have faced racism within the self-help movement for battered women in Great Britain, and that feminist practices based in ethics of women's sisterhood, collectivism, and self-help need to also focus on eradicating racism in the women's movement and in feminist collectives, such as in the battered women's movement. The Black feminist critique of collectivism as a feature of white alternative institutions, has also been expanded upon by other writers, as a white, middle-class Western European ideology. The notion of collectivity as the invention of whites, has also been said to reflect a Eurocentric bias (Svensson, 1979). Some of these writers have also critiqued white middle class notions of collectivism, seeing differences between western European industrialized notions of collectivism and tribal people's notions of collectivism (and preferring the latter). For instance Starhawk (1982) discusses how Native American talking circles are collectives. They use the passing around the circle of a talking stick to regulate authority, and then generate consensus based on discussion. As such they clearly antedate "American" Leftist and feminist constructions of collectivism based on Western European philosophy.

According to Svensson (1979), assumptions regarding the primacy of individualism underlie the unified conceptualization of "the group" in
Western European-based cultures. Svensson (1979) postulates that in these Western European, individualist-based cultures, social groups' interests are construed as an aggregate of the disparate self-interests of various selves or individuals in the group. Morgen's (1990) work on feminist health collectives supports this argument. Her analysis states that in U.S. feminist collectivist groups, collectivist structure carries out the ideological, individualist goal of allowing the full expression of each self in the group. She also argues that the predominantly white, feminist health collective she studied, sustained a "definition of the situation" that they were operating as an egalitarian collective, but in reality they employed white, middle class, liberal individualist assumptions about how a collective operates. For instance, the collective operated on the assumption that impairment of the collective process was due to problems inherent in particular individuals. Another example of this "social construction of collectivism" is in these feminist collectives' penultimate decision-making via overt voice-vote. For instance Morgen says, "Voting is an individual act and the product of a vote is an aggregate decision" (1990:49). Thus although arriving at a decision by consensual, spoken vote supposedly reflects the unity of the group, it is also a way of reifying the constructed unity of the group.

This social construction of unity via overt voice-vote also occurred in meetings of the self-help movement for incest survivors in which I participated, and as such served to stifle dissent. In contrast to the "aggregated self-interest" idea of group interests, Svensson says Native Americans and other tribal peoples evince a more communitarian sense of group interests in collectives, which is based on a sense of collective identity (1979:421). It is thus clear that predominantly white,
anti-institutional groups whether the latter are anti-institutional Leftists, feminists, Christians, etc., have their own meanings of collectivism which differ from those of non-western, tribal groups. These notions of collectivism are increasingly based on a sense of collective identity, even among white, middle class people, under post-industrial society.

Morgen notes that feminist collectives seem to be sustained by feminist essentialist notions of womanhood. The notion of the individual woman alone is transcended by making "woman" a symbol "through which a social self is identified" (Morgen, 1990:52). That is, women are "naturally" cooperative, nurturant, sensitive, caring, other-focused, and supportive. Some feminist authors contend that women are biologically more nurturant and caring due to women's reproductive and biological capacities for motherhood and breast feeding, which men lack. Others contend that this nurturant aspect of women's essential differentness from men is due to gender socialization and global patriarchal domination. Whether the argument is based on purely biological essentialism or modified, socialization-based essentialism, however, the outcome ideologically is the same. The belief remains that women's cooperative nature is naturally conducive to forming a collectivist structure for an organization. However, as discussed in chapter 2, various feminist postmodernist authors have argued that "woman" is not a unified category of analysis and that to make essentialist arguments amounts to feminism being a totalizing ideology (Mohanty et al., 1991).

Socially-constructed notions of group collective identity may become essentialized to function as political resistance to societal domination and hegemonic frames. As a postmodernist feminist I do not argue that the
social construction of a collective identity of "incest survivor," or of a white middle class Eurocentric collectivism, is "wrong," but that some movement members are engaging in such social construction and that this seems to be working for them personally and politically. I would like to see these constructions of survivor identity and collectivist structure, become more multiculturally inclusive in meaning in this movement.

THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT'S FMOs' INFLUENCE ON THIS MOVEMENT ORGANIZATIONALLY

I now discuss how the women's movement's SMOs have contributed to my analysis of the organizational aspects of the self-help movement for incest survivors. Feminist scholars who are activists have sometimes claimed that they have created a new prototype of a feminist movement organization (FMO) (Riger, 1984). This new type of organization presents an alternative to traditional, bureaucratic organizations due to its collectivist decision-making structure, emphasis on empowerment of members, and goal of ending male dominance of women (Ferree and Martin, 1995). Such groups have often been radical feminist collectives working in the areas of women's health, violence against women, reproductive rights, or lesbian rights, including battered women's shelters, rape crisis centers, women's book and music publishing collectives, bookstores, health collectives, and music festivals (Taylor and Whittier, 1994).

Before discussing the details of the impact of feminism on this movement I want to clarify that the self-help movement for incest survivors is not an FMO, in my opinion, but it has been strongly influenced by the women's movement. Respondents uniformly said that the SMO in question was not a feminist movement, when asked whether they
thought the social movement organization they attended was feminist. Rather, respondents uniformly said that the movement's purpose is to help female and male incest survivors. Respondents also uniformly cited the tenth tradition in stating why the movement should not be a feminist movement, or attach its name to feminism. The tenth tradition states that the "[SMO#2] name ought never to be drawn into public controversy." Hence for it to attach its name to the women's movement would violate the AA-based principle that twelve-step programs must remain unaffiliated with other institutions or social movements for the movement to engage in organizational maintenance. However, the women's movement's FMOs have indirectly contributed to the founding, organizational maintenance, and meanings about structure that are employed in the SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors.

Feminist beliefs include the ideas of interrelationality, egalitarianism, multiculturalism, respect for differences, and interdependency (Reinharz, 1992; Faver, 1994). The women's movement's radical critique of society has been described as "a transformational politics" (Taylor and Whittier, 1993). This means that it includes a radical vision for transforming society and politicizing all features of everyday life through symbolic means.

Feminist women engaging in social activism try to incorporate feminist beliefs into other social movements and social movement organizations, and have thus influenced these movements by introducing feminist frames into them (Meyer and Whittier, 1994). Specifically, feminist women have introduced the feminist ideas of consciousness-raising, empowerment, holistic spirituality, egalitarian leadership styles, inclusiveness, and
integration of the public and private spheres, into SMs and SMOs (Faver, 1994). The focus in women's movement organizations on the personal has been on women's experience, empowerment, and developing a sense of group consciousness. In the women's movement, women have needed to develop a sense of their "groupness" as women, and to connect that to their personal experiences, to develop feminist consciousness (Morgen, 1990). Feminist consciousness then mobilizes women into other FMOs or SMOs, to which feminist women then bring their feminist consciousness and critique of society (Meyer and Whittier, 1994).

For example, the women's movement has challenged the notion of hierarchy as being based on male experience of power-over-others (Ferguson, 1984). Sociological analyses of gender relations and male dominance as social constructions reified in daily interactions, have also contributed to this debunking of hierarchy (Gerson and Peiss, 1985). This feminist critique of hierarchical social relations has also been used to critique humans' dominance over animals in the animal rights movement. The anti-sexual assault movement itself has broadened from its initial basis in feminist-founded rape crisis centers, crisis hotlines, and self-defense courses, to include anti-sexual assault work in the criminal justice system, and interdisciplinary studies in feminism, social work, and mental health, for instance, as to the nature of battered woman syndrome (Gagne, 1993) or post-traumatic stress disorder in sexual assault and incest survivors (e.g., Donaldson and Gardner, 1985; Lindberg and Distad, 1985; Briere and Runtz, 1988; Goodwin, 1988; Briere and Runtz, 1991; Jehu, 1991; Graziano, 1992; Herman, 1992; Rowan and Foy, 1993).
In conducting research with my own feminist and social movement-based premises I had assumed that radical feminist activists had "naturally" founded the two social movement organizations I studied. Thus I assumed that radical feminist collectives of the 1960s and 1970s had functioned directly as pre-existing organizational bases for the self-help movement for incest survivors by providing it with resources such as leaders, organizers, funding, and a co-optable communications network. However, questioning of SMO founders revealed this "feminist pre-organizational base" supposition not to hold true. Founding members of the two SMOs studied, when interviewed, said that they had not been involved in any kind of feminist activity per se prior to founding the SMOs. They also believed in some liberal-feminist ideas but did not consider themselves feminists.  

The movement relied at its inception then as now, on funding from members, refusing to accept outside contributions in keeping with the twelve traditions of its role-model organization, Alcoholics Anonymous. Membership in the movement at its inception was not swelled by radical feminists flocking to be in collectivist recovery groups. Rather, women (and men) joined the self-help movement for incest survivors because they were in a lot of emotional pain and upheaval over the aftereffects of incest in their adult lives, and were seeking relief. 

However, I contend that three factors show the influence of the women's movement specifically on the inception and early development of the two social movement organizations which I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors. These three factors are the diffusion of feminist ideas into public consciousness and culture, the availability of feminist movement organizations as implicit role models and support
systems for women incest survivor-founders, and contact with feminist analyses informing the linkages between one's experiencing of multiple forms of sexual domination and the need for women to have support systems to recover from such domination.

In terms of the diffusion of feminist ideas into public consciousness and culture and their effect on the founding of the two SMOs studied, feminist expectations about women's abilities to achieve what they want in the private and public spheres may have influenced the SMOs' founders. For instance Stacey (1987) has noted the diffusion of feminist beliefs into the general U.S. public consciousness and culture, even among traditional evangelical women. Evangelical Christian women have increasingly incorporated feminist beliefs about women's rights to an egalitarian division of labor within marriage into their own belief system (Stacey, 1987). The Democratic and Republican parties' intense and diametrically opposed arguments over feminist issues and their relation to gender roles in everyday life, also indicates the women's movement's success in challenging institutionalized gender stratification and male dominance, and raising public consciousness on these feminist issues (Ferree and Martin, 1995).

Feminist theorists' writings on incest may have seeped into public consciousness and influenced founders to start SMOs for incest survivors. Russell, for instance, notes that, "1978 marked the beginning of a new look at incest from a more person-oriented perspective. That year Sandra Butler's *Conspiracy of Silence* and Louise Armstrong's *Kiss Daddy Goodnight* gave us the first feminist analyses of incest ever published in book form--building on feminist author Florence Rush's earlier groundbreaking work (1974,1977). The proliferation of scholarly and
popular books and articles since then reflects the tremendous upsurge in public awareness about incest" (1986:3).

Russell notes that high-status mental health professionals (who are predominantly male) still scapegoat "the seductive child and the collusive mother" (1986:4) as being to blame for incest in families, but feminist therapists and activists, and incest survivors' public "speakouts," have challenged these victim-blaming and/or silencing tactics, a challenge which has then seeped into public consciousness.

Many traditional psychiatrists and psychoanalysts still become defensive or even go on the offensive if anyone questions their sacrosanct Freudian theories about infantile sexuality or the origins and causes of incest memories (Russell, 1986; Masson, 1992). In one of his early works, (1896, rev. 1962) Freud said that childhood sexual abuse was the cause of hysteria in women. Hysteria was then a common psychoanalytic diagnostic term for women evincing behavioral aftereffects of incest. However, in his later work Freud dismissed his women clients' reports of having survived incest or childhood sexual abuse, as illustrative of a desire for "wish-fulfillment," saying he now viewed the etiology of neuroses as residing in unresolved Oedipal/Electra complexes (the daughters' desires for their fathers), or infantile sexuality phases (Freud, 1905; 1938a,b). Feminist critics of Freud, however, questioning the sacralization of Freudian theory, have noted that Freud's theories on femininity, female sexuality and "female masochism," are not based on any clinical data, but on unfounded androcentric and heterosexist assumptions, which tell us more about Freud's desires and views than women's (Segal, 1988; Chodorow, 1991). Moreover, scholars analyzing Freud's work suggest that Freud devised his later theories of infantile
sexuality and wish fulfillment, and retracted his original theory of childhood sexual abuse causing hysterical symptoms ("the seduction theory"), because the implications of his original findings became socially, politically, and ethically untenuous for him, in terms of holding onto his own career, his reputation, and his view of human nature. Specifically, scholars of Freud or sexual abuse issues suggest six factors may underlie Freud's retraction of the "seduction theory." These include: the negative response of his colleagues in medicine; his unwillingness to accept the enormity of the prevalence of incest and the ethical implications that men of "good character" were perpetrating sexual abuse on innocent, powerless children; his lack of desire to accuse other men, especially elite middle-class men who supported Freud financially and whom Freud's women clients were accusing of perpetration; fear of supporting the least-advantaged in society, and on a personal level, fear of losing friendship with Wilhelm Fliess and exoneration of both himself and Fliess for a botched operation on Emma Eckstein (Finkelhor, 1979; Rush, 1977, 1980; Herman, 1981; Dinsmore, 1991; Masson, 1992).

The prevalence of this kind of abuse was thus obscured and suppressed for decades by the male-dominated medical/mental health establishment, and politically reduced women's experiences of incest to "female fantasy" (Russell, 1986). However, feminist writers of the 1970s, drawing from the women's movement, broke the silence and brought the issue to public consciousness (Russell, 1986; Dinsmore, 1991; Masson, 1992). Russell notes that, "[I]t was feminists...together with incest victims who were willing to speak out, who broke...the conspiracy of silence about this formerly secret trauma" (Russell, 1986:4).
Thus I suggest that this early feminist theory on incest seeping into the public consciousness in the late 1970s, may have encouraged certain women in other twelve-step programs for addictions to problematize their personal difficulties stemming from the abuse and to search for solutions by founding self-help SMOs in the form of twelve-step groups for incest survivors. Thus the women's movement had an indirect effect on the founding of these SMOs, via influencing public consciousness, and giving women a "can do" attitude towards accomplishing things they had dreamed of doing.

Secondly, I suggest that the availability of FMOs as role models and support systems for women incest survivor-founders, particularly in terms of rape crisis centers and battered women's shelters, played a role in the founding of the two social movement organizations I studied. For instance the women founders of both SMO#1 and SMO#2 mentioned how they had had some contact with radical feminist organizations prior to their founding these SMOs. One founder of these SMOs had been a battered woman herself and had been on the volunteer staff of a battered woman's shelter in the late 1960s, several years before founding SMO#1, although she did not identify as a feminist. Feminist analyses of the connection between different kinds of male violence against women, such as between rape, incest, and battering, tended to be part of the belief system of battered women's shelters, particularly during these shelters' formative years (in the late 1960s/early 1970s) (Schechter, 1982; Gagne', 1993).

Feminist research has indeed corroborated that there is a link between women's childhood experiencing of incest and experiencing of different kinds of male sexual and physical violence in their adult lives. For instance, Russell found that "over twice as many incest victims
(27 percent) as women who were never victims of incest (12 percent) reported that a husband had been physically violent toward them at least once, and often many times, during their marriage" (1986:160). Women who experienced incest in childhood are also more likely than nonsurvivors to be vulnerable to, or experience, marital rape, nonmarital rape, sexual harassment, or other forms of sexual domination (Russell, 1986; Chu, 1992).

Thus I believe that Founder #1's contact with this battered women's shelter as a role model in terms of feminist collectivist structure and its implicit ideology of feminist self-help, may have influenced her subsequent founding of SM0#1 as a collectivist self-help organization for incest survivors. Its offering of support to her as a battered woman survivor may also implicitly have influenced her wanting to found an organization offering support to survivors of another type of violence.

Similarly, founder #2 had attended group therapy meetings for survivors of incest at a local rape crisis center, but had felt that it did not adequately address her needs, since she wanted it to be based on a self-help model.63 This rape crisis center's structure and ideology may have provided a organizational role model and source of support for this woman founder, however. The prevalence of feminist consciousness in the public discourse also, I contend, provided a basis for this woman founder to critique its services and think she could do better. Its feminist focus on empowerment of women through experiential sharing, probably also encouraged her to continue to talk to other women as a means of problem-solving, which she then integrated with the twelve-step model which she had found helpful for other addictions.
Thirdly, the particular experience of women founders of having survived incest concomitant with sexual abuse in the forms of prostitution, pornography, child sex rings and/or multiple perpetration, may also have influenced the founding of these SMOs, by giving founders an acute sense of the lasting effects of such abuse. One of the women founders of one of the two SMOs studied, had experienced such multiple forms of sexual exploitation. Studies on any one of these phenomena and personal narratives of survivors corroborate this, frequently indicating that incest or childhood sexual assault may occur in a context where prostitution, the making of child or woman-pornography, multiple sexual assault and/or sexual slavery of women or children is also occurring (Barry, 1979; Lovelace, 1980; Heller, 1990; Oksana, 1994; Gould, 1995; Rockwell, 1995). Research indicates that young women running away from home are likely to be forced into prostitution, one of the primary reasons for their running away in the first place being escaping incest or child sexual abuse (Barry, 1979). Also, high percentages of prostitutes are survivors of incest and/or childhood sexual abuse (James and Meyerding, 1978; Silbert and Pines, 1981, 83; Simons and Whitbeck, 1991).

Although this woman founder discussed fighting sexual abuse in spiritual rather than political terms, I believe that her survival of such experiences alone would suffice to provide her with a radical critique of sexual exploitation which would contribute to her willingness to found an organization for survivors of sexual abuse. Thus women surviving multiple forms of sexual domination, probably have more of an acute awareness than the average woman of how there is a link between different forms of sexual exploitation and that there is a need in this
society for women to help themselves and other women in particular, to recover from the effects of incest and other types of sexual abuse. This experientially-based knowledge combined with contact with feminist analyses of these linkages through being a volunteer or client in an FMO, could contribute to the founding of the SMOs studied.

The women's movement's FMOs have also contributed to the organizational maintenance of the two SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors, since, although the two SMOs' founders themselves were not familiar with collectivist or participatory-democratic group structure as a politicized means of resistance to hegemonic/imperialist or hegemonic/androcentric domination, later cohorts of feminist women incest survivors who joined these SMOs in the late 1980s or early 1990s were. For instance, the all-women's incest survivor group in which I conducted participant observation is part of a larger all-women's "self-help for addictions" organization, both of which had been founded by radical feminist women in the early to mid-1980s. Some of these radical feminist women had experience in radical feminist collectives, but all were familiar with the politicized notion of the participatory-democratic group structure through friendship networks in, or community involvement with New Left or radical feminist groups (Whittier, 1991). The city itself has a history of community activism through New Left and feminist groups, including an umbrella-group radical feminist collective which comprised at one point about ten radical feminist sub-collectives (Levi, unpub., 1993). The founders of the women's group were also familiar with the twelve-step model and its associated collectivist group structure, and its effectiveness for helping people with addiction problems. This all-women's "self-help for addictions" organization publicly espouses a
feminist twelve-step belief system, including belief in the political implications of having collectivist self-help groups for women with addiction problems that addresses women's needs in particular. The idea is that collectivist groups empower women, encourage them to make their own choices, and help them to share their experiences in a nonhierarchical environment, which encourages self-esteem. It seems likely that this public politicization communicated itself to women attending this all-women's meeting at this organization.

Feminist consciousness and activism have thus operated within self-help to form a new feminist self-help model. The influence of feminism on self-help is evident in terms of self-help groups adopting feminist principles such as being women-run, feminist-collectivist in structure, and seeking to provide affordable, alternative self-help services for people based on autonomy, integrity, and empowerment.

Women respondents whom I interviewed locally, who are or had been members of this all-women's incest survivor group, especially those identifying as feminists, were more likely than the men respondents or the non-feminist respondents, to politicize the collectivist structure with feminist constructions of meaning, and thus to have these feminist collectivist approaches to their local self-help group in the self-help movement for incest survivors. The one gay male respondent, who was familiar with the history of the two mixed-sex groups as being started by feminist women, also mentioned this influence of feminist frames on politicization of views of organizational structure.65

This idea of feminist collectivism views collectivism as a "natural" organizational style for women, empowering for women, and a means of resistance to hierarchical androcentric structures. Feminist women
respondents may also tend to view collectivist group structure in a more politicized light due to reading feminist theoretical works critiquing hierarchy, although I did not specifically ask respondents about whether they view collectivism as a feminist organizational structure.

These feminist collectivist structural meanings, however, are still problematic in the self-help movement for incest survivors, since not all members are feminists. Individual groups have resolved this problem at the local level by breaking away from affiliation with either of the two twelve-step SMOs I studied and forming their own "feminist incest survivor" self-help groups, based on feminist re-workings of the twelve steps to take feminist, gender, and multicultural issues into account. Such split-off feminist groups were thus more likely to use Kasl's (1992) or Swan's (1989) thirteen- or sixteen-step models than twelve-step models, and to be more similar in ideology to the feminist collectives of the 1970s. Feminist women who were dissatisfied with local groups' incomplete resolution to collectivist structural and ideological problems, were also likely to drop out of local groups, leaving the "die-hard" twelve-steppers to keep the meeting going.

RELATIONSHIP OF THE MOVEMENT TO DOMINANT SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS

Ferree and Martin (1995) state that in order to contextualize FMOs' activism and success, we need to ask how societal institutions, such as the legal system, the polity, or the economy, have constrained or opened up opportunities for feminist organizations. From the perspective of feminist postmodernism, I would also like to suggest that the two SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors, which derive their ideology, structure, and tactics from the legacy of feminist
activism, and from feminist consciousness and meaning construction, should also be studied using this approach. Thus I now address how the self-help movement for incest survivors has been influenced by and is influencing the politico-legal system, the capitalist economy, and the medical/mental health establishment.

One of the most important ways in which the self-help movement for incest survivors and the politico-legal system are having an impact on each other, is in the realm of litigation regarding suing one’s perpetrator for damages incurred from the incest. Debates have ensued as to whether it is more therapeutic or damaging for the survivor to pursue litigation, if the survivor desires to sue her or his perpetrator after recovering memories of the perpetration of childhood sexual abuse (e.g., Crnich and Crnich, 1992; Mallia, 1993).

The existence and duration of a statute of limitations regarding such litigation has also been called into question by those supporting the self-help movement for incest survivors. Currently the statute of limitations varies from state to state. The involvement of professionals in jurisprudence on behalf of the incest survivor movement has also led to the passage of "delayed discovery" rules in which the statute of limitations is extended, "for the period during which a victim is unaware of the harm caused by a perpetrator or does not realize that the harm was caused by the perpetrator’s actions" (Crnich and Crnich, 1992:35). Thus the statute of limitations for such litigation in combination with such "delayed discovery" rules, varies from expiration a few years into adulthood, to one year following the time at which one first recovers or discusses repressed memories, to an unlimited time period (Crnich and Crnich, 1992). This litigation has been supported by the work of mental
health professionals, showing that people can repress memories of trauma for years (e.g., Herman and Schatzow, 1987; Herman, 1992). Incest survivor plaintiffs, their attorneys, and mental health professionals who are aware that memories can be repressed for years, favor having no statute of limitations and a delayed discovery rule, for the amount of time that can elapse from the point of first recovering memories until one pursues a lawsuit against one's perpetrator (Whitehead, 1992; Beattie, 1993). Their argument is that the trauma ensuing following the recovery of repressed memories of childhood sexual abuse, producing depression and suicidal ideation, can prevent the potential litigant from being functional enough to sue for years.

The court has upheld such arguments in some cases. For instance, one court noted, in arguing that no statute of limitations should apply, "[C]hild sexual abuse survivors are hostage to their own thought processes, implanted by their abusers, and from which they may never be totally released. Indeed, the mental and emotional dysfunction suffered by such victims may virtually prevent them from seeking relief against their tormentors until the period of limitations has long since expired. To place the passage of time in a position of priority and importance over the plight of childhood sexual abuse victims would seem to be the ultimate exaltation of form over substance, convenience over principle." ((Petersen v. Bruen, 792 P.2d18,24 (Nev. 1990), cited in Crnich and Crnich, 1992:137)). Such legal victories have increasingly resulted in other states changing or dropping their statute of limitations on behalf of survivors. Incest survivors are also increasingly winning litigation suits against their perpetrators due to increasing public consciousness of the issue (Crnich and Crnich, 1992).
Legislative policy-making on behalf of incest survivors is also problematic, however, since the backlash has the ear of the media. Attorneys and policymakers in support of the backlash have supported legislation against the movement. The (alleged) perpetrator, the latter's attorney, and mental health professionals who support the idea that there are such things as "false memories," favor a low duration for the statute of limitations. They are also likely to support policy-making allowing alleged perpetrators to counter-sue the plaintiff-survivor for defamation of character when the survivor states that sexual abuse occurred by that person. Backlash supporters also believe that alleged perpetrators should be able to sue the plaintiff-survivor's therapist for "implanting false memories" or other alleged professional-ethical misconduct (Quirk and DePrince, 1995).

Interestingly, mental health professionals who support and make apologies for (alleged) sexual abuse perpetrators are also likely to argue that people are "all pedophilic" to some extent and therefore our society should not have such "excessively moralistic and punitive reactions" towards pedophiles (e.g., Gardner, 1991:118). This arrogant attitude seems to be based on the liberal-individualistic, individual rights-as-sexual-freedom ethic, which upholds the rights of individuals to their "sexual freedom" while blatantly disregarding the rights of incest victims to freedom from abuse. These arrogant arguments display their own attitude of self-entitlement particularly by skirting the issue of the long-term effects of childhood sexual abuse in the adult survivor, which sometimes do not surface until years after the abuse has occurred (e.g., Gardner, 1991, does not address this.)
The idea of suing the plaintiff-survivor’s therapist derives from the work of various mental health professionals who have contended, using cloudy evidence, that unscrupulous therapists can implant "false memories" in survivors (e.g., see Robbins, 1995:309, on the work of Loftus). This backlash against psychotherapy, however, has not necessarily had a totally negative effect on child and adult survivors, since it may have contributed to the impetus for new research on professional ethics in dealing with survivors. New, interdisciplinary research is thus being conducted as to how investigators and/or clinicians can best interview child sexual assault victims, testify as experts that specific children or adults have been sexually abused, or provide services for client-survivors, while recognizing that the alleged perpetrator, and/or the child-survivor’s custodian, can sue the investigator or clinician for liability (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, 1987; Cage, 1988; Hechler, 1988; Lloyd, 1991; Quirk and DePrince, 1995).

In general, the future relationship between the politico-legal system and the self-help movement for incest survivors does not seem to be clear. Much depends on the extent to which survivors win legislative victories or testify to legislators about the need for responsible jurisprudence which takes into account survivors’ needs in the courtroom for safety, respect, and realization of the courage that it takes for them to testify in public about their experiences (Crnich and Crnich, 1992).

The relationship between capitalism and the self-help movement for incest survivors is mediated by the relationship of capitalism to other patriarchal institutions, particularly medicine. Various feminist authors
have noted that the alienation, hierarchy, and instrumental relations endemic to work under patriarchal capitalism, promote or virtually require addiction, since addiction expedites anesthetization of the workforce's emotions (Schaef, 1987; Kasl, 1992). Self-help movements, encouraging self-love, sharing of experiences, and a sense of community with others, are then seen as providing a countercultural antidote to this enslavement process under capitalism. However, the self-help movement for incest survivor's use of the medical model of addiction and disease to address incest survivors' tendency to engage in self-harming, dysfunctional behavior may draw it closer to the medical/mental health establishment, and thus to an amicable, non-challenging relationship to capitalism.

The two SMOs I studied have distinctly different overt approaches in their literature to their SMO members' relationships to the medical/mental health establishment, even though they seem to both unconsciously support an alliance with medicine through their usage of the twelve-step "disease" model of addiction. For instance the "Welcome" (introduction read aloud at the beginning of meetings) for SMO#1, does not say anything about incest survivors seeing therapists. The founder of SMO#1 also said, "It would break with the [twelve] traditions to encourage people to go to therapists." Here she is probably referring to tradition 8, "Our work should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers." However, the "Welcome" for SMO#2 includes the statement, "We do not have any professional therapists working in our group, but we do strongly suggest that every member of [SMO#2] see a professional counselor while attending [SMO#2]."
The employment of the disease model of addiction, useful in other
twelve-step programs, may not be applicable to incest survivors, in that
this model personalizes problems stemming from systemic problems and
takes the issue out of its social context (Kasl, 1992). Women incest
survivors' main need, for instance, may be for empowerment, not
treatment, since they are double disempowered (Kasl, 1992). As women they
are disempowered by gender arrangements in our societal institutions,
while as incest survivors they are disempowered by societal
stigmatization of their identity, if they disclose it, or their
behaviors, which may be regarded as indicative of mental illness. The
two SMOs' use of the medical, "disease" model of "addiction," drawn from
AA's twelve-step, disease model of alcohol addiction, may thus encourage
survivors to believe that they need "treatment" for the aftereffects of
the incest, which manifest as "mental illness." However, feminists and
sociologists have noted that mental illness may be a social construction
which exists in the minds of the psychiatric establishment and the public
rather than being an inherent feature of individuals (Rosenhan, 1973;
Scheff, 1984; Bloom, 1995). For instance Chesler (1972) critiques the
medical/mental health system for reifying mental illness, thereby
transforming women having problems coping with the stress of living under
patriarchal institutions, into mental health clinic or hospital
"patients." Thus patriarchal medicine may prevent women survivors from
seeing that they need empowerment instead of treatment.

Both capitalism and medicine benefit from the labeling of women incest
survivors as mentally ill. For instance there seems to be a trend among
mental health professionals recently to "diagnose" any incest survivors
seeking help for their problems of sadness, grief, memory flashbacks,
dissociation, moodiness, control issues, etc. according to some label
from the American Psychological Association’s DSM-IV. Survivors seeing
therapists tend to be labeled as having one or more psychological
disorders, such as being unipolar depressive, manic-depressive, or
"cyclothymic;" having post-traumatic stress disorder, multiple
personality disorder, dissociative disorder, borderline personality
disorder, or adult attention deficit/hyperactive disorder. This
overdiagnosing combined with a tendency to prescribe antidepressants or
other psychotropic medications, seems to be attempting to push incest
survivors into a dependent or symbiotic relationship with mental health
professionals, and may thus be an indicator of potential cooptation of
the movement’s ideology and independent status. This increase in client-
labeling may also be a forced response from mental health professionals
to the demands of profit-focused insurance companies, who do not want to
pay such professionals for clients’ "pre-existing conditions." Thus the
forces of capitalism may be trying to coopt or capitalize off the self-
help movement for incest survivors, with therapists and mental health
professionals caught between needing to diagnose to be funded and wanting
to help people in the self-help movements stay independent.

We also find that capitalism’s relentless profit motive may underlie the
outward appearance of altruism as the reason for the medical/mental
health establishment’s extension of a listening ear to women incest
survivors suffering from various medical illnesses as a result of the
incest. For instance Masson has critiqued the psychiatric establishment
for its near century of discounting of female clients’ reporting of
experiencing childhood sexual abuse, up until the 1970s, when feminist
authors brought the issue into the public consciousness. According to
Masson, we can attribute the psychiatric establishment's subsequent, sudden embracing of the issue as important, to its dawning realization "that there was a profit to be made either through a new patient population or through "educating" the public" on this issue" (1992:xx). The relationship of the incest survivor movement to capitalism and medicine is a precarious one, with patriarchal, capitalist medicine threatening to coopt the movement and turn women into mental health consumers. However, the self-help movement for incest survivors has a resilience of its own and hopefully will continue to maintain its integrity despite these forces.

The self-help movement for incest survivors has, also, benefitted from its mutual interaction with feminist mental health professionals, in my opinion, whether these feminists are men or women. Feminist therapists frequently refer clients to the self-help meetings, as discussed above in the section on recruitment. This referral process has been helpful for women survivors who cannot afford to see a therapist regularly and need a weekly source of support for talking about their incest issues. In addition, some women who have been in therapy and recovery for years also use their experiential expertise to become feminist therapists (Kasl, 1992; Herman, 1993). Feminist therapists and medical-mental health care professionals have also influenced the movement by contributing helpful strategies for self-transformation to the social movement culture in the self-help movement for incest survivors. This will be addressed in more detail in chapter 4.
END NOTES

1. Personal interview conducted April 22, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
   Personal interview conducted April 26, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
   Personal interview conducted April 29, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
   Personal interview conducted May 2, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
   Personal interview conducted May 10, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
   Personal interview conducted May 12, 1995 by Andre' Levi.

2. From "[SM0#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #2. Citation is on page 24, [unlabeled, but it is 2 pages past page 22]

3. From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #2. Citation is on page 24, [unlabeled, but it is 2 pages past page 22]


5. From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 5. Citation is on page 27 [unlabeled page number, but it is 5 pages past page 22.]


7. From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #1. Citation is on page 23, [unlabeled, but it is 1 page past page 22]

8. From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #4. Citation is on page 27, [unlabeled, but it is 5 pages past page 22]

9. From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #9. Citation is on page 30, [unlabeled, but it is 8 pages past page 22]
10. From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #7. Citation is on page 29, [unlabeled, but it is 7 pages past page 22]

11. The quoted phrase is from a movement document concerning tradition #1. Tradition #1 of [SMO#2] states, "Our common welfare should come first; personal progress for the greatest number depends on [SMO#2] unity." An explanatory paragraph subsumed under this statement says, "Unity is our most cherished quality. Failure to maintain unity is the reason why some groups come to a standstill or fall apart while others flourish. It becomes evident that the group must survive or the individual will not. Once we realize we are a small part of a great whole, preservation of the fellowship becomes a priority." (emphasis my own.) From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #1. Citation is on page 23 [unlabeled, but it is 1 page past page 22]


14. From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #2. Citation is on page 24, [unlabeled, but it is 2 pages past page 22]

15. From "[SMO#2] Twelve and Twelve" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, Copyright 1985, revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition #2. Citation is on page 24, [unlabeled, but it is 2 pages past page 22]


17. Personal interview conducted April 26, 1995, by Andre’ Levi.


22. From "The 8 Tools of Recovery for [SMO#2]." Brochure, Copyright 1992, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2], Inc. Citation is on page 1.

23. The seventh tradition [for SMO#2] states, "Our [SMO#2] group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." The explanatory paragraphs subsumed under this state, "Just as [SMO#2] funds are not used to finance any outside organizations, neither are any outside funds used to operate [SMO#2]. This has been a controversial tradition as we have struggled to stay financially sound. Many members have questioned the advisability of having a Tradition that states that we can have no outside contributions when we have desperately needed those contributions to meet the ordinary purpose of reaching out to others. Yet, like each of the Traditions, the 7th has proven to be beneficial in the long run. We do not accept outside contributions because these contributions often become bribes. This Tradition helps to keep [SMO#2] autonomous, for our survival depends on maintaining our integrity as an independent incest peer support group.

We do need to support our organization internally. First, members contribute what they can to their local groups. The groups need only enough money for rent, coffee, literature, etc. As is customary, the Treasurer would then send 25% to [SMO#2] [centralized office] and 25% to [SMO#2] Intergroup, if any [Intergroup exists.] [SMO#2] [centralized office] and local Intergroups are supported by [local] groups; they are not self-supporting." (p. 29). From "[SMO] Twelve and Twelve." [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, copyright 1985; revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 7. Citation is on page 29 [unlabeled, but it is 7 pages past page 22]

24. From "[SMO] Twelve and Twelve." [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, copyright 1985; revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 11. Citation is on page 31 [unlabeled, but it is 9 pages past page 22]

This citation also is based on comments made from the following interviews:
Personal interview conducted April 26, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
Personal interview conducted May 31, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.


27. From "[SMO] Twelve and Twelve." [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, copyright 1985; revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 3. Citation is on pages 25-26 [unlabeled, but it is 3-4 pages past page 22]


   Field notes, March 26, 1995.

32. Personal interview conducted June 27, 1995 by Andre’ Levi, with Founder #1 of SMO#1.

33. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995, by Andre’ Levi, with Founder #2 of SMO#2.

34. Personal interview conducted June 27, 1995 by Andre’ Levi, with Founder #1 of SMO#1.

35. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995, by Andre’ Levi, with Founder #2 of SMO#2.

   Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
   Personal interview conducted May 8, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
   Personal interview conducted May 10, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
   Personal interview conducted May 23, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.


39. From "[SMO] Twelve and Twelve." [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, copyright 1985; revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 1. Citation is on page 23 [unlabeled, but it is 1 page past page 22]

40. From "[SMO] Twelve and Twelve." [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, copyright 1985; revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 1. Citation is on page 23 [unlabeled, but it is 1 page past page 22]

41. From "[SMO] Twelve and Twelve." [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, copyright 1985; revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 3. Citation is on page 26 [unlabeled, but it is 4 pages past page 22]

42. From "[SMO] Twelve and Twelve." [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions] Pamphlet, copyright 1985; revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 10. Citation is on pages 30-31 [unlabeled, but it is 9 pages past page 22]
43. Personal interview conducted April 27, 1995, by Andre' Levi.  
   Personal interview conducted April 22, 1995 by Andre' Levi.

44. Personal interview conducted April 22, 1995 by Andre' Levi.  
   Personal interview conducted May 15, 1995 by Andre' Levi.

45. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995 by Andre' Levi.

   Personal interview conducted May 31, 1995 by Andre' Levi.

47. Field notes, June 27, 1995.

48. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995, by Andre' Levi, with  
   Founder #2 of SMO#2; personal interview conducted June 27, 1995 by  
   Andre' Levi, with Founder #1 of SMO#1.

49. Personal communication between Andre' Levi and two anonymous  
   personnel of the A.A. Central Office in this Midwestern city on  
   7/12/95, as to why A.A. has collectivist structure, resulted in both  
   saying that it was an "unorganized" organization, "because that  
   [structure] promotes equality the best." and "because it's a  
   fellowship and then that way, everyone gets to participate."

50. From "So Long Norman Rockwell: The Death of an Illusion." Pamphlet,  
    Copyright 1986; revised 1988 by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission  
    of [SMO#2] Inc. Citation is on page 5.

51. From "So Long Norman Rockwell: The Death of an Illusion." Pamphlet,  
    Copyright 1986; revised 1988 by SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission  
    of [SMO#2] Inc. Citation is on page 5.

52. From "The 8 Tools of Recovery for [SMO#2]." Brochure, Copyright 1992,  
    by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2], Inc. Citation  
    is on page 1, emphases added.

53. From "The 8 Tools of Recovery for [SMO#2]." Brochure, Copyright 1992,  
    by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2], Inc. Citation  
    is on page 4, emphases added.

54. From "The 8 Tools of Recovery for [SMO#2]." Brochure, Copyright 1992,  
    by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2], Inc. Citation  
    is on page 2.


56. Personal interview conducted April 26, 1995 by Andre' Levi.

57. From "Victimization and Society" Pamphlet, copyright 1984, revised  
    1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc.  
    Citation is on page 2.

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60. From "[SMO] Twelve and Twelve." [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions]
    Pamphlet, copyright 1985; revised 1988, by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by
    permission of [SMO#2] Inc. Tradition 10 Citation is on page 30
    [unlabeled, but it is 8 pages past page 22]

61. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995, by Andre' Levi, with
    Founder #2 of SMO#2; personal interview conducted June 27, 1995 by
    Andre' Levi, with Founder #1 of SMO#1.

62. Personal interview conducted June 27, 1995 by Andre' Levi, with
    Founder #1 of SMO#1.

63. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995, by Andre' Levi, with
    Founder #2 of SMO#2.

64. Personal interview conducted by Andre' Levi on June 27, 1995. Due to
    the sensitive and confidential nature of this information I cannot
    discuss this in more detail.


68. From "The [SMO#2] Welcome" to meetings of [SMO#2]. Copyright [year
    unlisted], by [SMO#2] Inc. Reprinted by permission of [SMO#2] Inc.
    Citation is on page 1.

    Field notes, March 12, 1995.
    Field notes, April 18, 1995.
CHAPTER IV
SURVIVORS' RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF AND IDENTITY

Introduction

This chapter deals with the processes of reconstruction of self and identity in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Survivors need to reconstruct themselves as survivors since both the perpetrator and the larger society construct them as victims. Survivors experience a fragmented sense of self and identity due to the trauma ensuing from the abuse. As a result they use a variety of resourceful strategies, learned from movement beliefs and practiced in social interaction, to reconstruct the damaged self in a manner that empowers the self. Survivors also learn, through these means, to attach new meanings to various aspects of the self, such as their emotional, physical, sexual and spiritual selves. The language used in movement documents and the identity management strategies used in interaction, entail their own discursive practices which help the survivor reconstruct her self and her social identity as a survivor.

The sections in this chapter are the following. First, I define notions of self and identity as they are used in this study. Secondly, I describe the adaptation mechanisms children use to survive childhood trauma, including fragmentation of self and identity, and how survivors learn alternatives to these as adults. Third, I discuss how survivors use various strategies for reconstructing the self to the self and others.
Fourth, I elaborate how survivors construct a cohesive sense of self by integrating the physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual selves into one and then developing commensurate identities from these reconstructions of self. Finally, I document how survivors use various identity management strategies in personal interaction at various stages of the recovery process, to deal with the potential effects of others' stigmatization of them and to present a survivor identity to the social world successfully.

CONCEPTUALIZATIONS OF SELF AND IDENTITY

In order to understand how incest survivors engage in processes of reconstruction of the self and identity, it is first necessary to elaborate the definitions of self and identity used in this study. This study draws from developmental and self-psychology, symbolic interactionism and sociological social psychology in conceptualizing the self and identity. Definitions of the self and identity have sometimes been conflated within these perspectives but I attempt here to establish disparate definitions for them.

According to developmental and self-psychology, early interactions with others influence the child's mental representations of her/his existence and appearance to the world as an object. Others reflect back to the child these representations, which the child then integrates with further actions and occurrences in everyday life, to develop a stable sense of "who I am" (Erikson, 1956; Kohut, 1977, 1978a,b; Gardiner, 1987; Kopriva et al. 1993). Within self-psychology, "The self...is a symbolic abstraction from the developmental process. The self refers to the uniqueness that separates the experiences of an individual from those of
all others while at the same time conferring a sense of cohesion and continuity on the disparate experiences of that individual throughout his [sic] life" (Gardiner, 1987:762, citing Basch, 1983:53). The self is thus usually experienced as an overarching entity, an embodied and cohesive unit which persists through the lifecycle. Identity in this approach, also sometimes characterized as "ego identity," denotes a "group-psychological phenomenon" which comprises an "awareness of the fact that there is a selfsameness and continuity to the ego's synthesizing methods and that these methods are effective in safeguarding the sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (Erikson, 1959:23). Thus the self denotes an overall concept which the individual uses to achieve an overall sense of continuity with her or his experiences, while identity refers to the subjective cognizance that the self is continuous and meaningful to others.

Sociological social psychology differs from psychological views of the self in that the former tends to emphasize the social context of the formation of the self while the latter focuses on traits and intrapsychic processes. Sociological social psychological notions of the self have been divided into terms such as self-concept, self-image, and self-esteem, consonant with the aspect of self being studied within processual or structural symbolic interactionism (Gecas, 1982; Demo, 1992). Thus, traditionally the self has been construed either as a process or structure. As a process it comprises the Meadian "I/me" dichotomy. Alternatively, the self has been described as a structure, implying that it is a hierarchy or network of traits, meanings, roles, role/identities, categories, or meanings. The individual's conception of her self is thus comprised of various identities or role/identities which result from
socialization, social interaction and group identification. Symbolic interactionist perspectives, drawing from phenomenology, have also suggested employing the concept of the "substantival self" to emphasize the factors of human agency, reflexivity, contextuality, and awareness of one’s own and others’ intentionality which operate with respect to one’s interactions in the lifeworld (Weigert, 1975; Weigert, Teitge and Teitge, 1986). More recent formulations suggest that the self or self-concept can be conceptualized as both process and structure if we view it as a "stable baseline" which fluctuates across situations and lifestages (Demo, 1992). Identity refers to a sense of continuity to the ego which provides meaningful structure for the various dimensions of self, both to the individual and the society (Weigert, Teitge, and Teitge, 1986). Identity is viewed from this approach in terms of the "self as socially situated" or as enacted and presented to the social world as meaningful. Self thus refers to a process or structure by which one relates to the social world, while identity refers to the public reality, meaning the specific situational, historical and group context in which the self is emergent or enacted.

With respect to my definition of the self, from a postmodernist perspective, although we cannot attribute common traits to the self of all individuals, due to the situated character of the self, we can still acknowledge that the construction of a cohesive sense of self as a basic construct the individual uses to organize her/his experience, is a necessary developmental task for the individual during childhood. Thus, although I take a social constructionist approach to the formation of identity, I believe that the individual must, from early in life, develop some element of existential stability to her or his "self" as a basis
upon which the self can be shaped in social interaction. Otherwise social interaction would be chaotic and disordered. My conceptualization of identity derives from processual symbolic interactionist, pragmatic social constructionist and identity theories, consistent with this study as an examination of identity politics (Weigert, 1975; Weigert, Teitge and Teitge, 1986). Identity is used in the context of survivor identity as a meaningful, socially-situated public expression of this aspect of self, developing from social interaction and movement frames as they link to individual experience. Thus this approach uses the domain assumptions that both social reality and individuals' personal and social identities are emergent, socially constructed, products of interaction in everyday life (Weigert, Teitge, and Teitge, 1986).

FRAGMENTATION OF SELF IN INCEST SURVIVORS

Traumatic childhood abuse will both interfere with the normative developmental process of establishing a stable sense of self and yet provide those with a stigmatized incest victim identity with common experiences and meanings from which to construct a positive, politicized sense of collective identity as a survivor. Sociologists familiar with psychosocial developmental processes usually agree with developmental and self-psychologists, that non-normative, abusive familial social interaction, may lead to the child's self not developing as a cohesive unit (Demo, 1992).

This then leads to the rise of a fragmented self, with commensurate uncertainty about one's identities in the social world. This fragmentation of self is what occurs in the child in incestuous families (Herman, 1992). The child's developing sense of self cannot tolerate the
awareness of the abuse. The child may thus lodge memories of the sexual abuse in a repressed, nonverbal part of the personality or in separate identities altogether, depending on such factors as the relationship of the perpetrator to the child, and the age of onset, duration, frequency, and intensity (intrusiveness) of the abuse. Trauma characterized by an earlier age of onset, with frequent and longer incidents of abuse, particularly by perpetrators who are closer biologically and/or who live in the same household as the child, such as the father or stepfather, tends to have more serious consequences in terms of a more fragmented self and more aftereffects, than other types of abuse (Russell, 1985; Herman, 1992).

This study postulates that the incest survivors interviewed in the self-help movement for incest survivors, have such a fragmented sense of self. Although Russell (1986) found that most women incest survivors had only one perpetrator, that the incest was characterized by one incident, and that the perpetrator tended not to be in the woman’s immediate biological nuclear family, my respondents experienced more traumatic abuse. The average respondent in my study had more than one perpetrator, had experienced several abusive incidents or continual, ongoing abuse for several years, usually starting in early childhood, and tended to have one or both biological parents as perpetrators. Research has shown that people who have experienced such traumatic abuse are more likely than others to experience symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Donaldson and Gardner, 1985; Herman, 1992). PTSD is a complex constellation of factors involving denial or psychic numbing, panic attacks, nightmares, intrusive thoughts, shaking, and especially flashbacks in response to traumatic incidents, which may not evidence in
the adult until years after the trauma occurred (Herman, 1992). (I
describe flashbacks in detail shortly.)

The reason why my respondents in the two SMOs I studied in the self-
help movement for incest survivors had incurred more traumatic abuse than
others in a more random sample, is because such traumatized people will
also engage in more help-seeking behavior for the aftereffects of such
abuse in adulthood, and that such help-seeking will lead people to join
support groups (Donaldson and Gardner, 1985). Thus a probable reason for
the prevalence of survivors with such an unusual trauma history in the
self-help movement for incest survivors is that such survivors have
engaged in help-seeking behaviors and that those who have remained in the
movement (and thus became interviewees) did so because it has helped
their PTSD symptoms.

Trauma survivors' psychological response to severe trauma is to incur
loss of self, or to divide the self into parts and incur a partial or
total loss of one or more parts, sometimes described as loss of ego
identity and social role (Erikson, 1968:67). Some have characterized
humanity in general under Western modernity as suffering from a loss of
self or fragmented identity (Kohut, 1978a,b). However, this differs from
the literal sundering of traumatic memories or parts of the self from
their core self commonly found among trauma survivors.

Children adapt to traumatic experiences of childhood sexual abuse by
means of the development of dissociative defenses, the development of a
fragmented sense of self and commensurate fragmented social identity, and
the dysfunctional means of regulation of emotional states (Herman, 1992).
I now discuss these in detail before describing self-reconstruction
strategies.
The specific mechanism of self-fragmentation involves dissociation, which is "a special form of consciousness in which events that would ordinarily be connected are divided from one another" (Spiegel and Cardena, 1990:23). Dissociative reactions range from a temporary phase of depersonalization and derealization (involving a temporary loss of sense of self or one's place in reality), to longer-term fragmentation of memory (such as in psychogenic amnesia or fugue), or longer-term fragmentation of self (called multiple personality disorder or dissociative identity disorder) (Spiegel and Cardena, 1990). This longer-term splitting of memory and identity is a defense mechanism for getting the overall self to survive when faced with the experiencing of severe, traumatic assault. The child survivor does this in order to protect herself/himself from the fullscale knowledge that people who were supposed to be loving protectors were betayers of that trust. This denial is achieved by repressing the experience of the abuse into nonverbal aspects of memory storage, or by retreating from the experience by "hiding memories in complex amnesias" or in other personalities (Bowers, 1990; Herman, 1992).

Thus the child develops dissociative defenses as an adaptational strategy by going into a trancelike state during the abuse, in which her/his basic sensory apparatus is walled off from the emotions and experience of trauma incurred while the abuse is going on. If this walling off process is complete, that part of the self which holds the memories of the abuse may become split off and inaccessible to the main part of the self, and the self survives via the formation of multiple personalities. If the walling off process is not complete, that part of the childhood self which holds the memories of the abuse is split off...
from the basic self, but this younger child-self is accessible to the
basic self via hypnosis, meditation, etc. This younger self even
overtakes the basic self, when the self undergoes sensory experiences or
encounters stimuli which remind her/him of the abuse, in the form of
flashbacks. Most survivors involuntarily learn to shut themselves off or
dissociate from the abuse, but the extent to which they dissociate by
"spacing out," versus developing separate personalities, varies with
severity of abuse factors such as those mentioned previously. One woman
commented about this:

I think that I blanked out every incident [of abuse] as soon as it
was over. Except that it seems like right when another incident was
starting, I would remember enough to kind of protect myself, I mean I
just sort of braced myself for it. But sometimes I fought back when I
got older, I fought back or tried to run away. But I don't think I
had any conscious awareness of the abuse in between incidents at all.
It just completely went out of my mind.

More severe abuse incurs a greater likelihood of multiple personality
disorder (MPD) ensuing (Herman, 1992), in which the self is split into
parts, which may be unaware of each other, or at least the core
personality is unaware of the other parts, sometimes called "alters." One
survivor who is MPD explained:

I think the answer to why I always remembered abuse from my brothers,
but didn't from my mother and father, is that the abuse from my
parents started [when I was] at an extremely young age, and it was
very, very traumatic. The abuse from my brothers occurred [later],
when I was ten years old. As far as my parents were concerned, I
suspect that a great deal of what happened to me as a young child was
buried [in my unconscious], because I wasn't there when it happened.
Someone else took over and experienced that. It wasn't until I
started to work with someone [a therapist] who could work with those
other, splintered-off parts of me, so that I could get close enough
to them to start to regain some of their memories, to feel their
feelings, that I started having memories about my parents.

As adults, survivors may dissociate in response to trauma in adult
life or as a temporary disengagement from social reality in response to a
flashback. Flashbacks of repressed memories from the abuse have been
described as "sudden, vivid memories of the abuse in which content is coupled with affect" (Sgroi, 1988b:116). However, flashbacks are not always experienced as visual phenomena. Incest survivors may have these PTSD flashbacks or memories in visual, emotional, somatic, or other sensory form. The experiencing of flashbacks is very common among incest survivors who were highly traumatized by the experience. One study found that 25 of 26 incest survivor subjects had PTSD symptomatology (Donaldson and Gardner, 1985). Survivors do not usually experience flashbacks solely in auditory form. Traumatic experiences seem to encode themselves in the memory, not in symbolic/linguistic forms, but "on a sensorimotor or iconic level as horrific images, visceral sensations, or fight/flight reactions" (Greenberg and Van der Kolk, 1987:193).

PTSD flashbacks operate **visually** as sudden, intrusive thoughts or imagery of the abuse (Donaldson and Gardner, 1985). This manifests in the survivor engaging in usually short bouts of dissociation, or "spacing out," during personal interaction. Memory flashbacks may also manifest **emotionally** as sudden outbursts of emotion which seem "inappropriate" or disproportionate to the current social context. These emotions such as rage, tearfulness, or fear, occur in response to a stimulus in the environment that reminds the survivor subconsciously of the abuse. This is sometimes called an emotional flashback (Dinsmore, 1991), or affective flooding (Wilson, 1988a,b).

Memory flashbacks may also occur **somatically** as "body memories." In this case, bodily symptoms of the abuse may occur in the adult survivor with no immediate cause, years after the initial injury (Bass and Davis, 1988; Van der Kolk, 1994). This may include headaches, pelvic pain, hives, various muscle aches, sore throats or inflammations of other soft
tissue, etc. Flashbacks may also operate in other sensory form, such as by the survivor smelling odors from the abuse. For example one survivor said:

It's a smell memory, that I got. My therapist kind of played it down, acted like maybe it wasn't really an incest memory, that maybe it was just a negative memory. But I'm sure it was an incest memory. It's a gut feeling. A kind of sick-to-your-stomach gut feeling.

Some respondents mentioned that most physicians were not cognizant of PTSD flashbacks occurring as somatic problems in survivors. However, some information sharing has apparently occurred among medical and mental health professionals, since one woman noted that her sister's doctor was aware of the underlying cause of "body memories" as frequently rooted in previous trauma. She said she and her sister found this encouraging:

At one point I was having a memory, about four years ago, and at the same time [my sister] was. We're very emotionally, like psychically, connected. I met her for lunch one day, and she told me that, her throat had been really closed up for a number of days, and she went to the doctor. And the doctor said, "There really is absolutely nothing physically wrong with you. Could it be anything else?" And she said something [to the doctor] about, "Well, my sister's having incest memories." And the doctor said, "Well, maybe that happened to you, too," suggesting that she was possibly having a body memory. I didn't know anything about this [her sister having symptoms] at the time. And when she told me, I had been having the same physical symptoms, you know, the same thing happening to me. So it was real validating, to hear that the doctor said that, and to hear from her that [she knew] that it was probably the result of being attacked or maybe strangled and held down.

Survivors frequently have different types of flashbacks at the same time or sequentially within a short period of time. One man said:

For me when I get memories it can be a combination of both body memories and visual stuff. I quit reading self-help books for now except The Courage to Heal. It's just like sometimes they'll [self-help books will] bring up issues that I'm dealing with, and they have a tendency sometimes just to be too overwhelming. And I don't want to be overwhelmed because I'm experiencing a lot of body memories and visual memories and stuff like that. So I feel I don't need to put myself through any more pain and torture, as I call it.

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The survivors whom I interviewed usually had experienced a variety of flashbacks when they were alone or with a partner. In general, survivors had experienced flashbacks and then had subsequently gone to meetings of the self-help movement for incest survivors after tentatively thinking they might be incest survivors. Hearing others' experiences of flashbacks and other PTSD symptoms, together with frequent corroboration by siblings, usually sisters, helped confirm for them that they were incest survivors. For instance one woman said:

The only thing that I always remembered was being real sore in the genital area. And I had bladder infections constantly. But I didn't remember any actual abuse until I was 40. The first one was a visual flashback, but with sound and feelings. I was by myself, and I woke up in the middle of the night...And started thinking about that, and I always remembered about being sore. And I realized that I must have been sexually abused. My sister had told me that she was abused [by their father.] And I started thinking about that. I had taken training for the local rape crisis center, and they had told us about signs of sexual abuse in children, and I had never made that connection [for myself] until my sister said that she had been abused. I started to get a lot of memories after that.

Another respondent said:

I didn't really have any memories of my father [as a perpetrator] until I was 33. They were primarily emotional flashbacks. My sister started talking about being molested, and I started having them. I felt like I went crazy, I just had all of these emotions that were uncontrollable and unbearable. I remember the first time she talked about it, it was like somebody was shouting "No, no no!" in my head. And I had to leave and go [for a] walk. And I wanted to scream a lot and was wanting to hurt myself. So that's how it started, how I first started getting memories of my father doing that. And I got more memories, and I went into therapy. And later I started going to [SMO#2] meetings. So it wasn't until after I [had] struggled with this stuff for years, and kept wanting to kill myself, and wanting to hurt myself, and having other symptoms, that finally I started thinking that, "Well, yes, maybe this had happened to me."

One man said:

I hear people talk about body memories, and I don't really know what they are. Mine are like, visual memories. I've got a sister who's in recovery and going through twelve-step programs, and once in a while we'll talk, and she'll remind me of some things that happened. And I'll say, "Oh, yeah, now I remember that." It wasn't like I was
consciously trying to cover it up, just for some reason I didn't remember it.

Another respondent said:

I first heard about [SMO#2] through my therapist, who had encouraged me to go check it out. I, at that point, was feeling unsure about it, [though]. I was scared a lot about talking about my father, as far as being one of my perpetrators. I knew I had been molested by a babysitter, and there was a lot of indications and a memory I'd always had, that made me think something happened with my father. I was really put off by the [title of the organization] involving incest. I think, for people who are unsure and are scared to acknowledge it, ...it was really hard for me to get into it.

Another respondent said:

I was sexually assaulted by someone at age 35, and that [experience] caused me to remember that I had been sexually abused by my mother. I had been going to ACOA and Al-Anon and CODA [Co-dependents Anonymous] meetings and this topic kept coming up, that many of us were suffering the consequences [now], of having incurred incest during our youth, but there was no [SMO#2] meeting here in my county. So one of the members in CODA decided to start a [SMO#2] meeting, and I began going to that particular meeting as well.

The self may split into various social identities as a survival mechanism during the abuse. In cases of MPD the self splits into various social identities which find public expression in different types of behavior. It is a common-popular assumption that all incest survivors have multiple personality disorder, due to media attention such as on "Sybil," a woman incest survivor with sixteen different personalities (Schreiber, 1973). However, although most survivors engage in dissociation, this is not the same as MPD. The American Psychiatric Association and others characterize dissociation as being on a continuum, with mild experiences of "spacing out" but no division in consciousness or public expression of identity at one end of the continuum, and complete separation of the self into various identities, of which the core identity may be unaware, at the other end (Courtois, 1988).
One survivor commented on this, stating that the fragmentation involves splitting into different inner children:

The inner child concept is like different aspects of consciousness. I mean, there is a certain way in which we're unified, but then there are all these fragmented parts of ourselves. There's a continuum of fragmentations. You know, one extreme is someone with multiple personalities, and this is not what I mean, it being that extreme, but it is a sort of fragmentation. It works as a metaphor, but actually to me it isn't even that important what it is; addressing inner children in yourself works. The movement's use of the concept of the inner child to help the survivor self-integrate is discussed later in this chapter.

A fragmented identity develops due to the survivor's having incurred loss of self due to the abuse. The part of the self which has been lost is that part which can trust others, has a strong sense of boundaries between one's self and others, and which can connect to others in a healthy way characterized by trust, nurturance and cooperation rather than excessive caretaking, reliance on others as "rescuers," or symbiosis. The survivor may have difficulty with establishing social identities in the world, such as being a partner, husband or wife, being a worker, or even knowing what her/his sexual identity is, because of the self-fragmentation leading to uncertainty about one's identities (Herman, 1992). Several respondents expressed this theme that recovery was helping them to get their lost self back, or to reintegrate the self. For instance one woman said:

Recovery to me is a journey toward health and peace. My journey is knowing who I am and what I need and what my values are, and living by them. Part of it has to do with recovering who I am, that got shattered a long time ago.

Another respondent commented:

[Recovery] means I have to go back and heal that fractured, victim part of my personality, to integrate it with the rest of my personality.
Another woman, who was aware of the process of fragmentation of self in incest survivors and the need to recover the self, remarked:

At one time, I felt like it was necessary to confront both perpetrators and at one point when I was very angry, in that anger phase, I felt like it was really important for me to say, "You can stand there and deny it if you want, but I know you did this and I want you to know that I know, and that I'm going to do what I can, to see that you never do it again." And now I think it was probably good at the time. But if I had to do it now, I don't think it would be that big of a deal at this point because I feel okay with myself, whereas then, I was trying to scratch and claw, to try and get my self back.

The self may also engage in dysfunctional modes of expressing emotion, such as seeking an emotional outlet in having multiple sexual partners, engaging in substance abuse, compulsive and hazardous risk-taking, self-mutilation, or developing sudden bonds with strangers, who may turn out to be abusive (Herman, 1992). Survivors may also emotionally isolate and thus pretend to themselves and others that they have no emotions at all, meaning they put up a "front" of being an emotionally restrained, quiet, reserved person. This is a dysfunctional mode of expressing emotion through the ruse of "no emotion."

Incest survivors also share with people from substance-abusing families, an emphasis on presentation of a "false self" or "false identity" based on a superficial, socially-acceptable, positive, conformist self-image that everything is going well, that one is happy, and that nothing is wrong with the self (Black, 1982; Herman, 1992; Kopriva et al. 1993). Eventually, however, this strain of dramaturgical presentation reaches the breaking point. Other twelve-step programs, such as ACOA (or ACA), for adult children of alcoholics, encourage members to "stop pretending" and to slough off the false self for the authenticity of the real self beneath it (Kopriva et al. 1993). The self-help movement for incest survivors also encourages this rejection of
pretense, which some survivors have found helpful. For instance one woman said:

It's funny, I don't go around thinking "I'm in recovery." I think, "I'm living through this. I'm not lying any more. I'm not pretending any more, that things are okay, that I don't want to die." I think I associate recovery with alcoholism, though, and I'm not an alcoholic. I think of recovery as part of abstaining from something tangible, like alcohol, rather than from my chronic self-destructive behaviors like doing too much at work, or eating too much... But my family has been telling lies about what kind of family they are for so long, and just pretending like that. And I'm not gonna pretend any more.

However, for incest survivors the sloughing of the "false self" may become problematic, as they are not sure that anything underlies the false self. Thus it becomes particularly helpful for incest survivors, particularly those who have been in other twelve-step programs, to "find their self."

RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SELF TO THE SELF AS A SURVIVOR: STRATEGIES

When the child who has been abused grows to adulthood, she or he discovers that the adaptations used in childhood in situations of coercive control no longer are effective. Thus one of the basic tasks of survivors in recovery is to repair this damage to the self via enacting strategies for achieving self-integration and stable, healthy connections with others (Herman, 1992). The self-help movement for incest survivors encourages members to achieve these goals by means of self-reconstruction and identity management strategies. For instance the movement encourages members to conceptualize their self as being comprised of various parts, each of which need healing, such as the physical, sexual, spiritual, and emotional selves. Healing of these selves then forms the basis for healing their public expression in social identity. In addition, the
movement encourages the integration of self via emphasis on the survivor developing a relationship between the adult and "inner child" selves. The discovery of one's identities (such as sexual identity) is encouraged by emphasis on the survivor being patient and accepting of "not knowing who one is," and giving oneself time to explore and think about one's social identities within the overall context of the survivor identity.

There are two aspects involved in the reconstruction of self: reconstruction of the self to oneself, in terms of how one thinks about one's self, including a focus on reintegration of various parts of the self; and reconstruction of the self to others, in terms of identity management strategies. I discuss reconstruction of the self to the self in this section and identity management strategies in the next section.

The self-help movement for incest survivors encourages members to engage in reconstruction of the self to oneself as a nondeviant survivor rather than a stigmatized victim first, and then encourages more public self-presentations at the survivor's discretion later in the survivor's process of recovery. Clinicians' findings concur that survivors need to work on building their own sense of self through building up their autonomy and self-esteem before making their survivor identity public, such as occurs when survivors reveal the abuse to their family of origin or confront the perpetrator (Herman, 1992).

The social movement culture in the self-help movement for incest survivors constructs and disseminates among members empowering images of themselves via the creation of "transgressive discourse" or language practices that oppose dominant hegemonic frames of survivors as pathologized victims (Alcoff and Gray, 1993). Movement discursive practices and sharing of experiences among survivors, help survivors
reconstruct and then continually reaffirm themselves as survivors of an unjust form of abuse who are slowly changing their patterns of interaction with others in order to stop being victims of abusive relationships. The movement assists the survivor in these processes of reconstruction of self via discursive practices such as using language on the definitions of covert and emotional incest, setting boundaries or limits, nurturing the inner child, establishing safety, and relying on other survivors as familial fictive kin or community.

My respondents elaborated eight strategies for reconstruction of the self. These include: defining one's experiences as actually constituting incest; defining oneself as undeserving of such abuse; attributing blame to structural forces and perpetrators rather than oneself; defining oneself as a survivor rather than victim; finding and integrating one's adult and child selves; establishing safety through a focus on community support/fictive kin; engaging in an emotion culture involving shared experiential processes; and receiving constant reaffirmations of support for one's lived reality from other survivors. I now discuss these in detail.

*Defining One’s Experiences As Actually Constituting Incest*

Incest survivors in the movement need to reconstruct themselves by viewing their experiences of childhood abuse as incest. Hegemonic definitions of incest construe it as sexual intercourse or penetration by a person in one's immediate family, usually meaning blood kin. However, the various SMOs in the movement encourage members to expand the definitions of incest and of incestuous perpetrators. The definition of incest has been expanded to include various kinds of physical, emotional, spatial and sexual boundary violations, not just overt violation by a
perpetrator with a penis. The definition of incestuous perpetrators has been expanded to include members of the nuclear or extended family or others whom the child trusted.

For instance one movement document ("The Welcome," read aloud at the beginning of each meeting) states, "We define incest very broadly as a sexual encounter by a family member or by an extended family member that damaged the child. By "extended family" we mean a person that you and/or your family has known over a period of time. This may be any family member, a family friend, clergy, another child or anyone who betrayed the child's innocence and trust. We believe we were affected by the abuse whether it occurred once or many times since the damage is incurred immediately."

Hegemonic definitions of incest are so constrictive that they preclude female perpetrators and also fail to acknowledge that it was the whole socioemotional context of inappropriate intimacy that damaged the child, not solely any physical acts of sexual perpetration. Movement documents thus label the nonphysical, spatial, or intimacy-based violations that occurred in survivors' experiences as covert incest, or emotional incest.

Labeling certain actions as "covert incest" tells the survivor that the perpetrator was committing incest, in this case physical touching masquerading as affection. It is a false affection in that such touching is meant to gratify the perpetrator, not the child. Covert abuse usually refers to the adult touching the child's body in a sexual or intimate way, or encouraging the child to engage in such actions. Covert abuse also includes implying that the child is "sexy" by making remarks about the child's body or sexual development, looking the child up and down in
a sexual way, telling "adult" dirty jokes to the child, making the child look at or participate in pornography or pornographic acts, walking around in the nude, in lingerie, or other states of undress before the child, making the child dress or undress the adult, etc.

_Emotionally incest refers to emotional/intimate boundary violations between the perpetrating adult and the child. It includes treating the child as a favorite, reversing roles by making the child one's confidante or counselor, implying that one will "die" if the child ever moves away or leaves, etc. Such movement definitions challenge dominant notions that the child's emotional self as manifested in the child's demonstrations of affection or emotional-intimate behavior, exists solely for adults who "own" the child. Other self-help literature for survivors also encourages them to define incestuous perpetration as including both overt and covert forms of abuse. For example the self-help book _The Emotional Incest Syndrome_ supports the above definitions of emotional incest (Love and Robinson, 1990).

Some respondents mentioned how emotional and/or covert incest had accompanied or preceded actual physical molestation. Most respondents, having read self-help books and movement documents, had clear definitions that their perpetrators had committed covert and emotional incestuous abuse. For instance one respondent said:

_Emotionally incest for me was having to take my mother's place. My mother was sick and so I was the other head of the household along with my father. My mother also treated me like a best friend instead of a daughter; I call that emotional incest. The covert, is more what I think of, as my father telling me dirty jokes and the sexual innuendoes and the sexual remarks that were made [by him]. There were some things that I had always remembered, but didn't regard them as incest till I got into recovery. Like him telling the dirty jokes. I had always remembered that, but I thought that incest had to be sexual penetration, and I have since expanded the definition._
Respondents usually construed the incest as including emotional and/or covert abuse, then, although they did not always use these terms when talking about the abuse. One of the men said:

I was always a caretaker, for my mother. She’s the one that abused me. And she always had a problem, whether it was an illness or some physical disability or a mental thing, she always had a problem. I remember her turning to me, [when I was] as young as two or three years old, and confiding in me, things I didn’t understand. That went on all though my childhood. And she still tries to do it.

The expanded movement definition of incest helps survivors to realize that they were abused, in order to begin their healing. Another woman said:

I’ve always had some memory of one of my brothers messing around with me...I hadn’t always identified as an incest survivor, though. When I would think about the stuff with my brother, I always thought it was, you know, that it wasn’t real normal, but that it wasn’t abnormal either. I thought of it as kids just messing around and experimenting. The memory that I always remembered was of him asking me to have sex with him, and me refusing, and he didn’t force me to, except he did force himself on top of me, but with our clothes on. [other details omitted here] So, yeah, it was sexual abuse, and I think of him as a perpetrator now.

Some respondents had repressed memories of the emotional and physical incest from one perpetrator, particularly if the latter was a parent with whom the survivor as a child felt emotionally bonded, but they had never repressed memories of other perpetrators’ incestuous behavior. Reading self-help books on the topic frequently activated memories, as evidenced by emotional attacks of rage, grief, or fear, nightmares, shaking, or other symptoms of having a "post-traumatic stress response," an indicator of PTSD (Horowitz, 1986). This response gives survivors a clue that they might have experienced childhood trauma. One respondent said:

I’d say the physical incest [started], maybe when I was three or four, from my other relatives, but I think with my father, emotionally, it was probably [present] from the beginning. I always felt far closer to my dad than to anybody else in the family. I always wanted my father’s approval. And I always felt like it was my mom and the other kids, versus me and my dad...My partner had been
reading *Secret Survivors* to me aloud, because he thought that so many of the symptoms described me, in the book, but I didn’t listen to it. But then I started having body memories...And most of the sexual abuse from [my dad] was emotional incest. But I wasn’t able to differentiate them [different types of incest], at that time, because this was early [in recovery], this was like in April of the same year [that I joined SM0#2].

Some members of the backlash "false memory syndrome" foundation have accused the movement and/or therapists of "producing" memories in survivors, but all of my respondents indicated that they had had severe symptoms of post-traumatic stress response first, sometimes coupled with flashbacks of seeing their family members as perpetrators in "snapshots" before joining the movement or seeing a therapist for incest issues. Respondents also went out of their way to excuse, minimize, and exonerate people in their families, for the most part, from blame, analogous to battered women who tend to underreport and minimize the extent to which they’ve actually been harmed, as documented for instance in police or court records (Gagne, 1993). Respondents also frequently stated that their incest therapists had not suggested that incest had occurred but that the survivor was having symptoms of severe stress.

We can see from the above quotes that respondents tended to imply that the movement’s broadening of the definition of incest to include covert and emotional incest, was immensely valuable to them in their healing process, since it helped them to see how the perpetrator had progressively desensitized them to later physical molestation by being inappropriately emotionally intimate or to violate sexual boundaries in a subtle way with the child at an early age. Perpetrators also desensitized the child by breaking down her or his self-esteem by verbally insulting or physically abusing them first. For instance one woman said:

I know a lot of my memories started coming [of when I was] probably around five or six, but [I got] even more [of when I was] towards

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By attending meetings, survivors are relieved to learn that their experiences of emotional/covert incest were not individualized, unique experiences and that they are entitled to be free from such abuse. For example one respondent said:

I guess I was in my early twenties, when I first started having some memories, but I thought that it was just emotional incest. I had remembered the emotional incest all along; I had never forgotten any of it. But I had thought it didn't count. I thought I was the only one.

Another respondent said:

[My mom] said "It's not incest, it was just a bath." The things she did were her idea of personal hygiene. And this is a quote from her, she always said "she had to scrub the stinky parts." And I was like, "Oh, god." She hadn't changed, but I had. I was the one that had moved [in my thinking]; she was being extraordinarily consistent. And I got angry for the first time. And I shot back, "I was not dirty. I did not stink." And that felt wonderful [to say that]. And no one had the right to hurt me like that.

Another respondent said:

That's one thing that recovery has taught me is, that I thought sexual abuse had to be the actual [illegal] physical act [of rape], but [that] anything else was not illegal. So therefore I could not reasonably ask or [have] asked it not to happen. But now, abuse is abuse, and I have a very low tolerance to [abusive people].

Defining Oneself As Undeserving Of Such Abuse

The broad movement definitions of incest, including the ideas of covert and emotional incest, also help movement members develop a sense of anger and righteous indignation at the perpetrator's tacit assumption that the survivor exists to fulfill the perpetrator's emotional and/or sexual needs. This sense of anger and indignation helps survivors to begin to define their experiences of violation as undeserved, which is important since survivors tend to blame themselves for the abuse. Self-blame prevents the child (and later the adult) from having to deal with
the ensuing feelings of fear, lack of safety, and abandonment, if the survivor were to admit that her/his parents are abusive criminals (Herman, 1992). Blaming the perpetrator helps relieve the survivor of guilt and empowers her or him.

The reconstruction of self as undeserving of the abuse is difficult since the dominant cultural attitude towards noncombat-trauma survivors is that they "desired" their abuse. The public and the medical/mental health establishment have traditionally expressed a "victim-blaming" attitude towards trauma survivors such as Jewish Holocaust survivors, battered women, and rape and incest survivors (Danieli, 1985; Herman, 1992). Such survivors are viewed as having been overly passive in the abusive situation, or as being inherently "masochistic," self-defeatingly accommodating to others' needs, or otherwise "attracted to abuse." They frequently encounter a public "conspiracy of silence" when they try to talk about their experiences (Butler, 1978; Walker, 1984; Danieli, 1985, 88).

Combat veterans are also frequently trauma survivors, but due to gender-based differences between them and other types of trauma survivors and the difference in the type of trauma experienced, combat veterans, who are predominantly male and incurred trauma fighting for their country, are stereotyped in a different way. Combat veterans, particularly those in the U.S. who survived Vietnam, are stigmatized as anti-authoritarian, violent, antisocial, substance-abusing, and impulsive (Boman, 1990). Combat veterans share with other trauma survivors an increased risk of incurring posttraumatic stress disorder (Mellman and Davis, 1985; Boman, 1990; Wilson, 1988a). However, combat veterans are
not usually labeled with the pejorative, "feminine" attributes of being passive nonresisters who "deserved what they got."

An alternative hegemonic view of non-combat trauma survivors casts them as "victims of learned helplessness." Seligman and Maier (1967) found in experimentation on dogs, that when repeatedly deprived of opportunities to escape duress in the form of electric shocks, the dogs stopped trying to escape, even when given the opportunity. This "learned helplessness" thesis was later extended to research on human beings to explain depression (Seligman, 1975). Learned helplessness theory was then used to explain the behavior of battered women, who are supposedly "psychologically paralyzed" by their abusive husbands and seemingly prefer to remain in their abuser's captivity rather than to escape (Walker, 1979; Flannery, 1987). The theory applies to incest survivors since they are also frequently castigated as victims of "learned helplessness" due to the high incidence of survivors being in abusive relationships as adults. However, feminist research, in which researchers actually interviewed or conducted ethnographic case studies of battered women, notes that they actively engage in helpseeking behavior and use a variety of coping strategies both to address the abuse and to meet their own needs (Gondolf and Fisher, 1988). According to this "survivor hypothesis," the pathology does not lie in the abused woman but in the failure of existing social services and the legal system to provide her with economic, social and legal resources to leave the batterer (Gondolf and Fisher, 1988). Thus these feminist authors are critical of the learned helplessness model since its attribution of an intrapsychic sense of victimhood to trauma survivors, still pathologizes and stigmatizes survivors as "masochistic," thus implying that survivors have a different
psychological make-up than "normal" people who have not endured such extreme duress.

Similarly, incest survivors learn to reject the implication of masochism or learned helplessness by viewing themselves as undeserving of the abuse and attributing blame to the perpetrator and systemic factors. For instance one woman said twelve-step work and different types of therapy had helped:

Without all the work I've done in therapy, through twelve-step work, and now in co-counseling, too, I don't think I'd be where I'm at today. I definitely used to think that the incest was my fault and that I deserved the abuse, but today I don't feel that it is. I'm getting stronger, myself, and that has made me realize it wasn't my fault, it was my father's.

Another respondent said:

It's like before [I was in SM0%2], I felt like it was so shameful, it was like my fault. You know, in some way [I thought] I had done it, that it was on me and not on anybody else. And I guess what I learned there, is it's not my fault. I learned that I didn't do anything wrong. There's some kind of deficit within the perpetrator, that causes incest.

The self-help movement for incest survivors encourages survivors to put the blame for the incest back on the perpetrators by defining the abuse as due to the perpetrators' inappropriate emotional, sexual, and violent impulses. For instance one woman said:

There was originally one [incest] group therapy here, in all of [Z] county. So there wasn't a lot of resources [to help incest survivors.] And nobody was talking about it, and nobody considered a female as a perpetrator. And I was emotionally and sexually abused by my mother. We don't give women credit for having sexual feelings, much less for abusing children with those feelings. It just wasn't considered. So I felt like a freak among freaks. I no longer feel that way, though. Usually, there's at least one other person [with a female perpetrator], and/or a lot of those people [at a meeting] will name at least one [female] abuser. It's not all that unusual anymore, to hear about somebody abused by their mother.
Attributing Blame To Structural Forces And Perpetrators Rather Than Oneself

Besides blaming perpetrators, some survivors find it helpful to engage in system attributions (Ferree and Miller, 1985). This means they blame the system or cultural patterns for allowing abuse to occur. Some people begin to see patterns of "power-over" others and dominance in traditional family arrangements, Judaeo-Christianity, or society in general, after reading self-help books on incest and being in the movement. For example one respondent said:

I think in some ways it's society [that causes incest], but by that I mean a lot of the old-fashioned ideas. It's somewhat cultural...Some people really do believe that they have the right for possession of [their] spouse and children. Like, "Those are mine and nobody is going to tell me what I can or can't do with those kids." And I believe that some of that is society and the way people have interpreted the Bible. Like I've always had a problem with the [idea that the] whole world started with just Adam and Eve and their kids,-isn't that incest?

Other women respondents, notably self-identified feminist women, attributed incest to patterns of male dominance. One woman said:

It seems to me, in my experience...It seems like a lot of perpetrators are male--with exceptions, but I mean, it's [the pattern of male incest perpetrators is] like an exaggeration of the whole power structure. Incest and child molestations and everything [are].

Another woman said:

I'm pretty tired of living in a world that's run by white men, and that's very controlled about how things should be, when things are not really like that. I think a lot of us [survivors] have been suppressed. Like, a lot of our intuitions and feelings and just ways of expressing ourselves, has been suppressed by not talking, by pretending like everything's fine, and just putting adult's needs ahead of children's needs. And that's similar to putting men's needs ahead of women's needs.

Some other respondents attribute incest to societal narcissism. For instance another respondent said:

I think [incest] is a problem with many roots, but at the core of it is disrespect, disregard for another person's integrity as a separate human being, with its [sic] own rights. It's a world view that is
self-centered and narcissistic. And it's manifested in individuals, but it's real prevalent in our society also. I don't think as a society we have a great deal of regard for others, and a deep-rooted sense of respect for others.

Defining Oneself As A Survivor Rather Than Victim

The self-help movement for incest survivors encourages survivors to think of themselves as survivors rather than victims, and to actively construct common meanings and strategies around the idea of survivorship. This process of naming the self as survivor rather than victim constitutes an implicit challenge to the institutionalized hegemonic uses of power to define and label the disenfranchised. The disenfranchised have the power of resistance, which means refusing to accept the definitions of the powerful in defining them and their reality (Janeway, 1980).

The defining of oneself as a survivor involves learning to take responsibility for oneself and a proactive stance, to take action to stop participating in old patterns of abuse, to define and set boundaries, to stop being "co-dependent;" and to "own one's issues." I will discuss each of these in turn.

First, being a survivor means taking responsibility for taking care of oneself and being proactive rather than reactive. Survivors frequently lump these two ideas together. Taking responsibility and a pro-active stance means that survivors must learn to act rather than react to situations. Problem-solving patterns from their family of origin may have emphasized that there is only one solution to a problem, or only one "right" solution; or that there are only two solutions, involving opposite actions. This would be an example of "black and white thinking." Via the movement emphasizing "choices," incest survivors learn that they have several options in response to any situation, and that
there are several solutions to any problem. Survivors also learn to identify and state their needs, to learn to soothe, nurture, and provide for their own basic needs, and to ask for help when they need it from nonabusive people. For instance one woman said:

Action, the ability to take action in my own life and make choices, is the difference between a survivor and a victim...I used to think that who I was and how I act was just set. It was just fixed and that's how I would just spend my life. I had no idea that really fundamental things, the way I thought, the way I felt, much less the way I acted, could ever change. And largely, in my life now, my actions, and my thinking, and even sometimes my feelings, I am much more proactive towards my health and well-being, [whereas] it used to be completely self-destructive all the time.

Responsibility and "pro-active" stance are emphasized in both the self-help movement for incest survivors and the twelve-step Adult Children of Alcoholics groups. These SMOs emphasize that the survivor or ACA learn not to let feelings of powerlessness over certain problems in the past dictate one's current behavior, also called not using "control issues" to control others. The movements emphasize using one's strengths and working from them. For instance another respondent said:

Respondent: Today my main issue is really moving away from the victim stance and taking responsibility. I need to be taking responsibility for my life, [for] being okay. [Saying] "this is what I have to work with, and it's mine." And saying "I'm responsible [for myself]" today. Because it's such a reflex [action] to go into a victim stance and allow life to happen to me and feel powerless and like things are really unmanageable and out of my control.

Interviewer: Is that kind of like your definition of the difference between [being] a survivor and a victim?

Respondent: Yeah. And actually, I've been hearing those words for a long time and it's just now clicking in. Because initially I had to say "yes, I am a victim" and completely affirm my innocence and purity, and just surround myself with unconditional love. And now it's like I'm a big girl, and I'm looking more at fourth-step issues of "what do I have to work with, or on."

Secondly, being a survivor as opposed to a victim means that one takes steps to do "whatever recovery work is necessary" to stop participating.
in patterns of abuse with others. An awareness of how one's adult behavior is a product of the childhood abuse, seems to be a critical factor. For some survivors this awareness means taking action by cutting off contact with one's perpetrators. For instance one woman said:

"To me a survivor is somebody that acknowledges what has happened and is willing to do whatever recovery work they need to do, to take care of themselves. And a victim is still lost in it [behavior dictated by the abuse], whether it's currently going on or not. I've met people that were survivors and [were] still around their perpetrators, and very much in a victim position. Yet they were really struggling to be survivors. I've met other people who just chose to stay a victim."

One of the men said:

"When I first started incest recovery, I had no contact with my family of origin for a year and a half. And then afterwards I had tried to put healthy boundaries and limits in my interaction with them. And as of yesterday, actually, I just wrote [them] another letter stating that I don't want to have contact with them. It's something that I need to do to break a lot of the cycles that's [sic] going on. If there's a family crisis everybody usually turns to me for solutions, whether to do this or that, and so I have decided that I need to have no contact with them again for a while."

Thirdly, as we can also see from the previous quote, most of my respondents also discussed how redefining oneself as a survivor means defining, setting and defending one's boundaries. This means establishing the parameters of one's self, where one's self stops and another's begins. The perpetrator has usually deliberately destroyed the victim's sense of self in order to abuse her or him, but recovery processes can help restore this. Survivors frequently first learn this concept in therapy or mental health treatment centers. One respondent said:

"I first learned to identify emotional incest in treatment. For codependency. And learning about, like, not having any boundaries, and being inappropriately bonded with my parents, where I didn't feel like I had an identity separate from what they wanted."

Most respondents had "practiced" setting boundaries by cutting off contact with their family of origin for brief periods of one to a few years, to break the cycle of abuse with their family. Most interviewees
discussed setting boundaries as important to recovering a sense of self, in terms of restricting abusive people's access to the self. Survivors described boundaries such as by saying the following:

Having a confrontation with my dad helped me set boundaries. I probably learned the concept in therapy. It helped me be clear about what I needed to do in terms of taking space, and asking him not to call me, or me saying, "No, I won't be coming down to visit," that kind of stuff... Setting boundaries means setting up guidelines for the way I want to be treated. There are different types of boundaries, depending on the situation. You can have emotional boundaries, like, "I won't allow myself to be talked to that way." Physical boundaries, were, like, [telling my dad], "No, I'm not going to see you, I'm going to [another city] and please don't call me. And if you need to call me, here's an emergency number [of a third, neutral party]."

Survivors' setting emotional boundaries becomes particularly important for them establishing a separate emotional self from other people, while setting physical boundaries helps survivors develop a sense of separate physical self. The concepts of emotional and physical self will be discussed in detail in a later section of this chapter. Survivors initially have rigid boundaries around the concept of self when they first get into the incest survivor movement. It is easy for survivors to practice rigid boundary-setting by saying that certain other people can or cannot call them, for instance. It is more difficult for survivors to state that someone can call them sometimes, or on certain occasions. This is because most of them have experienced some kind of abuse in adult relationships as well as in their childhood, and they feel like they cannot trust people whom they have just met not to be abusive. So they are inflexible about letting potentially "unsafe" people get close to them. The experience of incest has robbed them of their natural intuition as to who is a safe, nonviolent person and who is not, but the process of being in recovery in the movement slowly restores this intuition. Later in recovery, survivors learn to establish flexibility by experimenting.
with "letting people in," but a little at a time, in order to be "safe," or free from abuse. For instance one respondent said:

I know when I was first in recovery I had a more rigid definition [than I do now] of what my boundaries are. And now I feel a lot more freedom of choice in each relationship I have, to make it different. As a child I didn’t have a sense of safety with other people; I didn’t have a sense that I had any boundaries. It was kind of unexplored territory to find safety with other people. So as I’ve learned how to really relate and get to know people and let people get to know me and be [emotionally] intimate, there’s more of a sense of fluidity with [my boundaries]. I used to have really strict rules [about my boundaries]. But now I think a sense of boundaries comes naturally when I have a sense of love for myself and respect for myself. There are clues about when something isn’t safe, about when I need to back off or ask someone else to back off. It doesn’t have to be something that I predetermine anymore, or really work hard at setting up, it just comes naturally with recovery.

Movement documents from the two SMOs also emphasize the importance of boundaries, but there is also a difference in their terminology. Members of SMO#2 emphasize setting "boundaries." The founder of SMO#1 disagreed:

The idea of a boundary is not right. Negative things have happened with the term "boundary," used as a fence. In [SMO#1], we use the term "limits." This means we have the power to say "no" and walk away from people who will harm us. And [it means] we can stop before it hurts, we can stop work, exercise, relationships, before they hurt. We set limits for ourselves, and have limits that we give other people.

The respondent may be acknowledging here that survivors of any kind of childhood abuse tend to self-isolate and put up walls or "fences" between themselves and others, to avoid further harm, which becomes in adulthood a dysfunctional mode of emotional expression. Despite differences in terminology, SMO#2’s concept of "boundaries" and SMO#1’s concept of "limits" both are examples of a social movement culture’s coining of language to indicate how survivors can empower themselves by using the behavior of "saying no." Survivors' perpetrators defined survivors’ boundaries when survivors were children, as unlimited or non-existent. Perpetrators assumed an inappropriate attitude of unlimited entitlement
towards survivors, in terms of gaining unrestricted sexual and emotional access to them. Survivors as adults learn to take this control of definition of the limits of one's self, back from their perpetrators, or back from other space-violating people, via the concepts of "boundaries" or "limits." This concept is also used in the self-help and psychology literature on survivors (Utain, 1989; Gannon, 1990; Lew, 1990; Briere and Runtz, 1991).

Fourthly, learning to be a survivor also means not being "co-dependent." This concept was originally derived from the concept of para-alcoholism, meaning that others in the family of a substance abuser exhibited dysfunctional behavior to cope with the abuser's "using" behaviors. Incest survivors are usually caught up in the role of caretaking their parents. Such parents may also give the survivor the message that "she or he can't make it on their own" and will try to make all the survivor's decisions for him or her, to create a false dependency on the parents. This may carry over into adult intimate relationships, with the survivor care-taking or alternatively becoming overly dependent on the partner. Breaking this socialization pattern means the survivor learns to stop allowing others to make choices and decisions for him or her, and will not make others' decisions for them. Survivors learn not to let "care-take" others or let others "care-take" them. Perpetrators may have also told the survivor that she or he must behave appropriately in order not to make others "feel bad." Survivors learn in the self-help movement to stop controlling their actions for fear of making others "feel bad."

For instance one respondent said:

[Being in the movement] means that I can see things that much quicker. It's a matter of having my own perspective rather than dissociating and seeing things through other people's eyes. Or [it means] having my own perspective rather than rationalizing and
excusing [others' abusive] behavior. It means staying in my own perspective and responding from that regardless of how it "makes the other person feel."  

Fifth, being a survivor also means figuring out which problems in interpersonal interaction are based on one's own problems in communicating or unresolved problems from the past, and which are based on others' problems. This is sometimes called "owning one's issues," or "separating out one's stuff." For instance one respondent commented:

I met this woman who was an incest survivor, and I saw this ad for an incest group and I mentioned it to her and she started to go [to meetings.] And then I started to go. And we were both in and out of that meeting. Eventually she left town and I stayed on, and I began to recognize my own stuff, because I was going to that meeting. And I was able to separate what my stuff was, from what her stuff was, and from what my daughter's stuff was, and I was really able to get a lot more insight. I mean it took a lot of time, I had to get a handle on what was going on [with myself], But that meeting had a whole lot to do with just turning me around.

Finding And Integrating One's Adult And Child Selves

In order to recover the lost part of self which was violated and which stores the memories of abuse, the movement encourages survivors to think of the lost part of self as their inner child. Survivors are encouraged to think of it as a part of themselves which they need to befriend, nurture, and encourage to speak about the memories. Survivors in the movement believe that survivors must make conscious efforts to get in touch with their inner child to heal from the incest. For instance one woman who speaks to both incarcerated women and men about the issue of incest, believes that people acting out crimes as adults is due at least in part to them having not healed their inner child selves. She said:

People kept saying, "It's [Incest is] a women's issue." But our prisons are full of men in rage. So who do they [the people who see
it as a women's issue] think they're kidding? Rage is the hurt little boy inside. I think men need to hear about our program.  

Another respondent said:

For me, being a victim is being stuck in the abuse. For me, like if I'm doing body work or having body work [done] on myself, it's like energy's blocked in certain parts of the body. Or usually I feel like I'm stuck in my emotions, it's just like being frozen, in whatever age the abuse occurred, frozen in time at that part of my personality or my inner child. And the inner child work has helped a lot. The inner child, for me, can be either a metaphor or a little one inside of me. When I say "a little one," it can be any age, especially if I'm doing a lot of reparenting and nurturing and healing the wounded part of me that's stuck in time or frozen in time. So being a survivor for me is just being able to function in the world as an adult.

Survivors learn to identity when their adult self is being overshadowed by their inner child. Survivors will thus refer to being "in my kid," or "in my child," if they know they are dissociating in response to a flashback, i.e., if they are being "triggered" by a stimulus which reminds them of the abuse. This happens most frequently during intimate relations with a partner. For instance one woman said:

In my most recent relationship, I had asked him [respondent's lover] to leave. It really didn't feel safe to share [memories] with him after a while. I did share with him a time or two, and he would be supportive for ten or fifteen minutes, and then it would turn him on, and he would want to have sex, and I would still be in my child, and I just decided I was no longer safe sharing with him.

Another respondent said:

[I first started having memories] when I had a body memory when I was having intercourse with my boyfriend. I got, I felt triggered or something and so then we stopped having intercourse, and I rolled myself up really tight in a sheet. And I felt like I was really, really young. And I think that I was having body memories and was in my kid but I didn't know it.

Survivors may always have "acted young" in response to such "triggers," but not have known that this was the lost part of themselves trying to escape from the abuse until the discursive practices in the movement gave them a language for them to contextualize this "sudden
feeling of being a young child experiencing the abuse again."
Alternatively, survivors may have never "acted out" even when
experiencing memories, but joining the movement encourages them to "feel
their feelings" when experiencing memories, which gives them the freedom
to recover the feelings of the traumatized child, either in therapy, in
meetings, or in the privacy of their homes with friends, where they can
receive nurturance from other survivors.
Survivors also amongst themselves may refer to their inner child,
being a part of their self that they have lost and seek to regain, as
being "my kid," or "my little girl/boy." By referring to the inner child
as "my kid," survivors show they view this part of the self as existing
even when they are not dissociating. They are thus validating that part
of the self that keeps the memories. For instance another respondent
commented:

My mother, I basically confronted in a letter about the physical
abuse and stuff. With my uncle, my kid is still terrified of him,
just because of his large physical size, and I have no interest in
confronting him.

Survivors may use expressions like "talking to my kid," "being with my
little girl," etc., when talking privately with other survivors, to refer
to the process of getting in touch with their inner child. This is a very
helpful process for many survivors, to recover memories or discover their
needs. Frequently survivors find that this inner child is connected with
their intuition about what they need. For instance one respondent said:

I told a childhood friend [that I'm a survivor]--I was standing in
the shower one night and my inner kid was saying, "I want you to call
X." And I kept saying, "I can't do that. He's not going to
understand," and X ended up calling me that night, I mean, within ten
minutes of this conversation I had with my inner kid. I decided to
trust my instincts and tell him [I'm a survivor], and he was not
surprised. He had been carpooling with a woman who had just begun her
own incest recovery and [she] had been talking to him.

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Both the broader self-help movement in general and feminist therapy has encouraged people from dysfunctional families to heal this young child-self by "getting in touch with their inner child." This connection of the adult self who denies the abuse, with the child-self who remembers the abuse, is vital to the adult survivor's recovery. The adult self learns to become the "parent" or adult guardian to the inner child, by linking with the child-self through meditation, creative visualization, self-hypnosis, or writing or drawing with the nondominant hand to access memories and to soothing oneself when overwhelming feelings of terror, rage, or grief ensue due to memory flashbacks. Thus recovery involves a process of the adult part of the self "re-parenting" the inner child, with love, nurturance, and patience. Some self-help books are very detailed about this aspect of recovery (e.g., Pollard, 1992). A few respondents discussed how doing this "inner child work" had helped them.

For instance another respondent said:

I probably first heard about inner child work at [SMO#2] meetings, or in The Courage to Heal, or both. But inner child work was something that started all the memories coming. I was reading a book called Toxic Parents, and there was a couple of chapters about incest. And they [the authors] suggested a lot of [writing] exercises, one of them was to write a letter to your inner child. And I had been thinking a lot about the first memory that I had had, and I hadn't yet told my therapist [the memory]. So I did this writing a letter to my three-year-old, and I just kind of wrote and wrote and wrote. And then I cried, and it really just opened the floodgates. And that was like releasing memories, this three-year-old talking to me all of a sudden. And she [the inner child] wanted to read the letter to my therapist. And I was like, "Are you sure?" And she said, like, "yes." So I told her how to read the letter, and within a couple of days after that, I started getting one memory after another, so it really was what started the whole [memory recovery] thing.

Another respondent said:

The memories have always been real, real vague for me. The clearest stuff, that I recall, has come in the form of drawings and writings. I often do it with my non-dominant hand, and with crayons. And sometimes writing in my journal with the non-dominant hand. That's been primarily the way things [memories] have come. Because if it
[otherwise] just comes into my head, I fight with it and don't believe it.

Establishing Safety Through A Focus On Community Support/Fictive Kin

The need for participation in a community of like-minded people who are "safe" is paramount for trauma survivors, particularly in early stages of recovery. Incest survivors share with Holocaust survivors and battered women experiences of entrapment and captivity. Herman (1992) discusses how captivity as a situation of coercive control which prevents escape, is common to hostages, political prisoners, concentration camp survivors, and incest survivors. She states, "A man's home is his castle; rarely is it understood that the same home may be a prison for women and children...In domestic captivity, physical barriers to escape are rare...The barriers to escape are generally invisible. They are nonetheless extremely powerful. Children are rendered captive by their condition of dependency. Women are rendered captive by economic, social, psychological, and legal subordination, as well as by physical force" (1992:74). Hence the need for survivors to learn to break out of feeling like a captive. The importance of the group and a larger community of trauma survivors as a safe place for emotional expression has been discussed by others (Danieli, 1988; Wilson, 1988a). Thus the movement is empowering survivors by encouraging them to rely on other incest survivors or people in twelve-step programs in general for emotional support and to think of each other as either "family" or "community."

Some survivors prefer the idea of "family" to describe their network with other incest survivors or twelve-step people in general. For instance one woman said:

When I go to my [other twelve-step] meetings, I say my name and that I am an [type of addiction] and then, "Hi, family." Because I feel like, even though everybody in there is not all the way recovered, we
are varying shades of recovering people. We have that common purpose of helping each other and nurturing, guiding, and support. Not like my biological family. And the women in [SMO#2] are like sisters that I would have liked to have had.

Other respondents seem to prefer the idea of **community**, by referring to having a group or network of like-minded people whom they associate with:

I know there's some people who consider their [SMO#2] group their family. I don't, because it's dangerous for me [to think that way]. They're people I'm in recovery with, they're not my "family." I don't have contact with my family. That's one of my old patterns—when I was little, I would adopt other people to be my family, [which was] dangerous. So I don't consider non-biological people "family." [People in recovery] are good friends, and all of my friends being people in recovery, they respect my boundaries, and they are the people I hang out with.

Some survivors said that as they healed their issues more, and started to feel a stronger sense of self with boundaries, that their need for almost exclusively associating with people at their twelve-step meetings had diminished. This usually occurred after a few years of being in recovery. It also seems to be related to survivors developing emotional support networks of people outside of twelve-step programs, through participation in vocational or avocational programs. For instance one woman said:

I'm a body worker and I work with energy [fields], like polarity and Swedish massage. I'm not in a conscious state of feeling traumatized anymore. When I was, I didn't feel safe, because I felt as if the trauma were recurring all of the time. I mainly used to socialize with people from my meetings and it had to do with the safety issue. I really needed to be around people who spoke the same language, who were [working] on the same task. And as I have healed and recovered, I don't need that anymore. I can relate to a lot of different kinds of people and I don't feel like they have to be in recovery for us to connect or trust each other.

**Engaging In An Emotion Culture Involving Shared Experiential Processes**

Survivors also reconstruct themselves as valuable and worthy people by the movement validating them as "people who are learning to be healthy by expressing their feelings." This is particularly important for survivors, who engaged in emotional isolation as children and still tend to do so as
adults (Donaldson and Gardner, 1985). The movement thus rests on a "feminine" paradigm of emotional expressivity, in contrast to the hegemonic masculinist paradigm of inexpressivity, competition, and ignoring one’s past in favor of future-oriented career achievement and materialistic consumerism. This "emotion culture" of self-help also characterizes feminist communities (Taylor, 1995). Many women in the movement find this particularly validating of their experiencing the world in terms of emotionality and relationality. For example one respondent said:

I think if anything will come of it [the recovery movement], it will be that society's going to have to look at women having that value [quality] that women have, of having the courage and strength and the emotions to do what we're doing. In my opinion for years now, women have felt like they had to suppress their feelings and emotions to compete with men, so that they can show they are the same as men. And I think now it's going to be shown that women are still valuable, but we are different in a lot of ways [from men].

Receiving Support For One’s Lived Reality As A Survivor From Other Survivors

Another way survivors reconstruct themselves as survivors rather than victims is to get constant support from other survivors for their lived reality. Self-help literature documents how recovery is cyclical and seems to go in phases (Bass and Davis, 1988; Sgroi, 1988b.) This means that the survivor periodically begins to doubt that she is an incest survivor and doubts her reality that her family of origin was abusive. Survivors call this "going in and out of denial." Talking with other survivors about the common experiences of flashbacks and other PTSD symptoms, eating disorders, being "in one's kid," etc., helps reaffirm one's experiences as truthful or real. Survivors also will refer to other people in their family of origin, or even to their own friends or partners who reject the truth of the abuse in their respective families,
as "being in denial." Survivors point to their parents', siblings', or other relatives' continued suicidality, substance abuse, abusive interpersonal relationships, eating disorders, mental illness, etc., as evidence that these people are harming themselves by being in denial and by keeping up this pretense of family normality. For instance one woman commented:

My other sister that I'm not in touch with, has said that she knows that something happened to her, she doesn't know how or who [did it] or what or when. And she's the one who's most unhealthy or most in denial in the family, in my estimation. She doesn't even want to talk about if inggest went on. And she's probably still a practicing alcoholic.

Another man remarked:

I think this girl whom I dated for four years, had some body memories [but didn't know what they were.] The first year [I was with her], I had no idea that she had been abused, and neither did she. Then she started having memories. And she kind of alluded, that she thought she might have been molested, but she wouldn't go into it, wouldn't talk about it. But looking back on the relationship with her, I think she had some body memories. And she was in denial. She had eating disorders, she was bulimic and anorexic, and she was, like, thirty years old, and she still hadn't accepted the fact that her brother had molested her.

Other survivors commented that returning home to visit relatives after joining the movement "opened their eyes" or "brought them out of denial" about the reality of the amount of abuse and violence in their family. One woman said:

I think being in [SMO#2] has definitely affected my views. I see, and I am dealing with, issues of violence and perpetration in my family of origin now. And now I'm breaking that denial and really recognizing it and beginning to see the damage done [to me]. I can notice now when that [unequal] power dynamic is there, a lot quicker than before.

Other survivors talked about how they get validation for their reality whenever they "go back into denial." For instance one woman said:

I know one of the people that I told early on, [that I was a survivor] was a guy I was getting to know at [another] twelve-step meeting, and it was weird because he said he wanted to tell me
something, and I knew he was going to say he was an incest survivor. And I said, "I know. Me too." It's interesting, because all of the people I have told in recovery [that I'm a survivor], even if I've just announced it at a meeting as part of what I'm talking about in my topic, or in response to somebody else's topic, all the people have believed me and not questioned me...And that encouraged me to keep talking about it and to keep trying to believe myself.

Quite a few respondents said that this validation operated through common experiences of emotions, probably some of which were emotional flashbacks. One woman said:

Recovery helps me to know I wasn't making things up, that there was [sic] a lot of other people who were [are] going through the same things that I did [am]. The most crazy or insane things that I could say or feel, or things that I felt were wrong or bad, were validated by other people who had the same feelings. So, it has kind of made me feel whole and self-empowered, and helpful to people, [when I talk to them in meetings].

Another woman said something similar:

I have read several brochures [of movement literature]. [With] most of them, I could hardly believe it, because there were examples of somebody's experiences, and they were saying the same [thing happened] as what I experienced, what I felt. So I'm not the only person to suffer from this problem. Before I got into [SMO#2], I was so frustrated; I couldn't tell anybody else my problems. Sometimes I wanted to talk to somebody, about how I [am] suffering, about how I feel, but I hesitated to talk about it with my [non-survivor] friends, because I wondered whether they [had] had the same experience[s] as me. And after I came to this support group [SMO#2], I have had lots of support. At least [with them] I know I have had the same experiences, and they support me, whatever I talk about.

INFLUENCE OF FEMINIST SELF-HELP ON SURVIVORS' NOTION OF THE PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, SEXUAL, AND SPIRITUAL ASPECTS OF SELF

Movement definitions again use the language of liberal individualism to help incest survivors develop an appropriate sense of their rights to their physical, emotional, sexual and spiritual separateness from the perpetrator. The movement organizations which I studied thus encourage survivors for their own healing, to link their personal experiences of incest to movement frames of entitlement for the various parts of self.
This specifically means members link their physical, emotional, sexual, or spiritual self to one's right to freedom and expression of one's individuality.

**Physical Self**

Movement definitions of one's right to one's physical space encourage survivors not to think of their bodies as existing for the perpetrators. If adults demand that the child use her/his body to engage in fake expressions of physical closeness, this is coercion of the body and of one's affections, according to the movement. Movement definitions of forced physical closeness as covert incestuous abuse, thus challenge hegemonic notions that the child's physical self is the property of the child's family and that the child has no rights to control over her or his own body. One woman said about this:

To be an incest survivor means someone who was sexually abused as a child, meaning the older people who had the power, used my body in an inappropriate way and did not give me any choices in it. I don't believe that I'm an incest victim [anymore] because I have options. I was a victim when I was a child, but I'm not a child anymore.

Another respondent said:

I learned [in the movement] that I can be strong, I can have control of my body. And no one can hurt me without me saying so.

For many incest survivors, problems with them accepting their physical self and body apart from the perpetrator and the abuse, manifests in eating disorders and feelings of having an inhuman, ugly facial and bodily appearance. Survivors may even think of themselves as "monsters." The movement talks about this mainly by encouraging self-acceptance. For instance one woman said:

I labor with things about my weight, about my looks. And the whole situation with being molested just exaggerates the whole thing. The way I internalized being molested as a kid, was, "I am a horrible freak; I am not a woman." And I just took it in, through the easiest...
trapdoor there was, which was beauty and weight and that being your
value...And I guess what I get out of recovery is, sometimes it kind
of forces the cards of me having a more realistic view of myself.

Another woman said:

I almost died because of my eating disorder, anorexia. I got into OA
[Overeaters Anonymous] first, then AA, then [SMO#2]. And something
that I have learned in [SMO#2] is that, "if I take the time, it is
possible." The big thing now is body image. I have been dealing with
body image stuff all of my life; according to everyone around me I
was beautiful. But my [own] perception was real screwed up. Since
being in the [twelve-step] program, though, I don't think in a linear
fashion anymore. I have made the decision to make peace with my body
as it is. I need to learn to love my body just as it is, belly and
all. So with some help from my physical therapist I am going to learn
to belly dance.

There is also a movement pamphlet on incest and eating disorders, but
most respondents with eating disorders had not read it, probably since
some of the meetings do not order literature from the national office
regularly.

Incest survivors' identification of the physical self with the
perpetrator's self can also carry over into adult life, such that the
survivor develops a sense of fusion with her/his partner and loses
her/his sense of social identity apart from the partner. This problem has
been noted as occurring in women, notably in lesbian communities
(Krieger, 1983). However, as a particular problem of incest survivors it
also occurs in men. For instance one man said:

Whenever I'd be in a relationship, my goal was to be that other
person, to get [myself] lost in relationships all the time. For years
I had no idea who I was, so it's [recovery has] really helped.

One of the women respondents also said:

I think twelve-step recovery has had a lot to do with me getting to
know myself, and through this relationship with myself being able to
even decide, like, what kind of ice cream I like. I always knew what
kind of ice cream my partner liked, but I never knew what kind I
liked. I liked whatever they liked. So by learning about myself, I
have learned about what made me comfortable and what made me
uncomfortable. It's a matter of respect.

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Emotional Self

With respect to the freedom of the emotional self, it means freedom for one's emotional self from being always considered emotional property, or always emotionally accessible to those with more power in the family. Movement members use the concept of emotional boundaries to start to think of themselves as separate from their perpetrators, as discussed. Movement members thus begin to conceptualize themselves as having a unique emotional self which is separate from the emotions of the perpetrator. For example, one respondent said:

I never knew what I was feeling, I just knew what he [the perpetrator] was feeling, and so I thought that [that] was what I was feeling. I thought that was what I was supposed to be feeling. But now I'm beginning to know what I feel.

Another respondent said that recovery makes her less likely to be emotionally abusive or emotionally parasitic of others, as her perpetrator was:

[Perpetrators] are basically trying to get [others’] energy. Like they're walking around, they know they feel depleted, and children are perfect targets because they're kind of defenseless. And it seems like, as we heal, [that perpetration is less likely]. Like if my problem is emotional, I can't get the emotional energy I need, then I might be emotionally abusive to other people, and get their energy in an abusive way, like through incest. But as I heal, then I am less so.

Some respondents who had mood disorders, such as being chronically depressed or bipolar (manic-depressive), commented that the recovery movement had helped them to accepting their emotional self despite their "deviance:"

I would say the inner child concept was helpful in getting in touch with [my] emotions. Like, emotions from being a kid, or just any emotions. But that's also where my biggest developmental block was. And also, I have a mood disorder. I have a lot of problems with emotional reactions. In terms of a whole range of periods of no emotional reactivity to very intense outbursts. So [the inner child work] has helped me with that, because I [had] developed a whole set
of mental attitudes about that that were negative, and so it's helped me change those attitudes and accept my own emotional states more.

Sexual Self

Survivors need to reclaim the sexual part of themselves back from the perpetrator. Sometimes they have totally lost all sense of their sexual self (Jacobs, 1994). Other survivors may have lost their sense of sexual self as existing for themselves as see their sexual self as existing only to please others. The former are likely to be sexual abstainers, while the latter are more likely to have had multiple partners (been "promiscuous") or have engaged in prostitution in adulthood, although there is not a strict correlation among these factors.

Feminist self-help as an ideology has had an influence on survivors' sense of self in terms of them reclaiming the sexual part of self and a sexual identity for themselves. Other authors have noted that the women's movement has been a movement for sexual freedom of women, in terms of challenging outmoded ideas that women's sexuality is "naturally" oriented towards men, that women are "naturally" oriented towards mothering, and that women's reproductive capacity exists to reproduce male heirs to support patriarchal capitalism (Chodorow, 1979; MacKinnon, 1982,87 [orig. 1984]; Rich, 1980). Faludi also comments on this when she notes, "That the New Right fastened on feminism, not communism or race, was in itself a testament to the strength and standing of the women's movement in the last decade. As scholar Rosalind Petchesky observed, "The women's liberation movement in the 1970s had become the most dynamic force for social change in the country, the one most directly threatening not only to conservative values and interests, but also to significant groups whose 'way of life' is challenged by ideas of sexual liberation."

Significantly, the critical New Right groups all got underway within two
years after the two biggest victories for women's rights--Congress's approval of the ERA in 1972 and the U.S. Supreme Court's legalization of abortion in 1973." (Faludi, 1991:232-3).

Feminist self-help encourages people in the self-help movement for incest survivors to accept one's self as a sexual being with a sexual identity. This entitlement to enjoyment of one's sexuality and reclaiming of a sense of sexual self has been particularly important for survivors who are "chronic abstainers," my term for survivors who have been celibate, sometimes for years, because of rejecting their sexual self. These survivors, like some other women survivors of male sexual violence, define sex as a weapon of power and control which has been used against them (Kelly, 1988). They desire companionship and intimacy but do not want to feel dominated. They cannot construe sexuality as involving mutual warmth and egalitarianism, having only experienced sexual relations with the perpetrator, or later with abusive partners, as dominating and disempowering. Thus they reject having sexual relations as adults, since they do not eroticize someone exerting power and dominance over them, and thus tend to instead think of themselves as asexual.

Later stages of recovery allow such survivors to realize that they can get their needs for sexual and emotional intimacy met, by a respectful, egalitarian partner, by learning to sense intuitively who is "safe" and who is not. Survivors in this later stage are reclaiming that lost aspect of self which was their sexual self. They slowly begin to feel like sexual beings again. Many survivors thus tend to refer to their early stages of recovery (or to their current state of recovery, if they have not healed their sexual self, yet), as "sexual anorexia." One survivor elaborated:
I have different aftereffects from the incest in my life. Like I am sexually anorexic. My understanding of it, is that it is like food anorexics. They avoid food at all costs in order to keep their body image in a certain way, so that they won’t get fat. They have a distorted body image. For me, I avoid sexuality because I have a distorted image of myself as a sexual person. I dress so that I look unsexual [sic]. I can’t even imagine being sexual with somebody.

Another woman said:

I got into recovery when I was 19, so I didn’t go through that stage [of promiscuity] I would say, though, that I was sexually anorexic, which is the flip side of the same coin [as promiscuity]. I didn’t, couldn’t get my emotional needs met through sex. Sex was something to be avoided; I thought it was a weapon. I thought it was a violent means to get [your] emotional needs met, which is [what] the promiscuous survivors [do].

For survivors with a history of having multiple sexual partners, the movement is also helpful. For instance one woman who had had various sexual partners said that the movement had helped her to set sexual boundaries with others:

I used to have a problem with sexualizing all my friendships. But I don’t sleep with friends anymore. Through [SMO#2] I dealt with my history of sexual relationships. This is what brought me into my seventh step. I knew my behavior had to change somehow. I became aware of my behavior in my fourth and fifth steps, and in the sixth and seventh I began to accept it, and then the behavior was able to shift. I have a really close friend for instance. We are very attracted to each other, but we do a lot of spiritual and political work together, and a relationship would really louse things up. So she and I sat down and talked about it. We had learned that from [SMO#2]. We both said "It would be great to sleep with you, but not right now." That is something I couldn’t have done before I was in [SMO#2].

Survivors also are adopting feminist self-help recovery frames when they begin to feel a sense of entitlement to defining the sexual part of self as nondeviant. The women’s movement, the gay/lesbian movement, and the self-help movement together, have in my opinion had a positive influence on survivors’ healing the sexual part of themselves by encouraging survivors to claim a sexual identity they feel comfortable with, as long as it involves consensual behavior with another adult. This means
survivors can allow themselves to be comfortable with themselves as gay, lesbian, bisexual, heterosexual, "bisexual lesbians," "bisexual heterosexuals," or just "sexual." Many respondents had gone through phases of trying to decide on a sexual identity label, such as one of the above labels, and had had difficulty because they felt that their sexual identity was determined by the gender of their perpetrator. Recovery helps them just to see themselves as sexual beings who are capable of intimacy with another person, without being concerned about whether their partner "should" be a man or woman, particularly that it should be someone of the opposite gender from the perpetrator (to "prove" one is not re-enacting the abuse).

Recovery beliefs could be criticized as depoliticizing sexual identity issues, since such beliefs do not encourage survivors to be lesbian as a way of resisting male-dominated heterosexual relations, for example. However, from the perspective of what benefits the survivor most in her/his sexual healing, some respondents said that the feminist and gay/lesbian movements' politicizing of sexual identity made them feel more confused and guilty about their sexual identity if they did not identify as a member of these movements. Such respondents seemed to feel that they could not fit the "politically correct" way to be a movement of these movements. Taking a depoliticized approach to sexual identity, then, seems to work well for these survivors, who want to think of themselves as "sexual" or "bisexual" without worrying about the political implications of their sexual identity. For instance one male respondent said:

Actually, recovery has kind of destroyed my identity as a gay man,--which is good. Because, dealing with doing this incest recovery, and looking at the fact that we tend to, I tend to re-enact my own abuse, it's kinda hard to [sort out.] Like, my mother perpetrated me in a
very violent way. Men perpetrated me in a very gentle way. So I associated love, with sex, with men. So, when I look at the fact that I re-enact my abuse [in adult relationships], you know, I wonder, is being gay re-enacting my abuse [from men]? So it's really kind of shattered that whole gay identity, which I really like, because I never did fit in with the gay community. I don't still regard myself as a gay man. It started a few years ago, and now I'm just trying to work on the fact that I'm a sexual being. Not gay, not straight, not "bi," just sexual.

Another respondent said something similar:

I am confused about my sexual orientation, because I was abused by both a man and a woman. I think I might be bisexual. I want to move to a place where that's okay with me. I don't really fit in with the feminist lesbians with the short hair [anyway].

Other survivors have commented, however, that they felt that the women's movement, the civil rights movement, and the gay/lesbian movement had supported their gay or lesbian identity, since these movements have encouraged sexual liberation from hegemonic ideas of sexual relations, or have encouraged the concept of "rights for minorities." For instance one respondent said:

The women's movement talked a lot about how they wanted women to be empowered, how they wanted equal rights [for women] as a minority. And for years I would say "No, I am not a minority," but in all actuality, I am [part of] a minority because of my sexual orientation, as a gay man. And, like, the civil rights movement tried to give people of color the same rights as the Anglo-Saxon white male, and the women's movement did the same thing for women. And being women, people of color, and gay or lesbian or bisexual, you're a minority because you're going against the status quo.

Other respondents mentioned that it was helpful for the process of recovery as a process of self-growth to have a gay or lesbian and/or feminist therapist, if the respondents themselves were trying to accept their own sexual identity. For instance one woman said:

I think it was important [that my therapist is a lesbian] because part of my recovery has been coming out as a lesbian myself. And that was like, right around the same period when I realized I was an incest survivor, so I needed support [from a therapist] on that [sexual identity], too. So I liked the idea that she was a lesbian when I went looking for a therapist. The fact that she is a lesbian
doesn’t show that she is supportive, but it made it easier for her to be supportive and for me to feel comfortable with her.76

**Spiritual Self**

Getting in touch with one’s spiritual self is accomplished by getting personally in touch with some form of Deity or "Higher Power." Movement frames encourage survivors to reclaim a spiritual self, who is in touch with their Higher Power, apart from the perpetrator. The woman who founded SM0\#1 said:

Perpetrators are trying to make themselves the Higher Power to their kids. Kids are told or are programmed that they will be dead if they don’t do what the perpetrator says. [So the perpetrator is] acting like God. So [SM0\#1] includes as a basic tool, to stay centered and grounded in our chronological-age adult, who is always in charge [of the self] and with God.

Another respondent said:

In a Higher Power, that’s just what I need, [a Power that’s] very nurturing and gentle. My inner kids have a strong association between my father and God being, you know, all powerful, angry, punishing. It’s not like I was ever taught that that was all that God was, but somehow what I took from my Methodist upbringing was more the angry, punishing, all-powerful stuff. And I think that was because of the abuse.

This rejection of one’s spiritual ties to the perpetrator may also lead the survivor to embrace an eclectic, non-traditional mixture of spiritual beliefs. This may include non-traditional beliefs about one’s Higher Power, since one’s childhood beliefs may have identified the perpetrator with God and God with the perpetrator. For instance another, male respondent remarked:

For me, being in recovery with my spirituality means I have to let go of my bad conceptions. Conceptions of how God, [when I was] growing up, as being a real judgmental, authoritative figure that said "I’m going to get you." That’s just because I equated God, at that time, as like a real authority figure/parent, like my parents. So when I came into recovery, I found out it was a spiritual program involving the "God of our understanding" or "Higher Power." So I could take what I wanted from my childhood of the Christianity s---t, and then
[I could] incorporate other things, other spiritual practices into my spirituality.

The extent to which twelve-step recovery movement or the self-help movement for incest survivors may be influencing survivors to create their own alternative spiritual networks as strategies of resistance to the dominance in organized, traditional religion, is discussed in the next chapter.

One's "Higher Power" does not have to be anthropomorphized as God or Goddess, however. It can be anything construed as having a spiritual level beyond that of the individual, such as the power of the group, the power of nature, an immanent spiritual force dispersed throughout the universe, etc. The twelfth step specifically encourages members to interpret any spiritual experiences they have while working on recovery, as a sign of the "spiritual awakening as a result of [working] these [twelve] steps" which indicates that the survivor is indeed recovering, and is working the steps in an appropriate way.

This step also encourages members to construe any spiritual experiences they may have had in the past as guiding them on a spiritual journey which includes twelve-step recovery and self-reflection today. For instance one woman said:

I don't know how I got into AA. I consider that the Spirit that guides me, brought me to AA. It still doesn't make sense how I ended up at AA because I didn't consider myself an alcoholic at the time...And being in recovery means a commitment to move forward on a daily basis with a goal being to be whatever my birthright was. And hanging out with people who are either in the step program or living a life that is from spiritual principles. They are assertive, and want to change themselves and then the world. That's where the spiritual component enters in. I am guided by certain duties. Duties to Mother [Goddess], or God, pick one. Doing that work. So I would say everyone I am close to, is in recovery, and doing that.
If we think of the various twelve-step movements as constituting collectively the twelve-step movement as based in evangelical Protestant Christianity, we can see that it encourages members to essentialize their sense of identity as "twelve-steppers" via this focus on interpretation of spiritual experiences as a product of working the steps. The process of giving leads as the modern version of "witnessing" also helps with this, as discussed in chapter 3. For instance one woman said:

I hope that I could [learn to] be more than [just] a survivor, because of step 2 [coming to believe in a Higher Power.] The hope I got from that [step] was witnessed in the room [in the meeting]. And I continue to witness it [change in myself] from my friends in

This essentialization of a sense of collective identity occurs in other quasi-religious movements as well. For instance Novaes (1994) states that the Crentes, or evangelical Protestant Christians in rural Brazil, emphasize their common identity due to a common conversion experience and a common choice to defect from the hegemonic faith of Roman Catholicism. They reify their identity as though it were an essentialized entity even though it is based on choice. They focus on shared experiential processes of conversion as the basis for common understandings of this identity. Novaes states, "In their condition as elect, they devote themselves to the conversion of followers, and emphasize the impossibility of a full understanding [for outsiders] because, as they say, "No one can actually understand what it is to be a Crente without being a Crente."" (1994:533). People who are stricken with chronic illness and who need to begin to adapt to the exigencies of their illness also may begin to feel that there is a "spiritual mission" aspect to their identity, and thus spiritualize an identity
built on a stigmatized category, such as in the case of Persons With AIDS (Sandstrom, 1990).

Similarly, in the self-help movement for incest survivors, respondents talked about how they reified this sense of collective identity with other "people in recovery" by talking about a sense of sharing spiritual experiences with such others. For instance in one interchange I had with a respondent, she said:

Interviewer: Does somebody have to be in twelve-step groups to be "in recovery"?
Respondent: No, that's not the only way to recover from difficulties.
Interviewer: What are some other ways?
Respondent: Religious or spiritual, therapeutic methods; [like] counseling, yoga, and other things to get in touch with your inner spirit. I believe that twelve-step recovery is the most direct and to the point, though.

Another respondent said:

Being in recovery means you are working on yourself with some sort of structure. Either through a group, or with some sort of help, with somebody else. It could be either therapy [with a therapist], a spiritual advisor, or with someone else who has also been in recovery. And recovery has given me a feeling that I am back in control of my life in a lot of ways. I have kind of developed a lot of spirituality. I am working on a partnership with, whatever you believe: "God," "Goddess," whatever, and spirituality. It helps me to know that I am not alone in my recovery and with my feelings.

Other respondents talked about recovery as a spiritual movement in terms of lifestyle politics, as a lifetime journey of healing the self. For instance one respondent said:

When I first started twelve-step programs, I always said you have to go to meetings [to be in recovery]. Way back in 1982, when I started, I was vigilant. I was going to five meetings a week. And now I know that my perceptions have broadened and recovery [means] being on a different path. It's not like all of a sudden I'm going to forget everything I've been doing in the last ten years and just say, "Well, I'm done now." Because there is always more to heal. Recovery is about healing. You heal one thing, and then something else comes up, or you have to come to a different layer and heal it in a different way, you have to heal the same thing in a different way, but on a different layer.
Other survivors talked about finding their spiritual self as being that part of themselves which intuitively knows which other people are "safe," and knows how to nurture and heal the rest of the self. This finding the "spirit-self" did not have to involve working the original twelve steps as developed in AA, but the adapted steps, which is a version of the steps developed for incest survivors. (See Appendix.) The adapted steps have less focus on breaking down the addictive self that has been abusive to others (based on the male, AA model as discussed in chapter 3), and more focus on the survivor learning to stop others from abusing her and learning to nurture her self. One woman said:

Interviewer: Can you talk about your involvement in [SMO#2] and how it relates to recovery?
Respondent: I guess [to do recovery] I listen to an inside part of me that I have learned how to hear, that just tells me whether I'm safe or not. It is not my inner child, it is more a separate part of me. It is the part that I know is always focused on healing, versus [a] focus on self-destruction. I'm finding that it is related to my spirituality. For a long time that was the only link to any kind of spirituality, that I had.

Interviewer: Is there any movement literature that has been particularly helpful to you in your recovery?
Respondent: Yeah, the adapted twelve steps, is the only thing that made sense. For a long time I could not believe all the traumatic abuse that has come down in all the twelve-step programs. That shows how little was written about how blaming and shaming the [original] steps are to childhood trauma [survivors]. It is simply not appropriate to do an AA fourth step as an incest survivor. [The AA fourth step asks:] "What was your responsibility [in the addiction], what was your part?" Well, I didn't die. That was my part in it.

The creation of a new, positive identity entails an active process of deviants or "ex-deviants" using successful strategies to transmit their own emergent sense of themselves as non-deviants to others (Herman, 1993). This can involve "role exit," in which the person becomes an "ex-deviant, or it can involve hiding one's identity or even eschewing social interaction. Some incest survivors "cast off" the deviant status.
by using role exit to become therapists. These "ex-" survivors, like other ex-deviants, use the experiential expertise they have developed to establish a career counseling those who share that stigmatized status (Brown, 1991). Some psychologists have also suggested that successful recovery necessitates relinquishing one's identity as an incest survivor (e.g., Sgroi, 1988a). Some respondents agreed, saying they no longer primarily associate with others in recovery. However, most of my respondents construed the movement, or the larger twelve-step movement, as a safety net, a family, or a community, with whom they have more in common than with the average non-survivor. For instance one man said:

I know [recovery] has helped me to develop my sense of self and central identity. I have a life now, you know? I mean, when I first started this stuff [incest recovery], I was f--king cleaning for a living. And now I've got a professional job, a career. And so it's building my sense of self, and self-esteem...Being in [SMO@2] helps keep me around, it's kept me coming back to recovery. All my friends are people in recovery, people who are running incest recovery. I was the one who started this meeting. My friends are all good friends because we're all working on the same stuff and we have a very, very strong, common bond, which is incest recovery. I mean, it's the core of everything. And that's [being an incest survivor is] why we are so compulsive about everything, and why we get addicted.

As I discuss in the next chapter, this "we-" feeling of group consciousness contributes to a collective identity of incest survivors, which they then use to construct strategies of resistance to hegemonic lifestyles and institutions.
END NOTES

17. From "Understanding Our Incest Experience" reading, page 1. Read aloud regularly at beginnings of two meetings of SMO#2. This reading states in full: "We are survivors of incest, in its many forms, including overt and covert incest. Each of us has experienced a violation of our trust by a person with power who was supposed to protect us. The person or persons whom we turned to for care, comfort and understanding violated our trust by sexualizing the relationship with us. We have been sexually assaulted and raped by people who were supposed to protect us. We have experienced overt incest by adults who violated our sexual boundaries. For example: We were exposed to adult nudity as children. We slept with parents and care providers for their comfort not ours. We were bathed by parents when we could bathe ourselves without help."
17. [continued] We were asked to help parents dress when they needed no help. We have also experienced covert incest by adults who violated our emotional boundaries. For example: They used us for emotional support or as a confidante rather than turning to another adult. They led us to believe that our job was to take care of their needs, to protect them and to be responsible for their happiness. They made us into their best friends and used us to substitute for a partner or spouse who was not meeting their needs. They gave us the message that no partner whom we selected for ourselves could be "good enough" to meet their approval. They led us to believe that they would be really hurt if we left home or moved too far away from home. They were too preoccupied with drugs, alcohol, work, outside interests, or another sibling to attend to our needs and feelings.

Regardless of the type of incest we have experienced, we have now come to understand that all incest experiences have a profound effect on our adult lives and we all have a right to heal from the wounds of these abuses.

24. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
29. Personal interview conducted May 18, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
32. Personal interview conducted May 12, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
34. Personal interview conducted May 12, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
41. Personal interview conducted May 12, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
42. Personal interview conducted May 17, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
44. Personal interview conducted May 2, 1995, by Andre’ Levi.
46. Personal interview conducted April 22, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
47. Personal interview conducted April 24, 1995, by Andre’ Levi.
52. Personal interview conducted May 8, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
54. Personal interview conducted May 18, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
55. Personal interview conducted April 22, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
57. Personal interview conducted April 25, 1995 by Andre’ Levi.
60. Personal interview conducted May 9, 1995, by Andre’ Levi.

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68. Personal interview conducted May 14, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
70. Personal interview conducted April 27, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
71. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
73. Personal interview conducted May 8, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
75. Personal interview conducted May 2, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
76. Personal interview conducted April 25, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
82. Personal interview conducted April 27, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
86. Personal interview conducted May 8, 1995 by Andre' Levi.
CHAPTER V
SURVIVORS' STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE TO DOMINATION

Introduction

This chapter deals with incest survivors' discursive and symbolic strategies of resistance to personal and hegemonic domination and means of social control. On the micro level, survivors reject societal norms prescribing adults' expected level of sustained contact throughout the lifecycle with people in their nuclear or extended family of origin. Survivors' limitation of perpetrators' access to them allows them to maintain their own sense of the reality of the abuse by their refusal to engage in dispute as to whether the abuse occurred. On the macro level, survivors oppose hegemonic institutional and ideological domination by constructing themselves as survivors rather than victims, devising their own networks of fictive kin, and creating their own personalized relationship with a non-patriarchal Deity or "Higher Power."

The sections in this chapter are the following. First, I discuss survivors' creation of a sense of collective identity as a symbolic strategy of resistance. Survivors construct themselves first as "incest survivors" in general and then as "recovering survivors" in particular by using identity-oriented strategies surrounding meanings they attach to their feelings, experiences, and PTSD symptoms. Secondly, I elaborate how survivors resist familial domination and construct their own support communities by means of various beliefs and action strategies. Third, I
describe how survivors reject traditional notions of God because of the concept's association with their perpetrator and use both traditional and non-traditional approaches to construct a relationship with a "Higher Power" who is both guiding and egalitarian. Finally I discuss how the self-help movement for incest survivors as part of the recovery movement, has encouraged women to engage in symbolic or artistic means of self-expression to create the newly-emergent self as "recovering survivor."

IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION STRATEGIES AS SYMBOLIC STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE

Social movement theorists note that collective action comprises symbolic elements which constitute strategies of resistance against hegemonic institutions and ideologies. For instance Gamson notes that, "Sustained collective action involves a symbolic struggle. In the broadest sense, it is a struggle over the legitimacy of a regime...At a more contextual level, collective action focuses on particular historical conditions and policies... People act on the basis of some meaning system, and the definition of issues, actors, and events is a matter of constant contention. A central part of the symbolic struggle, then, is about the process of constructing specific meanings" (Gamson, 1988:219). Strategies of resistance may be symbolic, encompassing various aspects of behavior, or specifically discursive. In the latter case strategies of resistance involve the use of specific language and linguistic practices as part of a constructed discourse which movement members use to challenge hegemonic frames. Such language used in movement discourse becomes constituted as part of the transgressive discursive practices used by movement members to identify each other and to resist dominant
constructions (Alcoff and Gray, 1993). Discourse itself is defined as, "a particular set of ideas and symbols that are used in the process of constructing meanings relevant to the struggle. To achieve and sustain mobilization, a challenger must participate in such discourse" (Gamson, 1988:221).

The construction of an alternative sense of collective identity as a member of a minority group with its own culture which rejects hegemonic discursive definitions of them, has been discussed as a strategy of resistance (Campbell, 1980; Breton, 1988; Seligmann, 1993; Taylor and Whittier, 1993,94). The process of naming the self as a member of a group with a disvalued identity constitutes a symbolic, discursive strategy of resistance by means of its use of language (Seligmann, 1993). Those constructing a new identity may also use symbolic means, such as dress, language, rituals, etc. emanating from their social movement culture, to reclaim a disvalued identity as a positive one (Taylor and Whittier, 1993,94).

In the self-help movement for incest survivors the pattern for transformation of one's identity from a person with various feelings, experiences, and symptoms to being an "incest survivor" is analogous to the identity transformation process in AA, in which initiates begin to construct themselves as "alcoholics" (Cain, 1991). Twelve-step movements as a type of social movement culture, use various discursive practices, such as the admission of one's powerlessness over one's addiction in the first step, and various rituals such as the confession in the fourth and fifth steps, to encourage the individual to adopt the new identity. "In acquiring a new identity, individuals must understand the identity, internalize it, and become emotionally attached to it. They do this by
becoming involved in group activities, mastering symbolic devices, and internalizing these devices and their meanings as part of their own conception of self" (Cain, 1991:218). The construction of an incest survivor identity ensues as various events cause the individual to question her old self-conceptualizations, in particular examining whether the particular constellation of symptoms she begins to exhibit in adult life aren't in fact symptoms of PTSD and thus indicators of past trauma, most probably of childhood sexual abuse. Identity reconstitution occurs as the old self is cast off by means of group rituals or the use of expressive symbols and the new, survivor self is publicly supported and confirmed in the community (Cain, 1991). This occurs in meetings when the individual begins to say his or her name and that he or she is a survivor before speaking in meetings.

In social interaction, individuals with disvalued or spoiled identities must strive to maintain a sense of personal worth in an environment which may be hostile or rejecting. Individuals will modify or interpret their social interactions to become commensurate with positive self-attributions. They do this by means of choosing whether to disclose the stigmatizing identity, choosing advantageous sites of interaction, and choosing to associate selectively with those who support their new, positive self-definitions. Such identity construction work also involves those engaging in identity reconstruction strategies limiting their interactions with others deemed as denigrating or as attaching negative attributions about the identity to self or others (Goffman, 1963; Snow and Anderson, 1987; Field, 1994).

This construction of a positive sense of collective identity is accomplished through various identity strategies which the survivor may
use at various stages of recovery. Survivors use the strategy of exclusivity when they have embraced their spoiled identity as positive and meaningful. Thus identity embracement is manifested behaviorally as exclusivity, in which one chooses to associate only with others with whom one shares the spoiled identity (Snow and Anderson, 1987; Sandstrom, 1990; Field, 1994). This is analogous to Taylor and Whittier's (1993, 94) notion of collective identity as involving ingroup-outgroup boundaries. With identity embracement, there is a commensurability between self-concept and social identity and between social and personal identity (Snow and Anderson, 1987; Field, 1994). Individuals use the strategy of pragmatic identification when they attempt to establish a personal identity which goes beyond the archetypal aspects of the social identity that they believe others with their social identity have presented to the world. A pragmatic identifier uses a social distancing technique to disassociate herself or himself from those others with the same identity who are viewed as evincing attributes and actions threatening to one's positive sense of identity (Field, 1994). Individuals use the strategy of autonomous identification, when they present themselves as having left the community of those sharing their devalued identity entirely (Field, 1994).

Identity As "Survivor"

Incest survivors as they go through various stages or cycles of recovery may first adopt an identity embracement approach and corresponding strategy of interactional exclusivity. Thus survivors first beginning to think of themselves as "incest survivors," prefer to stay in the company of other survivors, with whom they feel "safe." Many respondents said participation in movement meetings helped them develop a
sense of safety with other people for the first time in their lives. This sense of safety arises from survivors having a sense of common experiences, feelings, and PTSD symptoms with other survivors. This helps them reduce their sense of isolation and develop a sense of collective identity as an incest survivor, in general, and of a recovering survivor, in particular. For instance one woman talked about knowing she was a survivor from her feelings and then from hearing common experiences in meetings:

When I first got the feelings it was mainly anger and rage about my parents, but nothing specific. I felt that they had not done a good job on parenting, but I couldn't seem to focus on one particular thing. I had no clue. I would have never suspected [incest] at that point. It was intense rage and anger too big to be about anything that was in the present. There really wasn't a lot going on at the current time for me to be angry about. There were things about the past I remembered, remembering being neglected and not treated well. Then I started getting flashback picture memories after that. Little flashes of pictures with smells and sounds. Then I went to the [SMO#1] meetings and listened to other people sharing. I identified with everything and that's when I knew that I was [a survivor].

Another woman said:

Incest survivors definitely have some things in common. I can relate more to what's being said in [SMO#2] than in any other twelve-step program. And it seems like there's a lot of similarity in how people feel. Like fear of authority figures, which sounds like an ACOA issue, but now I think of it as an incest issue, because it's about someone having power over you, and abusing it. And how survivors react to things. For instance I really wanted to confront my boss yesterday, and I did, but my first reaction was to be real adolescent about it, like I was going to get real demanding and vocal about it. And I talked to [another survivor] about it, and they said a lot of times that's their reaction, too, if they feel they're being treated unfairly, to get into that adolescent.

Another, married woman said she initially experienced a sense of social distancing from the other women at the all-women's meeting, due to their overt countercultural attributes, but later embraced the survivor identity due to the sharing of feelings and experiences:
[After my first SMO#2 meeting], I went back to my therapist and he said, "How was it?" and I [initially] said, "It was horrible. There are a lot of strange-looking women there. They wear strange shoes and they have tattoos, and they wear nose rings." And my therapist laughed and urged me to go back, and I did. In the beginning I was very, very frightened and frustrated, because I just didn't feel like I was getting anywhere. But I could sit in that room and I could listen to those people talk, and it was like they had lived my life. It was an experience that I had not really had before, because in my childhood in my family, we were all very isolated. We never even talked among ourselves. I had always felt like I was just really weird, like there was something wrong with me, and that was really an attitude that my family had fostered. And yet I could sit in this room, and suddenly there were these people who experienced the same feelings as I did. And it was like, "Oh, maybe it's not me, maybe it's something else, maybe it's something that we all have in common, that's outside of ourselves instead of just inside of me." I think that is part of what kept me coming back.

Another woman kept trying different twelve-step self-help SMOs until she found SMO#1 to provide her with the best "fit" to her experiences, especially after hearing other women talk about their experiences in the meetings. She said:

The way I came in, I had heard about [another twelve-step SMO], and so I went to that. The only women in the room that I really related to, were alcoholics. And on the bulletin board there was a notice for a [SMO#1] meeting on that [day of week]. And I thought, "Oh, there's finally a group, I want to go to that." So I went, that was my first meeting. It was in the first year that [SMO#1] was here in [this city]. I already identified myself as an incest survivor before that, fairly shortly after I had that first memory back in the 1970s. I was in and out of denial, though: "How could this be?" But you know, I knew something was wrong. And then I found [SMO#1] immensely helpful. Because I had been struggling for years with feelings of being one in a million, or one in a billion, that this didn't happen to anyone else. I knew no other survivors. I had only shared [my feelings] with one friend and with my husband, but that was not successful with him. So it was real supportive to hear I wasn't the only one. And it helped the self-esteem a lot.

Other survivors in the self-help movement for incest survivors also talked about this shared sense of collective identity due to having common symptoms, experiences, and feelings. For instance one woman commented:
There are definitely some things that women who are survivors share, that might not be shared by other women. Like low self-esteem, like chronic depression, fear of intimacy, fear of men, or fear of women if the perpetrator was a woman; fear of authority figures; lack of good feelings about one's sexuality or sexual organs; wanting to hide oneself; poor, distorted body image; eating disorders.—there's just so many commonalities,—lack of belief in spiritual power, inability to keep a job because of depression or anxiety or memories. It's kind of overwhelming to think about.

Another woman came to think of herself as an incest survivor from a combination of reading self-help books on incest and from attending meetings:

I started having body memories after reading some self-help books. It was mainly an emotional response, that I don't feel I would have had, had nothing happened. And I went to my first [SMO#2] meeting, and everybody was going out afterwards at the time, and I remember sitting with them saying "I don't know why I'm here. I just want to find out why I am the way I am." And I was just in tears. And I think it was soon after that first meeting, that I would try it out, saying it, to see how it felt. And more and more, it felt comfortable. And what I have of memories is of my uncle, of me being sexually violated by him. His daughter had all of the characteristics you'd expect [in a survivor]. She had a reputation for sleeping around in college—and so did I. Being sexual, as a way to get accepted, was a major symptom for me. And also an inability to trust myself and other people. And with the man I married, we had virtually no sexual relationship. I think, subconsciously, I picked him because he would be safe, sexually. He wouldn't get close to me, and I couldn't get close to him. I think that whole dynamic is a huge symptom of that [being a survivor].

Another woman identified as a survivor because of her feelings, attitudes towards sexuality, and PTSD flashbacks. She said:

I told my therapist I was a survivor, first. And I started just saying I was an incest survivor at [SMO#2] meetings. I identified myself as that, there. And then I told my spouse, and then I started telling other people. My therapist said, "Well, maybe something did happen." And it was like a relief to me, because my emotions were all telling me that something did happen. I told her all the stuff that had been going on with all my feelings and the hospitalizations and me wanting to kill myself, and she said it sounds like something may have happened to cause it. She did not suggest I was an incest survivor, but I think inside I'd been having so much trouble being sexual, and I was triggered so often by sexual things, I didn't want to watch movies where people were sexual, I would just get nasty, sick feelings if people talked about sexual things or about sexual parts of my body, so it was just a relief for me to finally start talking about it and saying, "Okay, even though I don't have the
entire part of the memory yet, something happened to me." I didn't start telling people I was a survivor, though, until I started getting more of the conscious memory of exactly what had happened. 7

Another woman talked about the common symptoms of dissociation, outbursts of rage, and having an eating disorder:

My main problem [that led to involvement in the recovery movement] was dissociation. Like when I came home from work on my lunch break I would take off my suit because I didn't want to get cat hair all over it. And I forgot to put it back on and I went back to work, and all I had on was my blouse and slip. I was telling the story in Al-Anon and everybody thought it was funny but it disturbed me that it could end up getting that bad. I had already gone to [SMO#2] briefly in [another city] and thought I was done, that I had worked through the anger and whatever else. But I wasn't. And this one guy in Al-Anon did not laugh, but was very kind to me. He introduced himself as an incest survivor and said, "It sounds very much like you have other issues, besides Al-Anon [ones]." And he brought it back to me, that we still can have some of the effects in our lives, that I still had some of the effects. That's when I started back in, going to [SMO#2]. And it is helping me. But right now I'm going through a lot of stuff, and it is my eating [problem] that is really coming out right now. I have never had an eating disorder before but now I have to eat to keep the stuff out of my mind while I'm at work. But I keep going to [SMO#2] meetings every week.

Survivors in the movement thus seem to be very well aware of the symptoms they share with other survivors. The symptoms mentioned have also been documented by clinicians and psychotherapists in their work with survivors (e.g., Donaldson and Gardner, 1985; Bass and Davis, 1988; Sgroi, 1988a, b; Briere and Runtz, 1991; Herman, 1992).

Identity As "Recovering Survivor"

As the process of recovery proceeds, incest survivors use the strategy of pragmatic identification to create and maintain a sense of themselves as "recovering survivors" and to distance themselves from other incest survivors who are either not in the movement, or to a lesser extent from others who are in the movement but not showing signs of recovery success. Success is defined in terms of material success and a healthy personal life. Calvinist-Protestant notions of salvation as linked to
demonstrable material success, in this case including having a well-paying, long-term career, an egalitarian, long-term, committed monogamous relationship, and good mental and physical health, thus still pervade twelve-step programs. Those who were ostracized for lack of success in recovery tended to drop out of the movement's SMOs.

Recovering survivors distance themselves from incest survivors who are not in recovery or unsuccessful or not committed to recovery by construing them as "nonrecovering survivors," "unhealed survivors," or "incest victims." Survivors construe themselves as different from non-recovering incest survivors in terms of body language and general demeanor. On the abstract level, non-recovering incest survivors are people who have experienced incest but are not working on their issues, dealing with their feelings or symptoms, or trying to get help through therapy. My respondent-survivors said that they could determine who was in recovery by that person's use of twelve-step discursive practices such as the slogans or phrases from the twelve steps. They also said they could tell who was a "non-recovering" incest survivor by seeing people who were obviously in a lot of pain (due to being out of touch with their feelings or symptoms), or who were "acting out" their issues, such as by being controlling. For instance one woman said:

You can tell who's in recovery by their reactions to things sometimes, or an expression they might use, or just their "take" on different things. Like whenever I hear somebody say, "One day at a time," that's a big clue. And I can definitely tell when people aren't in recovery, because of how they react to things. Like my supervisor is manipulative and controlling. And so I guess being in recovery means moving toward a more healthy lifestyle, moving toward a more spiritual, emotionally healthy lifestyle.

Another woman said:

Recovery is like a special journey; it's a way of life...You can't necessarily tell if someone else is in recovery, [but] sometimes their language tips you off, when they use some of the lingo.
Like "turning it over," or they might even say [recite] a step. Or "taking a personal inventory," or "making amends." That one I've heard a lot. And you can tell somebody who has not been in recovery; you just see their pain and resonate with it. One of the men said:

I can usually tell [who's] an incest survivor, if I see one. It's just how their body acts, their body language, how they communicate, how they do their nonverbals. Like a lot of people have the covert stuff, and it's just like how they carry themselves, their interactions. And also since I'm a very intuitive person, I can sometimes just see their inner kid. And then a lot of times, especially with the facial expressions that people have, you can tell: they look vulnerable and hurt, and sometimes they look like a kid.

Incest survivors who experienced fewer aftereffects of the abuse and who no longer wish to view their life circumstances in terms of being a survivor, may also socially distance themselves from survivors who are still attending twelve-step programs by labelling the latter as "chronic twelve-steppers." These "autonomous identifiers" usually still consider themselves to be "in recovery," but prefer to disassociate themselves from twelve-step programs by viewing them as a temporary phase or stage they had to go through in order to progress to a more eclectic spiritual level of understanding. For instance one survivor commented:

I'm a body worker and I work with energy [fields], like polarity and Swedish massage. I'm not in a conscious state of feeling traumatized anymore. When I was, I didn't feel safe, because I felt as if the trauma were recurring all of the time. I mainly used to socialize with people from my meetings and it had to do with the safety issue. I really needed to be around people who spoke the same language, who were [working] on the same task. And as I have healed and recovered, I don't need that anymore. I can relate to a lot of different kinds of people and I don't feel like they have to be in recovery for us to connect or trust each other. But I still regard myself as being in recovery.

Some survivors may also quit attending meetings of the self-help movement for incest survivors but keep attending other twelve-step programs. The stigmatizing nature of the incest survivor identity seems to foster an attitude of social distancing from it more than for other
twelve-step programs. For instance a few "old-timers" at meetings for incest survivors, usually people who had been attending for three to five years semi-regularly, commented on the high rate of attrition among their original SMO-joining cohort. By contrast, at meetings such as Al-Anon and AA, it was not uncommon for a core cadre of old-timers to show up and comment that they had been attending semi-regularly with other friends for eight to twelve years.

To overcome this stigmatization of being a "victim," survivors also frequently talked about sharing a sense of collective identity not just as a "recovering survivor" but more generally as a "recovering person" or "person in recovery," to indicate their holistic view of the twelve-step programs and other aspects of the "self-growth" lifestyle politics in general. For instance one woman said:

I think if you rely completely on victimization [as an identity], from my own experience and from others I have observed, you remain afraid. Whereas, once you say, "I can survive this," or, I don't even say "I'm a survivor" as much as "I'm in recovery," once you've gotten on the road to recovery and then you can begin to heal a little, then it's not so painful. Once you've gotten past that initial complete excruciating emotional pain, then that's how I equate recovery with surviving.

Most survivors had not told everyone they knew or "gone public" with their survivor identity but had selectively revealed it to "safe" people. Survivors said that there is not any symbolic way of expressing one's survivor identity in the self-help movement for incest survivors, since the movement does not have its own slogans, symbols, or markers apart from other twelve-step programs. However many respondents had symbolically expressed their pride in their survivor identity at feminist events such as survivor speak-outs or Take Back the Night marches. For instance one woman said:
I've occasionally told [my survivor identity to] people like co-workers, if I was having a really rough day. And I've marched in the Take Back the Night parade with the green yarn [armband], which indicates the survivor, but I don’t expect people to recognize my face too much in a march like that.

STRATEGIES OF RESISTANCE AGAINST FAMILIAL DOMINATION

In this section I elaborate how survivors resist familial social control by means of various symbolic strategies. For instance survivors develop changed consciousness about the institution of the family in general and their own family in particular, refuse economic support and symbolic tokens of affection from family members who do not support their view of the abuse as a means of affirming their own construction of the reality of the abuse; develop their own traditions and celebrations among the recovery community; develop alternative support networks among the recovery community as "fictive kin;" take responsibility for ending the intergenerational chain of abuse with oneself by looking at their own behaviors and telling others about the abuse; and create new definitions of family and community.

Herman (1992) has commented on how the situation of the child in an incestuous family where the perpetrator exerts coercive control over the abused, is analogous to that of political prisoners in captivity. Under such circumstances any symbolic gestures of autonomy or self-expression can strengthen the abused's sense of self and weaken the captor's power. She discusses the various strategies of resistance used by political prisoners to resist the coercive control of their captors: "Political prisoners who are aware of the methods of coercive control devote particular attention to maintaining their sense of autonomy. One form of resistance is refusing to comply with petty demands or to accept rewards.

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The hunger strike is the ultimate expression of this resistance... The
psychologist Joel Dimsdale describes a woman prisoner in the Nazi
concentration camps who fasted on Yom Kippur in order to prove that her
captors had not defeated her. Political prisoner Natan Sharansky
describes the psychological effort of active resistance: "As soon as I
announced my hunger strike I got rid of the feeling of despair and
helplessness, and the humiliation of being forced to tolerate the KGB's
tyranny...The bitterness and angry determination that had been building
up during the past nine months now gave way to a kind of strange relief;
at long last I was actively defending myself and my world from
them."
(Herman, 1992:79).

*Changed Consciousness About The Nuclear Family And Family Of Origin*

In order to break out of this situation of coercive control, however,
survivors must first recognize the family dynamics as being an example of
such control. Thus one of the elements in achieving liberation and a
sense of collective identity as a survivor is a sense of "cognitive
liberation" (McAdam, 1982) or raised consciousness about one's status as
being part of a collective group which has been oppressed (Taylor and
Whittier, 1993,94). Severely traumatized survivors are often under
subtle pressure to "keep the family secrets" at all costs. Perpetrators
may increase the pressure on survivors to "keep returning to the fold" so
that their behavior will not be exposed, particularly if the survivor has
only recently recovered repressed memories of the abuse. Thus one of the
first steps in symbolic resistance against such coercive control is to
achieve a disenchantment with the family dynamics that allowed the abuse
to occur. Many respondents said that the longer they were in recovery,
the more they began to perceive that they did not have a perfect, ideal
American family, as they had always thought. Survivors discussed how this disillusionment is emotionally difficult but necessary for self-growth. The end of idealization of one’s own family is also often a concomitant of the end of idealization of the "traditional American nuclear family" as a paragon of safety and security compared to the supposedly harsher public sphere. For example one respondent said:

My relationship with my family of origin has changed since I’ve been in [SMO#2] recovery. I’m not blocking out how they treat me now, like I used to. Like, I used to do this big thing of, "Oh, well, they didn’t mean that." I used to almost pretend like what they said or did, didn’t really happen. And I’m planning now to remember things, and it’s becoming more important to see them for who they are, rather than for who I wish they were.

Another one of the women respondents said:

I stopped talking to my family of origin about a year ago. And it’s been the hardest year of my life. I actually can’t believe that I’ve kept going forward, because it has been so painful. But I just could not handle the idea of starting to talk about the idea of my father molesting me, while simultaneously having any sort of relationship with them. I would just feel like such a fake, it would just be unbearable. My father was really, really emotionally abusive to my sister and I. Just tyrannical, military, "everything you do is wrong," really into humiliating us...And I keep saying that [the abuse did occur] to myself when I go into denial about the incest, which is something I do often, and I go back and forth on it. And the way that my relationship with my parents has gone, it was just so necessary that I needed to break away from them. I don’t know if it’s going to be permanent, I love them dearly. But I spent so many years pretending, you know, that my dad belittling us didn’t hurt, didn’t matter. So it’s been really good for me not to talk to them anymore, for the time being. It’s been really positive.

Another woman said:

The definition [of a family] involves support. Like I was most disappointed about my brother’s response [when he heard that the incest occurred]. He refused to think about it. I was disappointed because I felt like we had known the family patterns, and [that he] knew the way we were all together, that he could at least relate and support me. And he didn’t. He turned his back. And he was my best friend in the family.

Another woman said:

When I confronted my father, his lack of response had more of an effect on me than his response. He just said for him to do anything
like that, he would have had to have been drunk or crazy. He didn't have the kind of response you would expect a parent to have, which would be, concern. And my father's response, combined with my mother's response at a lunch we had together, convinced me...She just got remarried and that was the first time I had seen her or spoken to her in two and a half years, and her response was clearly, "Let's start today and go on from here." There was no interest in finding out about the past, wanting to help me heal the past, or anything like that. And so I just realized, first from her meeting, and then with my dad, that I can't expect my family to change. That I need to accept that I'm never going to have the kind of family I want.

Another woman, who had always had some memories of her brothers molesting her but only recently recovered memories of her parents doing so, said:

For me a great deal of this has been about just being willing to accept what is, and sometimes that is horribly, horribly painful. I mean, who wants to believe that they were abused by their parents? Who wants to believe that their childhoods were unsafe? Nobody wants to believe that. I mean, give me a break. I would rather have the ideal family. I'd rather have a fantasy. That would be my preference, but it ain't so. And as long as I continue to deny that, I'm always going to have this conflict inside of me. When we can accept what is, then we will be able to set it aside and move on.

Another woman said:

[Recovery] really totally turned around my view. I had to totally turn upside-down my view of my own family, which I had always thought of as being real typical, and all-American, because that's what I got fed on when I was a kid, how great your family was. And I used to say, my family was like Ozzie and Harriet. We were like Father Knows Best and Leave It to Beaver. And now I know those television families were pretty dysfunctional, too. But I just always thought we had this model family. So, right along with seeing how my family was not that great, I began to understand that that model is not that great either. You know, like...the parents lied to their kids by telling their kids one thing and then when the parents were talking privately, they would say a different thing to each other. And they would go tell the kids something to manipulate them into doing what they wanted. My family was just like that. And people never said what they really felt, and we talked about each other behind our backs, and you never talk to the person you have the direct issue with, you talk to a third person, and then it always gets back to you what that person said. And my father would still do that, if we'd let him. But my sister and I don't.

Another woman who was in partial, tentative contact with her parents after not talking to them for about two years, said:
I thought I lived and grew up in an all-American family. I think that in the past five years, I've seen that there are far fewer families that I'm aware of, that live in a healthy way--and that the picture of the perfect American family can have a lot of shit behind the picture. This letting go of one's earlier idealization of one's family thus sometimes led to acceptance of one's family as dysfunctional people whom the survivor still could love and wanted to be in touch with, or else led to survivors relinquishing ties to them and finding love and support instead through twelve-step networks or the recovery community.

Refusing Support And Symbolic Tokens Of Affection As A Means Of Affirming One's Own Construction Of The Reality Of The Abuse

Subsequent to or contemporaneously with this end of idealization survivors began to engage in symbolic strategies of resistance to claim their autonomy from their families. For instance survivors refuse to comply with unspoken family rules, refuse to accept cards, letters, or phone calls which break the survivor's request to have "no contact;" refuse to accept money or be otherwise financially dependent; and/or to refuse to participate in facades of normalcy such as "coming home for the holidays." For instance one woman said:

I had a confrontation with my father, and he said he "had no recollection" of any of it. That was the last time I had a relationship with my dad, and that was almost five years ago. I wrote a letter to him around six months later, asking for help with therapy [monetarily]. And he refused me, and he wrote back, saying that he wanted a relationship with me, and that he wanted to "start fresh." And that he felt like he had apologized for everything he had ever done to me. And that's when I really cut away from him, was when I received that letter. So I wrote him a letter, in which I said that I didn't want him to contact me anymore. And he hasn't contacted me, but my stepmother tried to get me to be back in contact with both of them, and they sent me cards, for my birthday and for Christmas that year, also. That was about three years ago. And I didn't accept them. Each time I would refuse the cards, I would never accept them.

Other survivors also seemed to regard refusing to accept economic or emotional support in the form of cards, checks, and gifts from their
families on principle as a symbolic badge of "resisting the oppressor."

These respondents, who as single women had a difficult time in our society "making it" on their own, said they were aware that they were losing a significant source of economic security by refusing to exchange their own silence for gifts of money and household goods from their parents. They still refused to accept gifts or money because to do so would be symbolic of accepting that perpetrator's reality, according to these survivors' constructions of their reality. They recognized that siblings accepting parents' support entailed accepting the parents' reality that the abuse did not occur or should be ignored. For instance one woman survivor who had not seen her family in several years said:

I told my one brother about the abuse. He was the one sibling that I was having the most contact with. I think I wanted him to be on my side and pull away from Dad. His response was that, it wasn't that he didn't believe me, but he wasn't willing to give up his relationship with his father at this time. It was a profitable relationship at this time both emotionally and otherwise. Their family was getting help from my father and his wife. My dad has money now, and they didn't want to jeopardize the relationship. He [my brother] said they were on good terms, getting gifts from my dad at holidays and things. He said he didn't want to blow it.

Developing One's Own Traditions/Celebrations Among The Recovery Community

Refusing to comply with expectations through abstinence or withdrawal from contact is not the only means of resistance used by survivors. Many survivors proceed to create their own families, celebrate holidays with these networks of friends, exchange cards, letters, and phone calls and/or other tokens of affection within these networks, and learn to become economically self-sufficient after breaking ties to abusers. For instance one woman said:

I regard my husband, my son, and two of my friends [in recovery] as my family. And we have a tradition of going to a Christmas tree farm and cutting our Christmas tree every year.
Another woman who is a single mother, said:

Right now, [SMO#2] is my social life, my family, my support system, my spiritual life. It's a lot of that, all of that. I don't feel it's safe sharing with too many other people. People in [SMO#2] are my social life because, if I need to talk, I can call. If I want to go out and play, I call somebody, try and find somebody who will play. We do those things together. I've just started getting together with them at holidays this year. And this one guy I used to work with, still calls me on my birthday and holidays. I had one time at work where I really lost it and he came and sort of took care of me and got me grounded, and he was an old twelve-step guy.

Another woman said:

After the [SMO#2] meeting, the best part is going to [restaurant] afterwards. We keep that place in business. It's so nice. It really does replace your family of origin. It's like this is a family of choice. There's always holiday [SMO#2] dinners, somebody will have one...Sometimes I've had an open house, but usually a lot of the single [SMO#2] people that have broken off ties will have dinner together, as a tradition. And at least I'm comfortable with them, [compared to family of origin]. I don't have to lie.

Developing Alternative Support Networks

People frequently develop alternative notions of the family as a result of developing an alternative sense of their twelve-step group as family or community. This alternative definition of "family," usually talked about as one's "community, network, circle," or "support net," includes people who are defined as nurturing, supportive, safe, emotionally expressive, and capable of admitting mistakes. Thus people in recovery frequently construct others in recovery as fictive kin or "non-related family." This strategy of help and provision of assistance among community members who are minorities has also been discussed by researchers, for example among urban disenfranchised Blacks other women may provide mothering to some children and be called "other mothers" (Stack, 1974; Collins, 1990). This is a survival strategy among people who have fewer resources than the normative white middle class dual-career couple with children, and demonstrates the resilience of
nondominant groups in "taking care of their own" by constructing fictive kin. For instance one respondent, who had not worked in seven years and was living on disability checks and savings, said:

I don't really like the word "family" but some twelve-step people, mostly people in [SM0#2] though, are the people I'm closest with. My definition's shifted and changed and everybody [in the "family"] shifts and changes, but every time I have to let go of somebody there's at least one to replace them, if not two or three. And I get together with at least one person that I'm close to, once a week right now and I talk to at least somebody in my circle, at least once a day. The one I talk to the most, we usually talk about what we are feeling and what's going on with the incest and memories, talking mostly on the issues.  

Another respondent, a "married lesbian" who had been living with her partner for years, said:

Being in [SM0#2] has shown me that I'm not alone, first of all. And secondly, that there is a big network of people, men and women, who are there no matter what. They might not necessarily be able to empathize completely, because everybody's situation is different, but [they're people] who can offer a lot of sympathy. It's a humongous support network, where I know no matter what, no matter what comes up, if I can't get a hold of my therapist, I can call anyone of my [phone] numbers and gain the help I need. It's been empowering.  

Respondents discussed the fact that although the notion of the "dysfunctional family" has become a cliché of the 1980s and 1990s, and although most to all families may have some elements of dysfunction, this is not a condemnation of people living in families, and moreover the extent to which a family is dysfunctional varies along a continuum, with most families obviously not being perfect but only being moderately dysfunctional. Respondents all were clear about the fact, however, that they needed to take a break from contact at some point in recovery from people in their family of origin, since their own families of origin were characterized by a high degree of dysfunctionality and traumatic interaction, such as mental illness, generalized aggression, substance abuse, wife-battering, incest, childhood sexual abuse by non-relatives,
parents' physical and emotional abuse of respondents' siblings, and also sometimes (less often) ritual abuse. For instance one man said:

I didn't know what the term was, [for my family.] I knew there was a problem, though. I could see it like when I was two years old. I can remember knowing that "this wasn't right." So I knew there was a problem, I just didn't know what it was called. And my mother would say, "This is the way everybody is." So, you've got that on the one hand, and [yet] something inside says, "This isn't right." And I view them as totally dysfunctional now. They have no idea how to communicate with one another, to communicate with their children, to raise their children, to give their children the support and nurturing that they needed as children. Especially my mother. She was too busy trying to be the center of attention or being a child herself. But I think I've got more control over it [the relationship with his parents] now; I don't see her very often anymore. And I pick and choose people to be around, with a little bit more care now.

Another respondent indicated that she didn't really regard her family as dysfunctional until she remembered the incest, even though she had always remembered the physical violence:

I did not [initially] regard the dream [of her father being a perpetrator] [recalled under hypnosis] as a memory, but as one of those "oh, shit" moments. Like, "Oh, shit, what have I gotten myself into?," and what it told me was that there was something so shattering for me that I became hysterical, even under hypnosis, rather than look at it. I loved my father, even though he could be very violent at times. And I was horrified to think that my mother would have done anything sexual because she was a real prude when it came to sex. It was beyond my comprehension that this stuff could be true. But when the body memories started to happen, I did regard those as memories. Then shortly after my sister told me that my father sodomized her when she was 12, my son told me about [having been sexually abused by respondent's mother.] And at that point I wrote a letter to my parents and told them that until they got into recovery for being abusive, that I would not be able to have contact with them. And I called [local children's services] about my mother and the incident with my son, and the case was substantiated...And these days I spend my time with people who believe in honesty, who live their life with integrity, and who are safe. That to me is a big part of my recovery.

Taking Responsibility For Ending The Cycle Of Abuse, With Oneself

One of the main ideas that respondents had gotten from recovery, was the idea that "the buck stops here." Respondents frequently expressed the notion that by being in recovery, the long chain of abuse and
dysfunctionality was stopping with them. Respondents had made a personal commitment to work on these issues of substance abuse, mental illness, violence, and incestuous perpetration in themselves so that they would not treat others the same way their families had treated them. For instance one respondent said:

There's varying degrees of dysfunction [in U.S. families]. All families have some dysfunction, in the sense that all families do things that hurt the children and the family. You know, we can't avoid that. Some are more damaging than others, [though]. But I think there is a lot of it. Being in recovery from incest, it's a part of a social movement because it's like I used to have a poster that said "History stops here." And I felt like the history in my family, in which there's been a lot of incest and alcoholism and stuff, you know I said, "It's stopping here, right here with me." I am becoming aware of all this, and I'm not going to pass the buck. So I see that people have just been passing the dysfunction from generation to generation. And the twelve-step stuff including [SM0#1] is helping [me] not to do that.

Another, male respondent said:

I always knew that my family was extremely dysfunctional. Because my mother's crazy, my father's crazy, and I come from a long line of alcoholics. We have documentation in my family of origin that there are people that have been certified as insane. And I'd say that about 95% of American families are dysfunctional. Five percent might not be, but I don't know any of them. I don't know what a functional family would look like, because I've never been exposed to one. But a dysfunctional family like mine has alcoholism and incest and mental illness. Or also food addictions, power struggles, you name it...And I don't want to have any communication with my parents, because they're in major denial [of this dysfunctionality.] Like both my parents like to practice being battered spouses. Like my mother wasn't taking her prescribed medicine for being bipolar, and my father tried to force the medication down her throat and hit her. And she had a nervous breakdown and I had to go to the hospital and do the intake for her. And then my younger sister called me and we discussed all the problems that we had [from the abuse]. So my siblings' denial is slowly being erased. So maybe they're willing to start doing something about this, and to talk about it. For me, it was just like, "Well, you know, this is what I was telling you for the last nine years."

Another woman, who said she is beginning to think of her mother as a perpetrator, said:

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My mother is very sarcastic, and manipulative. I just see a real pattern with her, very sweet until she kind of pulls you in and goes for the jugular. I hope I will never treat anyone like that.

Many respondents expressed the idea, which seems to be a hallmark of the self-help movement for incest survivors, that one will repeat the same addictive or dysfunctional behaviors of one's parents unless one gets into recovery. My respondents as incest survivors seemed particularly aware of the hazards of becoming perpetrators. Respondents cited evidence from siblings or other family members familiar with the family history, that their perpetrators had been victimized as children themselves. Respondents thus believe that their parents or other perpetrators abused them, due to not having the recovery movement as a resource to change their own dysfunctional behaviors, and due to not talking to others about the abuse the perpetrators themselves experienced as children. Respondents also frequently expressed the idea that their parents and/or grandparents were mentally ill, but that this could also be managed through recovery and did not exonerate perpetrators for their behavior. Respondents were therefore resolved to practice abstinence from their addictions so that the intergenerational chain of abuse would stop with them. One respondent whose father is one of her perpetrators and who is in AA herself, summed up this idea by saying:

I'm pretty certain that my dad was perpetrated by certain members of his extended family, and that he grew up in a volatile, very cold and unloving atmosphere. And that kind of neglect has been connected to people who later become pathological. And with my dad, I have come to the conclusion that he is mentally ill. And that he also has compulsive-obsessive disorder, which would be considered an addictive personality. And he's an alcoholic, and he's also addicted to food and sex. But I think perpetration is both a choice and a compulsion. Like what I went through, could be compared [to my dad's experience] as just as bad, or worse, and yet I didn't choose to be that kind of person. Just like an alcoholic is compelled to drink and has a disease, a perpetrator is compelled to perpetrate, because they're sick. But then there's choice, the choice to recover. I am an alcoholic, and I choose not to drink today, I chose to get help.

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I chose to get healthy. So I think that my dad made some sort of choice at some point, not to change, and not to look at or deal with his behavior.

Another woman who has broken off contact with her entire family of origin said:

My mother's mother was schizophrenic and acted out a great deal. She was certifiably crazy. I have had memories of her throwing knives at me before I was three and a half. If she was doing that to me, then I can imagine what she was doing to her own children. I can't even fathom why my mother did to me what she did to me sexually, except that some of what she did had to do with bodily functions. And I would bet money the same things happened to her and she was just repeating what had happened to her. But I think that it's an important point that everyone chooses to do it. Otherwise, there is no responsibility that can be assigned to them. And I cannot accept that. I think perpetrators remember what they're doing and that they are choosing to do it.

Talking about the abuse to "safe people" and examining one's own dysfunctional behaviors to take responsibility for being in recovery from them were regarded as instrumental to ending the cycle of abuse with oneself. For example another woman whose mother was deceased and who had broken off contact with her father and was not in contact with her sister said:

My father was the main perpetrator. He had a very decent upbringing, but I know he was a victim of emotional abuse and emotional neglect, and probably a lot of physical abuse. And I would be very surprised if there wasn't sexual abuse, too, just knowing his family and just bits and pieces of information that I've gotten. My father never talked about his own childhood. And the incest was his way of dealing with it. He was also, like, a split personality or something. My therapist said, maybe he had more than one abuser personality. I think I could identify three abuser personalities. And I think it is a compulsion, but by saying that I don't mean to excuse it. It's like an alcoholic, a sexual addiction. But the person still has to be held responsible for it...And the main thing I like about some of the literature from [SM0#2] is the idea of abstinence from victimization. I never thought of it as being an abstinence, but it fits really well with the whole twelve-step idea of addiction and abstinence from addiction. I mean, recovery is dealing with your own stuff, whatever came out of your family of origin, like if there was alcoholism, or in your own addictions and compulsive behavior. And the individual is ultimately responsible.
Respondents also said that stopping the intergenerational cycle of abuse involved talking to others about the abuse and/or confronting the perpetrator(s) about it. One respondent discussed how she had resumed contact with her family of origin after having broken off most contact with them for a few years. Notably, in this case the respondent's parents had listened to her, honored her truth, and had become willing to work on building an adult relationship with the respondent. However, other respondents had said that their own families of origin had not been willing to listen or work on changing abusive interaction patterns, when the respondents had confronted one or more perpetrator(s). This particular respondent commented on how her situation was different from that of other survivors:

I just broke the silence around my parents around the abuse. I did it trying to be grounded in the ninth step as part of a mending process with my relationship with them. I felt that in order to have a real relationship with them, that we had to get the s--t out on the table...A big part of my mending process with my parents, is because they are willing to try to get better, and do the truth process with me. So I sat down with them and my therapist six weeks ago. And it does have to do with [SM0#2]. My relationship with my parents has changed. I [had] felt as though it was obligatory, to cut off your family of origin in [SM0#2]. It actually motivated me to see if I could try to find a way to honor the truth of my life, but do it differently. Bearing in mind that there were certain things that were unacceptable. Like if they would have said that there is no way this happened, that you are sick and crazy. At that point I would have cut them off entirely. I had pulled away and had a very marginal relationship with them for several years, though. But I am basically leaving room for them to come forward [and admit to the abuse] as we start to talk about what happened. And I am getting very powerful results.

Creating New Definitions Of The Family

Survivors' new "families" or support network usually means a circle, community, or network of people who are construed as fictive kin, or as "like family, only better." Respondents also expressed recognition that their own family of origin did not fit this new definition of "family" or
community as something healthy and stable. Other research has also discussed how stigmatized people, such as gays and lesbians, do not want to do away with the family but want to create their own "families of affinity" or "families of choice" characterized by ties of love and by living with those with whom one chooses to live, rather than with those with whom social convention dictates one live, due to biological ties (Weston, 1991; Thorne, 1992). Moreover, a symbolic interactionist analysis dictates that we understand the family and marriage in each society, including the U.S., as institutions shaped by specific sociohistorical forces, including gender, race, and social class, and thus as contextually-specific and amenable to change (Collier, Rosaldo, and Yanagisako, 1992). Thus we cannot construe members of the self-help movement for incest survivors as asocial, pathological, or deviant just because their social bonds do not conform to the model of the white, middle class nuclear family, just as we cannot judge African-Americans' emphasis on community and kinship as deviant because it does not conform to the hegemonic model (Collins, 1990; Wilson, 1994).

Feminist social scientists and anthropologists have discussed how "kinship" may be a more appropriate term for examination of residential and affectional patterns, particularly among people whose cultural meaning systems are not commensurate with those of the white middle-class model of the family in the U.S. They have noted that the term "kinship" is less culturally-specific and has fewer connotations of "normalcy" than "family" (Weston, 1991; Collier, Rosaldo, and Yanagisako, 1992; Thorne, 1992). Researchers have also discussed how people outside the realm of normative white middle class "family" life will create their own networks of "fictive kin" which are like family to them (Weston, 1991). Survivors
in my study thus discussed their view of "family" in terms of creating familial-type bonds of affection, safety, and emotional support, whom we may view as their fictive kin. Respondents' social movement discursive practices surrounding the idea of "family," then, are shaped by both their disillusionment with the idea of the nuclear family as a mythical haven of support and their discovery of this support in alternative networks of fictive kin and the "recovery community." For instance one woman said:

My view on American families is, I see a trend towards more healthy bonding, towards people choosing "family" that is supportive and nurturing. I see people forming family groups that better fulfill the need for family, and people moving away from allegiance to [their] family of origin simply because of blood line...My definition of a family is more of a circle of people who are freely choosing to nurture and support one another. My circle includes children. As a mother I'm real aware of the need for stability [for my children], that my children have a need for relationships with other adults. And so there are people in my family who are not blood uncles and aunts, but who are that to my kids.

Another woman, a single heterosexual woman, said:

I think a family ought to be supportive and nurturing, and have your own best interests in mind. But you should be able to communicate freely with your family, too. Mine is none of those things. In actuality, the men run things in our family. They're kind of catered-to. And my mother definitely doesn't have my best interests in mind. People in [SM0#2] are more likely to.

Another respondent, a lesbian who lives with her partner, said:

Well, two people can make a family, so it doesn't even have to be hoards of people. There don't even have to be any kids involved, or biological ties. The only thing, I guess, is people who live together, who have some kind of commitment to each other and who love each other. Like me and my partner.

One bisexual woman who was living with her fiance' said:

My family includes my fiance', and my younger sister. And I guess the rest is just kind of a smattering of people that I see in twelve-step meetings that are supportive to me, like validating my feelings and memories. If I would name them, they're just kind of acquaintances or people whom I might talk to on the phone but I don't really do a lot of things with. But I always consider people whom I help, or who help me in my recovery, as part of my extended family. And that means...
having a history with people, and just being open and honest and supportive of other people's journeys. And giving and receiving that. And having some sense that there's a net of people out there, that care about me, and that are supportive, and that reflect back to me the way that I have grown or changed. It's kind of like what I wanted in a real family but didn't get, such as open or honest communication, and talking about things that aren't necessarily fun or easy to talk about.

One of the male respondents, who is single and heterosexual, said:

I suppose, when I was growing up, my definition of a family was a mother and a father and the children in the same house, and everybody watches out for each other. But the definition, I think, has changed in society. And since I've been going to twelve-step [programs], I think my definition is probably going to change some more. So I don't really have one [a definition] now. It may end up where I still believe it's the mother and the father and the children, but a "family" would function in a better way than mine did...Somebody said, about a year ago, "You've got an addictive personality," to me. And I said, "No way." And it finally dawned on me, about being addicted to the perpetrator, and there it was. I was always being controlled by that. Finally I said, "I've got to stop that." So my mom has less control over me, which feels good for me. And I've started to eliminate those people from my life, people that mimicked what my mother is.

One heterosexual, married woman said almost the same thing as the previous respondent, adding that the family does not necessarily mean those with whom one shares biological ties but love, support, and safety:

Ten years ago I would have said the family is the place that you were born into. Now I think that's changing. I think my idea of family is changing, and I'm not really sure what a family is anymore. But I do know what it isn't. I know that what I grew up in, and what I was growing up with, was not a family. To me, "family" is providing safety and helping someone grow, and I did not have either one of those in my family. So to me, being in a family and creating a family is providing safety and helping someone grow. Loving them and helping my child. Helping him to discover and learn who he is, and to be happy. So I guess that my idea of a family isn't just the people you were born into, but people that I hold close to my heart, and people that are probably more "family" to me now than any family that I ever had when I was growing up. So it includes me and my husband and my child and a couple of friends.

Another woman, a bisexual lesbian who was divorced and living with her children, said:
My definition of a family is people who get together and live together, cohabitate [sic] together. Whether they be adopted or with children or married or living together, it doesn’t really matter. It’s [a] rather loose [definition]. It includes me and my two children.

CREATION OF ALTERNATIVE MODES OF SPIRITUALITY AS A STRATEGY OF RESISTANCE

Survivors may also create nontraditional modes of spirituality and constructions of the Deity within the context of twelve-step spirituality. They construct this as a mode of resistance since, as discussed previously, many respondents said they identified their perpetrator with traditional notions of "God" and even said that they thought that their perpetrator fostered this association that "the parent was God" to them. Survivors’ creation of new conceptualizations of Deity allowed them to break this association and to be free of the control of the perpetrating parent-as-God over their adult lives.

Survivors’ construction of the self-help movement for incest survivors as a spiritual social movement thus allows them to develop their own personalized relationship with the Deity, which can be less dysfunctional than that between the respondent and her/his perpetrator. Other research has also documented that many incest survivors have a dysfunctional relationship with their Higher Power if they still retain childhood conceptualizations of the Deity as uncaring, punishing, or judgmental which they may have learned in their family of origin or adopted at the time of the abuse (Sargent, 1988). Such research also notes that, "For some adults abused as children, a relationship with God as a personified being is as frightening and potentially abusive as the relationship with their abusers had been in childhood and as any intimate human relationship might be in their present lives" (Sargent, 1988:172). In
addition, such research also notes that ministers or other religious authority figures may unfortunately not have any familiarity with incest survivors' issues. Such figures may subtly reinforce the erroneous message that the survivor was at fault or in control of the abuse situation by suggesting that the survivor engage in penance or prayer as a "solution" to the problem of the incest. Thus both Western and Eastern religious figures may disempower survivors by emphasizing the inherent unworthiness of the "pray-er". This may be particularly damaging to a woman incest survivor, who "as a child relinquished control to a trusted adult and who as a result of that experience likely has spent a number of years building defenses that ensured her control in the future" (Sargent, 1988:177). Thus incest survivors frequently need a relationship with a Higher Power in which they feel they have control.

The traditional twelve-step teachings in which one is supposed to relinquish control to one's Higher Power by use of the first three steps, are thus sometimes seen as disempowering to some survivors. This was more likely for survivors who did not come in to the SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors through AA or NA but by means of less "hard-core" twelve-step groups like ACOA, or CODA. Sargent notes that, "For most child victims, the sexual abuse influenced the "relational embeddedness, spirituality and affiliation" with which they constructed their identity" (1988:171). Thus it becomes important for most women survivors to construct a relationship with the Deity that is cooperative and emotionally close, just as women in general are usually focused on building and sustaining interpersonal relationships which are cooperative and emotionally close.
However, this recent research does not discuss spirituality as a strategy of resistance or adopting a newer version of Deity as a "Higher Power" which is more egalitarian and thus lets the survivor feel like she is in control of the spiritual relationship with the Deity. This symbolic act of resistance of exchanging old notions of god which just don't work anymore for many recovering survivors, it must be noted, may be a finding singular to my study, which has a disproportionate number of "nontraditional" people in terms of sexual identity and in terms of their attitudes on a continuum of feminist identity. These other nontraditional aspects of identity may make my respondents more likely to hold other nontraditional views than a random sample might have. Thus as an ethnographic study of respondents who chose to be interviewed in the self-help movement for incest survivors, many of whom are gay, lesbian, bisexual, "nonheterosexual," and/or radical feminists, I make no claims as to the generalizability of this study to the self-help movement for incest survivors internationally in terms of views of the Deity.

Survivors thus frequently develop alternative, non-Judaeo-Christian conceptions of the Deity, which are more comfortable and less threatening to their spiritual self. For instance in twelve-step programs it is a common discursive practice to use the term "Higher Power" instead of "God." Incest survivors in particular may no longer wish to call their Higher Power "God," because of the term's negative associations for them with their perpetrator. Survivors thus use the twelve-step term "Higher Power" which conveys a less personified form of the Deity. Research on incest survivors' spirituality still tends to use a monotheistic Judaeo-Christian model of Deity when discussing the issue (e.g., Sargent, 1988). I use the term "Deity" or "Higher Power" since it reflects the narrative

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language used by survivors and is more in accord with their own
conceptualizations of Deity as a force, energy, or something in nature
rather than an anthropomorphized figure, although some survivors use the
term "God" to refer to this conceptualization of Deity as an immanent
force. For example one woman said:

I was raised Lutheran, but I can’t really believe in a male, father
figure as a god anymore. I mean I might say "God" [still], but I
really struggled with that when I first came into recovery. And I
guess I’ve given myself the permission to believe in whatever I want.
I think my beliefs now are more Eastern than Western. That’s more
comfortable to me. It’s been helpful to know that my Higher Power can
be whatever I need it to be. I guess the visual stuff hasn’t been as
important to me as it is to some people, to visualize a person [as
God] or something. I guess it seems like more of an energy, or a
force to tap into.

Another woman said something similar:

I don’t really practice an organized religion. I believe in a Higher
Power but I think it’s more a force of nature than anything.

Survivors giving themselves "permission" to exchange old,
dysfunctional notions of Deity as a male authority figure who was their
"heavenly father" for newer conceptualizations of Deity as "life-force,"
"energy," "spirit," or "Goddess" constitutes a symbolic strategy of
resistance against oppressive traditions, a twelve-step strategy which is
similar to, but not aligned with, feminist symbolic resistance. Thus in
this case survivors’ choosing to free themselves from notions of Deity
which they find oppressive is a symbolic means of resistance against the
hegemonic power of institutionalized religion to define who/what "God" is
and how "he" thinks women should live their lives. Some respondents
viewed their alternative spirituality as similar to the feminist critique
of hegemonic institutions since both constitute resistance to
androcentric, hierarchical forms of organization and thought. For
instance one woman who had some "New Age" beliefs said:

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There are a lot of things about New Age spirituality that appeal to me, and a lot of things that just seem kind of weird, that I just don't relate to. The current New Age movement gets kind of away from the strictly rational, logical, scientific way of thinking. So it's kind of anti-patriarchal in that sense. And that part appeals to me. And I am not anti-science, but I am very much in reaction against a lot of the exclusivity that science claims, and against a lot of the other patriarchal aspects of science. Well, I don't know if it's science itself, or what patriarchy has made of science. You know, this whole idea that you always have to be logical, rational, and scientific, that emotions have no place. And that if you can't explain something scientifically, then it's not real. And that you have to have massive statistics to prove something. So I'd say feminism is sort of related to the New Age movement in my mind since they both challenge this scientific, logical, rational view of the universe. And I like the feminist approach to recovery and spirituality, I go to the recovery meetings where there are all women and a lot of feminists.

However, the majority of respondents said they construed their quest for individualistic spirituality as in keeping with twelve step programs' emphasis on individualism, not as a feminist response to patriarchal religion. According to my interviews twelve-step programs also are not encouraging people to become free-thinking atheists who reject all religious impulses. Some respondents even had difficulty with being in SMO#1 or SMO#2 because they viewed these SMOs as trying to encourage spirituality or a reliance on the Deity as a moral authority and guide, when these respondents were used to being atheists or agnostics. Thus some survivors were atheist or agnostic in adolescence and/or early adulthood, having rejected their parents' faith at a young age, and then developed some notion of theism or of a Higher Power after getting into twelve-step programs. For instance one man said:

I grew up in a religious family, it was Catholic. It was traditional to have the Higher Power of "God" and everything. So I got that [Catholic] education and that indoctrination. When I was 16 or 17, I got sick and I was bedridden for a while, and I had to do a lot of soul-searching. And I had my doubts about whether there was anything. I don't know if there is a God or a Higher Power now. I stopped being Catholic when I was about 17. If somebody asked me, I've kind of got a mixture of science and faith.
One of the women respondents, who was originally agnostic before joining twelve-step programs, said:

When I first came into recovery, I didn't have any Higher Power. I was agnostic. Then I came to believe in a generic Higher Power. Over time as I worked the steps and developed contact with the Power on a daily basis, it has changed. I used to think that it was testing me and making me jump through hoops and stuff like that. I didn't feel like that was a very loving, caring image. It was cruel to me. I had images of my father and mother as God because most of the time religion referred to God as a parent, as a Father, but that was a negative image for me. I had to realize that I had those beliefs in the back of my mind. I had to become conscious of them. I did prayer and meditation then, seeking. And saying, like, "God, please reveal Yourself to me. I believe You are loving and caring." Eventually I came to believe in something that wasn't a button-pusher or a puppeteer. I got the help and energy that I needed. It has been a spiritual journey. I'm sure there is more to go.

Various respondents also discussed reading self-help books on spirituality in their search for a Higher Power that was unlike their perpetrator. These self-help books frequently encourage the employment of holistic alternative consciousness techniques, such as meditation, creative visualization, or "self-hypnosis," to allow readers to get in touch with their own idea of a "safe space" and a "Higher Power." A few respondents mentioned writers such as Shakti Gawain, who wrote Creative Visualization and Living in the Light. For instance one woman said:

The latest book that I read that I really liked was Shakti Gawain's Living in the Light. I think I liked Living in the Light best because she has such a positive outlook on life.

Another woman said:

I feel like I'm being hypocritical when I say this, because I do that [New Age] stuff, but I don't know what people consider New Age, I don't know if I would describe myself that way. I don't like the label. I think the label has become a trend. And I have been a part of that trend, but I like to think it's deeper than a trend. I've never put a label on it. The cynic in me says it's synthesized music and crystals and psychics. And for the non-cynic, I think there's a new movement, New Age, and I like to think that I'm open to different stuff. Like I attended a workshop two weeks ago on quantum consciousness. And right now I'm reading Living in the Light.
I read those [self-help] books because I hear friends in recovery talking about them and then I go get them. And I think creative visualization and meditation can help in recovery.

Other research has noted that techniques such as meditation, creative visualization, and guided imagery can help survivors achieve a sense of peace and relaxation which is often a rare commodity for them due to having PTSD (Sargent, 1988). My respondents did not generally construe such books on meditation, creative visualization, etc., as being "New Age" books but as "self-help" books on spirituality. Simonds (1992) also notes that different women will bring different interpretations to the same self-help books depending on their experiences and needs.

Some respondents also commented that they engage in various types of meditation apart from reading such self-help books, to establish or sustain contact with their Higher Power. The employment of these practices, even among people who self-identify as members of mainstream Judaeo-Christian churches, points to the increasing incidence of people in the U.S. constructing their own individualized religio-spiritual meaning systems and relationship with the Deity, often practiced in private at home (Berger, 1967; Luckmann, 1967). Some sociologists, following the structural-functionalist tradition, have viewed this increasing individualism in U.S. society as indicative of the loss of a common biblical, republican tradition which cemented our society together (Bellah et al., 1985). This view is rooted in the premise that common "American" (Judaeo-Christian) values of community, solidarity, helpfulness, and cooperation are strengthened when people worship together in traditional, hierarchically-organized church settings. However, according to my own symbolic interactionist perspective, cooperative and communitarian social bonds and values are emergent in
daily interaction and are not necessarily synonymous with or dependent
upon Judaeo-Christian contexts to be effected.

Respondents said they practiced these techniques at home or in therapy
sessions in order to practice the step of achieving conscious contact
with their Higher Power through prayer and meditation, to achieve a sense
of peace and personal meaning in their life, or to connect with their
"inner child." For instance one respondent said:

I meditate almost every day. I learned TM [transcendental
meditation] in 1989, and I'm taking a meditation class right now [to
help connect with her Higher Power.] 

Most respondents did not construe this use of meditation, creative
visualization, and other "alternative consciousness" techniques as "New
Age" spirituality, however, nor did they consider themselves "New Age"
spirituality practitioners. For instance one woman said:

I haven't ever done New Age type stuff. I'm not the type. New Age is
crystals and chakras and meditation. I am a cradle-Catholic. But I
have always struggled with it and have never felt at-home with it.
The only concept I have of a Higher Power is one of condemnation and
fear. I have not been practicing my faith for a year and a half now.
And I guess I'm seeking more of a spiritual connection [with my
Higher Power], as opposed to achieving that through religiosity. And
I try sometimes to do self-hypnosis or creative visualization at
home. It's helped me sometimes when I really need to feel some
safety or comfort or connection with other people. I will try to
remember what they look like, or how it felt when we had an
emotional connection. I try to visualize my inner kids feeling safe
and warm. I try to think of spaces that are safe and try to
visualize that, a safe space, which had trees, flowers, animals, and
a little brook. That felt safe. I think it has helped me to hang on
and helped to keep me from hurting myself. 

Survivors also discussed developing a personalized relationship with
their Higher Power as an alternative source of "spiritual authority,"
rather than relying on members of the clergy or sacred texts such as the
Bible within institutionalized religion as sources of authority.
Survivors' adoption of a very personalized conception of their
relationship with their "Higher Power" often involves examining whatever
events are occurring in their lives currently, to see "why their Higher Power put that in their path." This could be construed as fatalism, or as a kind of resignation to Protestant-Calvinistic notions of deterministic predestination, as opposed to free will. However, respondents chose in accord with movement ideology to construct this as "opportunities for growth" or "seeing what spiritual lessons can be learned from this." For instance one woman said:

I already considered myself an incest survivor, because of feelings I had about my dad, but I hadn't discussed it [in therapy]. Then one day I was going to individual therapy, and so I said a quick prayer, out in my car. I always take like fifteen different things into treatment with me, so I have all these different things I want to talk about. And that day I decided not to take anything, and just to "turn it over" to [do a third step with] my Higher Power. So I said a prayer, like, "Let whatever needs to come up today, come up." And I walked in, and she said, "I see you didn't bring anything with you." And I said, "No, I didn't." And she said, "Well, I'd like to bring something up that we haven't talked about in a while." And she said the word "incest," and it just completely blew me away. And I just figured that that was where I was meant to be. I'd turned it over, and that's what happened.

Another woman who had been going to therapy for years said something similar:

I've just recently understood how I did some of that [recovering memories in therapy.] When I go into therapy, I say a prayer of, "May I hear what I need to hear, and may I say what I need to say." And I just started adding on, "And may I see anything I need to see, [to recover]." I just turn it over. And it's like I'm like a pinball in a pinball machine, and I pull the spring back, and let it go, and I may bounce around a little bit or a lot before the ball finds its niche for that day. Whatever happens, it's talked about as it happens.

Similarly, another respondent, one of the founding members of SMO/2, said she kept the first meeting going because she felt like her Higher Power wanted her to do so, by inducing random individuals to keep showing up for it:

We started meeting at [place] here, but [the two other founders] quit coming shortly thereafter. So I had decided to close the meeting; I was not going to be the only "old-timer," because I was coming apart at the seams. I said, (and I talked to my Higher Power about this),
"Nobody's showing up, or one or two only, I'll wait until this last one or two quits, and when they quit, I'm going to quit." But I just had the sense that my Higher Power was telling me "what you do for the least of my brothers, this you also do for Me." So I thought, "Okay, God, You want me to be more co-dependent than I already am, okay." I decided that as long as even one person would show up, I would keep the meeting open. And from that week on, one person showed up every single week, one person only, for the next several months. [laughs] I thought that my Higher Power had a real sick sense of humor. Here I had wanted to quit, but I couldn't.

This acceptance of the twelve-step recovery movement's emphasis on "accepting God's will" by "turning over one's will and one's life to a Higher Power" can have positive consequences when respondents use it to view adversity as a learning experience. However, many respondents also said that they sometimes felt like victims of their own reactions to adverse events, and hence victims of their emotions. Interestingly, survivors did not construct this idea of accepting adversity as feeling "victimized by God," if they had constructed a new relationship with the Deity that was not analogous to their relationship to the perpetrator. The predominant post-traumatic stress response model in psychology may unfortunately abet this problem in survivors, of feeling victimized by their emotions. This predominant trauma model seems to assume that trauma survivors can best achieve recovery by integrating affect with the memories. Thus according to this model, by re-experiencing the emotions repressed at the time of the trauma in a safe setting as adults, trauma survivors can overcome affective flooding and intrusive thoughts. Survivors at meetings tended to express this as "being tired of feeling their feelings" or "not wanting to feel their feelings anymore but that's the price for recovery." Some newer, alternative therapeutic modalities such as EEG biofeedback or brainwave neuro-feedback therapy (BWT), or eye movement desensitization and reprocessing (EMDR) may thus empower survivors more than the traditional "talking cure." These newer...
modalities directly address the cerebral processes that produce PTSD symptoms such as flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, etc., rather than alleviating these symptoms in survivors through their re-experiencing of traumatic emotions (Peniston and Kulkosky, 1991; Shapiro, 1989a,b; 1991; Brown, 1994; Othmer 1994).

CREATING SYMBOLIC WAYS OF EXPRESSING THE EMERGENT NEW SELF

The twelve-step program SMOs emphasize the use of rituals as a symbolic means to mobilize and sustain group commitment and solidarity. "Alcoholics Anonymous abounds in rituals. Before each meeting, members communally observe a moment of silence and then recite a serenity prayer. At the opening of each meeting, the organization's preamble is read by the chairperson, and the organization's 12 suggested steps of recovery and the 12 traditions are read by those assembled. At the close of each meeting, members join hands and communally recite another prayer, followed by the affirmation, "Keep coming back: it works." The fellowship celebrates its members' A.A. birthdays, and a distinctive language or jargon not in common use outside symbolically binds the members together" (Donovan, 1984:415). This use of rituals helps in the process of identity transformation from addict to recovering person.

Various respondents also mentioned that they felt that the spirituality they gleaned from twelve-step SMOs in general, in conjunction with a sense of rebirth of self in the two SMOs I studied, prompted them to want to engage in symbolic ceremonies or artistic means to express this sense of newly-emergent self. Some women respondents said they engaged in symbolic ceremonies, alone or with friends who shared their spiritual views, to express this rebirth of self. Some
women changed their names, some "came out" as lesbians, some adopted alternative nontraditional modes of spirituality and wanted to recognize their new place in a community of believers. This process of ceremonial rebirthing seemed particularly more likely among women who self-identified as feminists and/or as believers in Native American or feminist spirituality. For instance one woman said:

I didn’t do this personally, but there are two women I know in recovery that changed their names. With one, I would label her as a radical feminist, and the other, I would say, is a liberal feminist. For the two of them what they did was a new beginning, a starting-over kind of thing.

Another woman who considers herself a feminist Dianic Wiccan, which is a type of feminist spiritual belief system, said:

The closest I’ve come to that [rebirthing ceremonies] is up at circle [a spiritual meeting-place], when we do casting-off and taking on [of various qualities]. It almost always has related to my recovery. Like with casting off [old behaviors], it changed over time, it was different things. But I was really struggling with things that I needed to get rid of, like fear, or rigidity, or control issues, or patriarchy, and taking on things like [a] particular courage and risk-taking. I wanted to be more open to taking risks, and so for the first time I jumped over the fire, so that was a big step for me. It’s a very old ceremony for good luck.

Several respondents said that the discursive practices used in the two SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors had encouraged them to engage in creative self-expression through art as a means of expressing the newly-emergent self. The emphases on "giving voice" to one’s experiences, finding one’s self, emotional expressivity, and exploring various aspects of the self helped give them permission to engage in various artistic work as a means of expressing the self as an incest survivor in particular or as a creative, unique individual in general. For instance one woman said:

I’m a performing poet and I’ve read poetry at a lot of meetings, that’s about incest. And I’ve done poetry readings quite a bit at women’s events. A lot of times people just don’t say anything
[in response], but I've had a few people come up afterwards and say they were really glad I read that, because of what had happened to them. And that they knew what being a survivor was like. I think it made me feel better that I had done it.

Other women commented about doing artistic work in general as a means of freeing the spirit and living their dreams. For instance one woman said:

What being in [SMO#2] has changed, is that the whole world has opened up for me. I now believe that anything that I want to do is possible. But it is not going to happen overnight. My dad is a visual artist. I am a writer. I have always wanted to do some visual media, though. I fell in love with quilting and have given myself a lot of time to learn how to do that.

Thus the self-help movement for incest survivors seems to be fostering trends towards greater self-expression and activism in some survivors in their relation to the self. Discourse among movement members also seems to be fostering attitudes promoting cooperation in survivors’ relation to the community of other survivors, while simultaneously encouraging the sort of "cool instrumentalism" favored in modern self-help books (as discussed by Hochshild, 1993) in survivors’ relation to their families. I discuss in the next chapter whether the movement will continue to survive itself or whether it will undergo cooptation by the forces of capitalism and the medical/mental health establishment.
END NOTES

17. Personal interview conducted April 29, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
34. Personal interview conducted April 22, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
41. Personal interview conducted April 22, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
42. Personal interview conducted May 4, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
43. Personal interview conducted April 28, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
44. Personal interview conducted April 29, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
47. Personal interview conducted April 25, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
56. Personal interview conducted May 1, 1995, by Andre' Levi.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS OF THE MOVEMENT FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

Introduction

This chapter discusses my findings in terms of what we can learn from survivors' narratives as social constructions of their reality, constituted as truth. Findings have important implications for societal discourse on incest and how it is experienced and defined. The chapter also examines the influence of the culture of the self-help movement for incest survivors on social institutions such as the family, capitalism, the legal system, and the medical/mental health system. The future direction of the self-help movement is then explored, in the context of its commensurability with American values as well as the quest for new therapeutic modalities to achieve "self-growth." Finally, implications for social change are then discussed with respect to culture-structure links. Symbolic modes of resistance within new social movements have an impact on structure by encouraging activism and overt challenges to institutional systems as well as by changing consciousness and modes of identity expression within the context of lifestyle politics.

The sections in this chapter are the following. First, I discuss how a feminist postmodernist approach to this research necessitates that we examine what we can learn from the narratives of people who have survived incest, both in terms of hearing what my respondents had to say about it and in terms of listening to the "voices" of those who were precluded
from being in my study due to limitations of the research or structural features of the movement itself. Secondly I provide a synopsis of the theoretical and substantive contributions of this study to existing sociological research on social movements and incest/childhood sexual assault. I then discuss the influence of the self-help movement on other social institutions. I conclude with a discussion of the relation of my findings to activism, identity, and social movement culture.

FEMINIST POSTMODERNISM AND LEARNING FROM SURVIVORS' NARRATIVES

My conclusions to this study and its theoretical and substantive contributions to existing sociological research on social movements and incest in general, and collective identity in the self-help recovery movement in particular, are structured by my domain assumptions. These assumptions are grounded in feminist postmodernism, new social movements theory, and processual symbolic interactionism. My belief that a personal trouble becomes a social issue by means of its social construction as a social problem by such societal agents as the mass media, social movements and countermovements, and the discursive practices used in social institutions by the powerful, derives from sociological literature (Mills, 1959; Tierney, 1982; Nock and Kingston, 1990; Alcoff and Gray, 1993). Yet from a postmodernist and social constructionist perspective, discursive practices may become an instrument of hegemonic power and social control in the hands of those whose powerful social-structural locations in the system translate into greater "truth value." Thus it seemed to me important in this conclusion to interpret my findings based on both the traditional sociological model of the "scientist-as-knower,"
and those based on the feminist postmodernist model with the "subject-as-
knower," where she is the narrator of her own truth. In such a way, I  
symbolically acknowledge that I value both the epistemological claims to  
truth of the community of professional social scientists and of the  
community of recovering survivors whom I studied.

Following this feminist postmodernist paradigm of mutual education and  
information-sharing among "subjects" and researcher, I first discuss the  
implications for future research on incest suggested by incest survivors  
in particular, whose experiential, situated knowledge qualifies them as  
"knowledge contributors" to this study. The words of my respondent  
survivors here have been corroborated by many women writers discussing  
inecest, who are often survivors themselves (e.g., Wilson, 1994). By  
giving voice to the narratives of survivors we can glean two main themes  
from the words of respondents and writers speaking from their  
experiences. These are the themes of recognizing societal silencing  
processes but refusing to be silenced, and listening to and believing  
ourselves and other survivors who tell their stories.

First, from a feminist postmodernist perspective, which respects the  
integrity of respondents' right to their own "truth," we must recognize  
that the issue of incest needs to continue to be talked about, written  
about, and brought into the public consciousness, so that the patriarchal  
silencing of women and children about (predominantly male) sexual  
violence will not prevail (Butler, 1978; Wilson, 1994). As a sociologist  
I believe that these "recovering survivor" narratives as told by  
respondents and women writers, are no less "social constructions" than  
the hegemonic discourse about them which casts them as seductresses,  
liars, victims, crazy people, promiscuous, or the deceived clients of
unsurprilous therapists. As a feminist postmodernist I believe that it is
important to "give voice" to these narratives in such a way that honors
their truth as so constructed by themselves and their community of
"recovering survivors" and to let the readers judge for themselves
whether they agree with this truth while they gain an understanding of
how survivors' reality is constructed as truth. Critics might contend
that I give these narratives too much credit for being "true at face
value" without presenting a more austere critique of them. The validity
claims of this group rest on their collective identity as recovering
survivors who share common feelings, experiences, and complex PTSD and
other sexual-assault symptoms not shared by other women or men who did
not experience incest. As a sociologist I recognize that the
construction of these experiences as common symptoms of incest are a
social construction of the members of this specific social movement
culture no less than the beliefs of those in the countermovement who
allege that survivors' memories are false. As a survivor and feminist
researcher who has heard these women's stories I believe that their
construction of reality constitutes their truth of having experienced
incest and I believe them.

I also believe that women researchers can be educated by Black
feminist writers that hegemonic discursive practices on incest seek to
perpetuate myths of girls' and women's insatiable, "animal" sexuality,
particularly of Black women, and that these hegemonic myths are damaging
to the mythologized (Collins, 1990; hooks, 1993; Wilson, 1994). We might
then also use the criterion of whether discourse involves harm or
oppression of certain groups, in examining whether to accept the validity
claims of one group over another.
My focus on survivors leaving their families of origin behind in their quest for honest, nonabusive relationships might also be critiqued as a white, middle class phenomenon, all the more so since I was unable to obtain Black survivor respondents and because works by Black women survivors discuss retaining links to their families, despite abuse (e.g., Wilson, 1994). In this context Black women survivors' connections to their families may perhaps be seen as their link to their roots, heritage, and the Black community and churches in general, in which they find renewal in a hostile and racist society. However my focus on how incest survivors in twelve-step communities construct others in their community as fictive kin, follows from and owes much to the works of Black feminist writers who have described Black community-based strategies of constructing fictive kin. Black women’s connections with various forms of spirituality rooted in African-American heritage and social connections with other women in their community who are constituted as kin, whether mothers, grandmothers, or "other mothers," etc., have provided them with the strength to bear their burden in silence, to release themselves from that burden by sharing, and to begin to structure new selves which reject the dominant myths in favor of self- and community-based narratives which are more empowering (Collins, 1990).

Recognizing Societal Silencing Processes But Refusing To Be Silenced

Respondents said that they felt that the silencing of women and children and societal tendencies to disbelieve survivors, was supported by both societal denial and backlash countermovements. Some respondents said the silencing process was due to societal attitudes and its hierarchical organization that puts men’s needs before women’s and adults’ needs before children’s. Research supports this view, showing
that adult survivors and children who have been sexually abused,
according to reported rates of childhood sexual abuse and incest, are
predominantly female and abused by males (Finkelhor, 1984; Russell,
1986). Respondents talked about the need to recognize and if possible
work against this silencing and against this backlash. For instance one
woman said:

I think that our society is generally unsupportive of people who were
abused as children. I think they generally want us to shut up and be
quiet. I have relatives who literally have said that to me. "Why
don't you just put it up on the shelf where the cobwebs are, and
forget about it." Or: "Why, you mean you're still doing that
[recovery]?" Or: "But your parents are such nice people." And if our
society in general is even trying to talk about children who are
being abused now, I get a general sense a lot of times from people
that it's not okay to talk about it. Like if it comes up generally in
a conversation with people who are not in recovery, in my experience
the conversation is not pursued. It is not discussed; it just sits
there in the middle of the room.

Another woman said:

If I had just one little thing to say, on my own, not as a person
that is a member of [SMO#2], I'd say, twenty years ago, if I had said
I was being sexually abused by my father, I would have been told,
"It's a fantasy of yours; you're just making it up. Nothing really
happened." Now I'm being told, it's my therapist's fantasy, and she's
making it up for me. To me, that's the same thing, only a little
twist on the old denial.

Some respondents based on self-help reading, believe that societal
silencing of survivors stems from societal denial and societal-wide
addiction. For instance one woman who had read a lot of the books by Anne
Wilson Schaef, commented:

Society doesn't want to believe us. They don't want to believe that
these kinds of things happen to children, especially when upright
"pillars of the community" get accused of it. My father for example
was a pillar of the community, real active in the church and highly
respected at church and at work. They don't want to hear about this,
though. A lot of people are probably unconsciously motivated by
having their own stuff, that they haven't dealt with. And so it is a
form of personal denial. But society can be in denial, too. Like Anne
Wilson Schaef wrote that book When Society Becomes An Addict, and our
society overall reflects the behavior of individual addicts, and
denial is a part of it.
Some respondents also said that attempts to silence incest survivors are analogous to the backlash against the anti-sexual assault movement. For instance one woman said:

An awful lot of the talk about false memories is just backlash. It's a backlash against the whole [incest] survivor movement, just like there is a parallel backlash against rape survivors. Just as we are starting to make progress, like not allowing questions about a woman's sexual history in a rape trial, we're getting the backlash now that's going back to it [questioning women's truth]. I've heard of some cases dismissed recently because a woman didn't fight back physically so you know, it's like going backwards, as far as I'm concerned.

Some respondents also believed that the backlash against incest survivors was part of a broader backlash against the women's movement. This belief seemed to be more common among self-identified feminist respondents. For example one woman who had worked on rape crisis hotlines said:

With feminism, one big thing to me is recognizing how women have been oppressed and discriminated against by a patriarchal society. Sexual abuse is certainly a big part of it, because I think more girls are sexually abused than boys. And more men are perpetrators than women, by far. I seriously doubt the recovery movement would have gotten started really without feminists, because I think it was feminists who were first saying these things. Like saying that sexual abuse of children really happens. And it happened to me, but society doesn't believe me. It's the same as when they say, "Well, you weren't really raped. You asked for it. You wore the wrong clothes." Or, "You really were a participant, and then you decided to get back at this guy for some reason so you said he raped you." You know, that stuff about rape is really very parallel to the stuff about incest, like they say kids are seductive or they imagined it, all that stuff.

Some other respondents, however, who also considered themselves feminists, but who had not worked specifically on "violence against women" issues such as battering, rape, incest, or pornography, said they regarded the backlash as originating in the media and the capitalist profit motive. They also said they did not regard the women's movement as related to the incest recovery movement, contra Armstrong (1994). For example one woman commented:
I don't think the recovery movement is related to the women's movement. A lot of men spoke up, just around the time that the women did, too. As far as the feminist movement, they were supportive [of the recovery movement]. But it would be just like saying that the civil rights movement or the gay movement influenced it or that it was part of that and it's not. They're very separate issues. I don't think recovery has anything to do with radical feminism or separatism or anything like that. The media played a big role in sensationalizing it. Like when the talk shows start to bring it into your living room, it's no longer true. You might as well read it in *The National Enquirer*. And whereas some of the talk show hosts that did the topic were very supportive [of survivors], like Oprah and Phil Donohue were very supportive, then you get people like Ricki Lake and some of these crackpots like Howard Stern. They're just out to make a buck. And I think that's maybe where people got the idea that a bunch of feminists were lashing out against their dad, because I've heard that a lot of times. I don't think it's true, not at all.

*Listening To And Believing Ourselves And Other Survivors Who Tell Their Stories*

Silencing can also ensue via survivors telling their stories to others and not being believed by those others. Thus respondents I interviewed in the two SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors, pointed to the need to listen to and believe adults and children who disclose they are survivors. Some survivors mentioned that disclosure of the incest to family members might result in the non-perpetrating family members (if any) accusing the perpetrator's spouse or the survivor's therapist of "making up stories." Survivors noted that they are commonly accused of telling falsehoods or of having been duped and that the act of disclosure necessitates keeping in contact with others in the movement, to help affirm one's reality of the abuse, in the face of such accusations. For instance one woman who confronted her father in front of her whole family in a therapy session said:

> My dad's mom, [and] my mom were there. And my grandmother, my dad's mom, was in shock, I think. And afterwards she blamed my mom. She didn't believe that it happened; she said that my mom "fed us that story." So I had a different opinion about her [the grandmother] after that. I guess it changed from feeling like she loved and supported me, to feeling like she didn't believe me and furthermore
that she was so angry that she took it out on my mom and wanted nothing to do with my mom after that. I went and talked to people in [SMO/2] after that.

As part of the process of listening to and affirming their own reality and that of other survivors as to the truth of the incest, survivors share a number of common beliefs in this movement. One common belief is that it is very rare for people who have not experienced abuse to fabricate such stories in a vacuum. For instance one woman said:

I don't think that people make up atrocities like that. Unless there is some sort of payback, which there really isn't. I mean, if I could choose not to be a survivor, I would, because it has so many consequences in my life. I don't see why anybody would want to.

Two other beliefs held among survivors in this movement are that it is unlikely (albeit possible) that therapists would try to convince clients that they are survivors of incest when they are not, and that a type of intuitive, gut-level "knowing" about the truth of the incestuous abuse is characteristic of survivors but not others. This "knowing" surfaces in response to sensory triggers which will eventually remind the survivor of the abuse when she or he is in a strong enough position to stand the memories, according to respondents. For instance one woman commented:

Under extreme situations, [it's possible]. I mean if the therapist sets out to do that, and is purposely attempting to--there are some really evil therapists out there, for sure. They might do it because some of them perpetrate sexually and some perpetrate emotionally. I guess if somebody really wanted to try to make somebody believe that, they might attempt to do that. I don't know if the client would actually believe it if it weren't true, though. I think it's very, very rare that a therapist would set out to get somebody to believe that they're a survivor--and if you aren't, you aren't, and you know it. It doesn't mean that you know it at the moment that somebody first asks you, but you are going to know it in some span of time. And I still don't think that that's "false memory syndrome;" I just think that maybe there was other stuff. Maybe there was physical abuse, maybe there was verbal abuse, maybe their mom was getting beat up all the time. It doesn't happen in a vacuum.
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

On a substantive level, findings from my respondents have contributed to knowledge about incest by being willing to broach the topic of women as perpetrators, by elaborating various self-help strategies for constructing a sense of survivorship, by discussing and hence providing evidence for the prevalence of complex post-traumatic stress disorder among many incest survivors, and by delineating how the various other twelve-step SMOs, especially AA and Al-Anon, provide pre-existing organizational bases for recruitment, conversion, and commitment into the SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Substantively, my findings have also led to the documentation of discursive practices, symbolic strategies, and emergent norms among people in two twelve-step SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors. Findings also show how the emphasis on "talking out one's feelings" and having a conversion to twelve-step programs as a "spiritual recovery journey" or path, allows survivors to engage in identity-construction strategies which constitute them as different from other survivors not in recovery who are thus constructed as "unhealed victims." Founders of the two SMOs also revealed that not all aspects of the incest survivor movement were started by feminists specifically to challenge male dominance within the family, contra Armstrong (1994). Rather, the two SMOs I studied within the self-help movement for incest survivors were started by women (and later men) in other twelve-step SMOs who wanted to apply the twelve-step, "disease" model of addiction to their own more nebulous self-destructive behavior in order to be in less emotional pain. Later many of the emotional and psychological correlates or precipitants of these self-destructive behaviors, such as intrusive thoughts, nightmares, sleep disorders,
psychic numbing and affective flooding would be understood as PTSD symptoms and come under the rubric of examples of the medicalization of deviance.

Substantively, this study also contributes to existing knowledge about incest experiences among members of a particular social movement community. Respondents in this community reported more severe aftereffects of abuse in adult life due to the factors of early age of onset and number of incidents of abuse (most respondents reported being two or three when the incest started and that it continued through some point in their adolescence or when they left home at 18-20), close biological relationship of the perpetrator(s) to the survivor (most women were perpetrated by their biological fathers, and sometimes also by their mothers), number of perpetrators (most respondents had several), and intrusiveness of the abuse (most women respondents reported having been raped).

This research also contributes to social movement theory by allowing us to see how social movement discursive practices operate to constitute mothers', as well as fathers', inappropriate emotional (as well as sexual) behaviors as incest. Besides providing a case study of two SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors, this study also has examined the social movement culture of these SMOs as discourse on incest. I have explored how movement members use movement frames such as "inner child work" or "twelve-step conversion to belief in a Higher Power" to construct their own experiences as survivors on a spiritual path of recovery. The final section of this chapter also discusses broader implications in terms of identity and activism.
INFLUENCE OF THE SELF-HELP MOVEMENT FOR INCEST SURVIVORS ON SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE DIRECTIONS OF THE MOVEMENT

On a theoretical level I have examined how the movement has influenced the meanings people in the U.S. attach to "family," and its potential impact on the legal system, such as with respect to the laws governing whether survivors may sue perpetrators. I now summarize and discuss the implications of these findings for various social institutions in the U.S., including the relations between this movement and the future of therapeutic modalities and U.S. self-help movements in general as they struggle to disengage from cooption by the self-help book and workshop industries and by the medical/mental health system.

The self-help movement for incest survivors differs from other twelve-step programs in that, due to its focus on healing from the aftereffects of sexual assault perpetrated by someone else, members seem likely to be more alienated from their families of origin and to create their own support networks apart from their families of origin, than people in other twelve-step movements or "programs." Due to the nature of the problem survivors are also more likely to accuse people in their family of origin of wrongdoing and to prosecute them for harm, making the twelve-step SMOs in the self-help movement for incest survivors inherently more threatening to societal denial about the extent of incest in the "normal" U.S. family and to "the family" as an institution where adults can perpetrate any kind of abuse on their children as chattel and still remain free of the fear of prosecution.

Various survivors talked about how engaging in disclosure of the incest and/or confrontation of the perpetrator(s) could become divisive
of the family in general. Survivors may reject or be rejected by their parents, siblings, or other relatives due to disclosure. For instance one woman who was no longer in contact with her older sister after disclosing the incest and confronting her father said:

There have been times in my relationship with [my older sister], where she has believed me, she has been supportive, but this was before she started having a relationship with my dad again. She had also cut off from my dad, [for a while]. But my older sister has started to have contact with him again--I guess she went to therapy with him. But before that, she was very supportive, she came to visit me when I was in treatment, she validated my feelings and memories. She said that she thought that similar things had happened to her,--that she hadn't had clear memories, but that that was her feeling, or intuition. And then, when she started having a relationship with him again, our relationship was falling apart at the same time, now that I look back on it. Our relationship [between my sister and me] was never that great, to begin with, because she was always real dominating. But then she said, the last time I spoke with her, "Oh, I believe that Dad raped you." I don't know if she said "rape," but she said, "Oh, I believe that Dad did that to you." When I asked her, "Do you believe that Dad raped me?" she said, "Yes, I believe that he did that to you, but I also believe that he has a good side, and so I have a relationship with him." And that, to me, meant that she didn't believe it--because if she truly in her heart believed that he did that to me, [then] I don't think that she could have a relationship with him. So that's when it ceased, that's when I felt that her support of me stopped.

Thus various groups in society which feel threatened by the idea of the break-down of what they view as the "traditional" family, may see disclosure of incest itself as a threat to the stability of the family and thus blame whoever speaks about it as a threat to society (e.g., Goldstein, 1992; Goldstein and Farmer, 1993). Such groups may have myths about the "good old days" of the nuclear family and thus feel that the truth value of their narratives is being impinged upon by those whose views of the family are changing or who act on these changes to construct networks of fictive kin.

Due to this challenge to the hegemonic social construction of "the family" as a patriarchal unit in which parental abuse, even sexual abuse,
may go unchallenged, and the divisiveness created within some families as a result of survivors' challenge to the notion of abuse as "normalcy," the self-help movement for incest survivors and the attention given to incest and sexual assault issues has precipitated a backlash and "false memory syndrome" countermovements to a greater extent than any of the other twelve-step SMOs. As countermovement SMOs such as the False Memory Syndrome Foundation gain the ear of the media in shaping public discourse on the issue of incest, members of the self-help movement for incest survivors have found themselves on the defensive about whether their memories are true or "produced." Survivors and their supporters construct their PTSD symptoms and other adult aftereffects as evidence that incest occurred; accused perpetrators deflect frames about incest as a crime by claiming that the nature of memory itself is uncertain and therefore survivors' memories are false. Robbins (1995) has noted that they do not address whether their own recollections of whether abuse occurred are faulty. At any rate we can expect that movement-countermovement frames will continue to affect each other and to influence how they each use strategies to shape public opinion about incest survivors, just as this has occurred with the women's movement (Steuter, 1992).

With respect to the backlash countermovements centered around the idea of "false memory syndrome," respondents felt that this confabulated medical syndrome has been made up by perpetrators and families of perpetrators to take attention away from the real issue of incest and childhood sexual abuse, and that this countermovement by grabbing a lot of media attention has detracted from the public's attention to the very real issues of incest and child sexual abuse. For instance one woman said:
Our meeting started, and newsletters [for recovery] started springing up, and then a couple of years into it, we were getting calls from national talk show programs. And then it [attention to the issue] went berserk. I remember getting the first call from the "Giraldo" television show. I didn’t go on it personally, somebody from our group did. And we’ve been on most of the national talk show programs, many times over now. Although in the last couple of years, what with this other [false memory] organization flaring up, the media attention has not been what it used to be. It is getting the attention.

Respondents also felt that the backlash movement’s rhetoric deliberately attempts to minimize the extent to which incestuous perpetration damages the child and the adult survivor by constructing stories of "recanters," "false memories," and "unscrupulous therapists." Respondents also noted that when they confronted their own perpetrators about their behavior, perpetrators conveniently forgot or had no recall of events that respondents’ siblings had often corroborated. One woman said:

I think that when perpetrators say "I didn’t do that," it’s out of their own need to cover their own asses and save their own asses. Which to me is kind of a selfish motive. And they are not thinking about the person they are molesting, that they are turning into a piece of meat so they can use them. They are just thinking about themselves.

Social movement discursive practices as framed by themes of emotional and covert as well as overt incest encourage movement members to externalize causes or attributions about "blame" for the incest. They also, by broadening the definition of what constitutes incestuous perpetration, begin to include a broad range of behaviors not considered crimes by hegemonic institutions and thus challenge existing laws by seeking to transform notions about the definitions of "normal" behavior and parental rights under the dominant "nuclear family" model. These social movement definitions challenge the extent to which parents can violate children’s physical and emotional boundaries under the law without encountering legal repercussions. The extent to which survivors
continue to achieve success in pursuing litigation against their perpetrators for damages incurred from the abuse, will also affect society's conceptualizations of parental rights and challenge patriarchal notions of women and children as chattel of husbands and fathers and the rights of the latter to unlimited sexual and emotional access to women and children.

The movement has also had an effect on other twelve-step movements by perhaps drawing off some of the participation in them. This is because the SMOs I studied in the self-help movement for incest survivors in particular, seem to provide a place for survivors to talk about their common feelings, experiences, and the aftereffects of childhood abuse in adult life, which other twelve-step programs discourage. For instance one woman said:

My first twelve-step program seemed to be saying all the wrong things....When I started talking about the [incestuous] abuse, with people in these programs, they were saying all the wrong things. Like "Just live one day at a time," and "Don't cry about it." I was shamed [by them] for crying. And the group therapy [for incest survivors] was not working. So the first meeting [of SMO#2] got started.13

The movement has also been strongly influenced by medical discourse and the medical/mental health establishment. Respondents' reports pointed to the manner in which experience is constituted as truth through the validation of shared feelings, shared histories of similar childhood events, and shared medical/psychological symptoms. The medical/mental health establishment's discursive practices surrounding the issue of childhood sexual abuse, constituting certain behaviors as symptomatic of PTSD, supports this construction of events and symptoms as evidence of the truth of the abuse occurring. The label of PTSD helps to destigmatize survivors from being deviants evincing "crazy" behaviors to being people struggling with aftereffects of trauma in their adult lives who need
understanding and compassion. This medicalization of deviance has also occurred for battered women and has helped to destigmatize them also (Gagne', 1993). However this uneasy alliance between social movement members and medicine may lead to the movement's cooptation in the future and a retreat from its emphasis on symbolic resistance to the traditional family and traditional religiosity.

Various writers have discussed how we can expect the self-help movement in the U.S. and internationally to persist into the twenty-first century, for several reasons. First, interviews with respondent-survivors as well as existing research supports the view that the self-help movement is not a temporary "fad" or fashion as some journalists may contend (Kaminer, 1992). Rather, the self-help movement in the U.S. has now become part of the general movement of people seeking self-growth and/or a sense of community in support groups and therapies (Melucci, 1989; Wuthnow, 1994). "A plurality of psychotherapeutic approaches--including not only psychoanalysis but also new family therapies, body therapy--is now a permanent feature of the social and cultural framework of complex society" (Melucci, 1989:142).

Twelve-step programs present a challenge to the self-growth industry's attempts to coopt it and channel its participants into more lucrative "therapeutic modalities" such as "self-growth" workshops on consciousness, meditation, past lives, inner child-work, etc., increasingly led by experts with professional credentials. Respondents themselves frequently said that they regarded the twelve-step recovery movement as a permanent fixture on the U.S. therapeutic landscape, especially since they derived benefits from these locally-based peer groups that they could not get out of therapy sessions with an individual
counselor, and vice-versa. For example one woman who participates in both individual therapy and various kinds of twelve-step group participation, said:

When all of this stuff started to surface, I was afraid of sleeping, and my doctor said, "Well, maybe you need to talk to a therapist." And when I talked to her [the therapist], the more I talked about it, the more I was able to sleep. And I knew that if I wanted to lead a "regular" adult life, I was going to need to get some help and individual therapy, but I don't think it's the only route. I don't think individual therapy alone can solve people's problems. Mainly because, you go to one therapist, you don't normally see more than one at a time. So then you're just getting one person's point of view. And the therapist can't really offer advice, it's not on a peer level with them. But in a group situation, like in [SM0#2], you have everybody in that group and all the experience that they bring to the group. And every person that they've ever met, that's helped them, that's also there, so you're gaining their experience. But it's also very beneficial to have that one person [a therapist], where if it gets to the point where you are in danger of hurting yourself or someone else, then you have at least one person who is a professional, that knows that. So I don't think you can maintain a group situation without seeing an individual [therapist], but I also don't think you can just go to individual therapy without the group. They just kind of complement each other.

Another woman said:

I think you get from therapy, what you don't get from a group. And you get from a group, what you don't get from therapy. And I do think that they work rather well together. In therapy I could talk the gory details and I could also get a surrogate parent, more so than from a group. A group would seem more like a surrogate sibling...So I'm not anti-therapy; it's just that therapy groups are not usually ongoing, and they cost too much. And I think a [self-help] peer group has very different dynamics than a therapy group. Dealing more with the feelings.

Another woman commented:

My opinion is that what really works about twelve-step programs vs. other types of help, professional or non-professional, is in part the concept of [the twelve-step] meeting. And some of that is gathering in a place with other people for a period of time that's finite and having it be safe, and the other thing that I think is a real key element is because it's free. It's not only free financially, it's free with no strings attached. No one can make me go to a meeting. And what I think the power of that is, is essentially, unlike therapy or church or school, or any number of things I have been involved with, a person has to be ready to go on some level, enough so that they get their body to a meeting. And the part about the meetings.
that is so important is listening, learning how to listen and share, and learning how to show up and sit down for however long [an] amount of time.16

Thus we can expect twelve-step, self-help movements to continue to co-exist alongside other therapeutic treatments as individuals continue to search for an identity that contains elements of choice in a society in which the state increasingly encroaches upon individual choices, desires, and behaviors. "The expanding demand for psychotherapy is another symptom of the growth in complex societies of the need for identity and self-realization. Greater resources in terms of education, knowledge, and time are now available to individuals to enable them to conceive of themselves and their situations as individuals. They begin to think of their lives as a choice between various possibilities, and as a process of growth, discovery, and realization of their potential" (Melucci, 1989:141-142).

Secondly, women's use of self-help books as part of "self-help culture" is both fostered by and strengthens the cultural and material consumerism that is part of woman's role under postindustrial complex capitalist society (Simonds, 1992). Thus the self-help book industry will not abandon its market when it has become so lucrative. Thirdly, women in the "postfeminist" era are increasingly taking a "cool" approach to relationships formerly reserved for males but now supported as appropriate for "modern" women by self-help books and other popular reading material (Hochschild, 1994). Thus women survivors in the self-help movement for incest survivors seem to be increasingly accepting and incorporating into their notion of appropriate gender norms, the "cool instrumentalism" encouraged by both the modern self-help books and among survivors themselves in social movement discourse. This cool
instrumentalism is manifested as survivors seek to distance themselves from abusive people, including people in their families of origin, and increasingly ask themselves "what they are getting" out of specific relationships. For instance one respondent said:

It seems to have been one of those [marriages] that worked out, but marriage is often one more casualty, I think, in the recovery process. Because once you start identifying that first abuse as abuse, you start looking around your life [at other abuse], and you go, "I don't want this anymore." And in fact, you know, it really did almost precipitate a divorce, like I said [to my husband], "I am choosing to leave. I will not live with you like this anymore." I felt like I was kind of cleaning house. But he chose to get better, and to get into therapy. So he’s been in therapy, and I’ve been in therapy, and if we didn’t kill each other that first year, then we never will.”

Finally, we can expect twelve-step movements to continue to thrive, since their emphases on liberal individualism and upholding of Protestant Calvinist beliefs in witnessing and personal responsibility for success, are commensurate with dominant hegemonic "American" values. Yet twelve-step movements also provide the basis for a new spiritual social movement which resonates with new trends towards individualistic modes of spirituality while rejecting the more authoritarian, hierarchical and anti-mainstream aspects of some new religious movements which have been characterized as cults and thus viewed as threatening to dominant U.S. institutions (Riessman, 1990).

SOCIETY, IDENTITY, AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT CULTURE

The process of constructing a new social identity for incest survivors has also been compared to that for lesbians, in which survivors begin to question the dysfunctionality in their families of origin while lesbians begin to question the dysfunctionality in society, particularly in terms of institutionalized homophobia (Deevey and Wall, 1992). For both groups
self-hate and self-blame can be understood as self-protective defense mechanisms which allow the survivor or lesbian to maintain a sense of control, since it is easier to feel that it is one's own fault if one feels badly or suffers rather than to blame social institutions which seem less amenable to change (Deevey and Wall, 1992). The creation of a positive sense of collective identity as a survivor was complicated for many of my respondents by their coming to terms with their sexual identities as gay, lesbian, and or bisexual people. In such a context activism to change societal attitudes towards incest and sexual assault survivors may operate as a means by which the survivor can transform her/his attitude about the self from one of self-blame to system attribution and self-acceptance. Thus even though the twelve-step programs themselves do not specifically encourage activism, quite a few respondents stated that they were engaged in various outreach or activist behaviors for helping other survivors and/or changing public opinion and treatment of survivors.

Here we see how symbolic strategies of resistance as part of collective identity and lifestyle politics can influence and motivate people to engage in the types of overt challenges to structural oppression discussed in resource mobilization theory. Hopefully this study has shown that resource mobilization and new social movement perspectives are complementary perspectives in research on social movements, and that cultural-structural and public-private sphere oppositions are false dichotomies. My perspective here follows that of Yanagisako and Collier (1987:18), who discuss how we must be wary of construing symbolic systems as if they exist apart from social action. We need to ask how symbolic systems, particularly our ideas about the social
world, operate in people's actions. People encounter symbolic oppositions and dichotomies in discourses in their everyday lives but integrate them into their practice of social relations. Moreover the concept of the public/private sphere opposition is not a valid description of a universal reality but rather an ideological product of western industrialized white middle class society.

Survivors thus tend to get involved in consciousness-raising workshops, survivor speakouts, inservices to various professional organizations, lobbying or other types of activism, around the issues of incest and childhood sexual assault. For example one woman who is a teacher in a public school said:

As far as domestic violence and child abuse, I would say I've always had strong views. But I would say if anything that the [self-help recovery] movement has strengthened my position, I guess, on certain things. I question things more. Like you know if I'm aware of any acts [of abuse], with my kids [students] at school, if I know that they're being abused or that mom's being hit by dad or dad's being hit by mom, I'm more apt to get involved now. And I think part of that is just being stronger about myself, and that stems directly from the movement.

Another woman who testifies and lobbies about bills for incest and sexual assault issues said:

I go to the legislature every year, but not as a member of [SMO#2]. I lobby. I give testimony about bills, and why they're important. Why a child's ability to testify is murdered, even though they might not be dead. I testify about power issues. I don't say to them that I am a member of [SMO#2], but I do say that I've worked in the field for fourteen years and this is why I think this bill should be passed. So I'm more of an activist than the therapists are. I started doing the work because I got involved with another organization that's local, that deals with advocacy for children. And she [the director] was like, "We need you in [capital city] next Tuesday. We need people to give testimony that know what they're talking about." And I'd read to her what I was going to say, and she'd go, "That's exactly what they need to hear, be there at two." So I got a little bit of a push from a woman whose daughter had been abused. She started this organization to help children. I probably read something about her in the local newspaper, is how I heard about it, and I contacted her, and they got very active with me, very quickly. And if somebody starts talking to me about current abuse, I refer them to her.
Another woman said she was motivated to do activism within her local meeting of SM0#2 to help others not yet in recovery:

One of the reasons I got active in the group was to start a phone line so that we could have an answering service and let people know where our [local] meetings were. It was sort of like a hotline. The number you could call, you would leave your name and we would call you back, and you could leave messages.

Insofar as the self-help movement for incest survivors encourages survivors to keep attending meetings, talking to each other for support, using the twelve steps and traditions which hold the movement aloof from other organizations, and supporting individualistic, spiritual modes of treatment such as an individualistic relationship to one's "Higher Power," it constitutes one of the "new social movements" of people engaged in symbolic expressions of "lifestyle politics" under civil society (Breines, 1982; Cohen, 1985; Johnston, Larana, and Gusfield, 1994; Gamson, 1992; Taylor and Whittier, 1992a, 94). To the extent that U.S. societal institutions continue to impinge on individual freedoms and act as systemic constraints on people in search of self, community, and enclaves promoting solidarity, communitarianism and cooperation, we may predict that people will continue to seek a sense of self and community in social movement communities with their own cultural, even countercultural values.

Adult survivors who are dissatisfied with parents' or other family members' attempts to retain control of their emotional and sexual lives and to keep up middle-class facades of respectability and family cooperation, will continue to resist control by building their own networks, families, and communities of emotional support, made up predominantly of other women and men in recovery. The movement may be coopted at least in part in the future by its alliance with the
medical/mental health establishment but the resistance work of people committed to the independence of twelve-step programs may keep it autonomous. The symbolic aspects of lifestyle politics of feminist, leftist, countercultural, and/or gay/lesbian/bisexual movements may continue to contribute symbolic elements or concrete beliefs to this self-help movement in terms of members' freedom to explore their beliefs in participatory democracy, collectivism and sexual liberation.

Finally, we need to ask what implications this movement has for the analysis of culture and structure in sociology as well as the relation between civil society and the state. Under modernity "the boundaries of new identities are expanding" (Kellner, 1992:141). Under modernity, identity becomes problematic because the ties of the individual to tribe or community which provided a basis for one's sense of social self have been lost, to be replaced by a temporal sense of identity rooted in other-directedness. Thus "[t]he modern self is aware of the constructed nature of identity and that one can always change and modify one's identity at will" (Kellner, 1992:142). The overall view of the self and its manifestation in social identity under modernity is commensurate with the Enlightenment's emphasis on reason, since the individual under modernity is a universal subject with the power to reason, where "identity is conceived as something essential, substantial, unitary, fixed, and fundamentally unchanging" (Kellner, 1992:142). However, contemporary postmodern thought has by and large rejected the essentialist...notion of identity and builds on the constructivist notion which it in turn problematizes" (Kellner, 1992:143).

Some postmodernists or poststructuralists have contended that postmodernity has led to the fragmentation of identities as globalization
and rationalization have ensued. The quintessential postmodern individual is thus devoid of a stable identity and culture, a "player" detached from social roles who tries on different identities based on the images, looks, and consumption modes suggested by mass culture (Kellner, 1992). However I contend, using a feminist postmodernist approach, that postmodernity is characterized by the increasing importance of lifestyle politics and social movement cultures which serve as foundations for individual and group identity. The rise of symbolic forms of expression of identity under postmodernism thus may herald new forms of subjectivity, that of situated subjects who know who they are because of their location in subcommunities of knowers (Haraway, 1988; Tuana, 1992). In this case the knowers are those sharing a sense of collective identity based on such features as survivorship, sexual identity, feminist identity, or belief in activist causes such as peace or anti-nuclear politics.
END NOTES

APPENDIX A

LIST OF THE TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS (WITH ADAPTATIONS USED IN THE TWO SMOS I STUDIED, IN
PARENTHESES)

Twelve Steps:

1. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol (the incest experience), and that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. (Her/Him).

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him (Her/Him) to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics (others) and to practice these principles in all our affairs.
Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery (progress for the greatest number) depends on AA (SM0#1; SM0#2) unity.

2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are trusted servants; they do not govern.

3. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking (is that you are a victim of child sexual abuse and that you desire to recover from it.)

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole. (except in matters affecting another group or (SM0#1 or SM0#2) as a whole).

5. Each group has but one primary purpose: to carry its message to the alcoholic (incest survivor) who still suffers.

6. An AA group (Our SM0#1 or SM0#2 group) ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA (SM0#1; SM0#2) name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

7. Every AA group (our SM0#1; SM0#2 group) ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Alcoholics Anonymous (SM0#1; SM0#2 work) should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. AA (SM0#1; SM0#2) as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Alcoholics Anonymous (SM0#1; SM0#2) has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA (SM0#1; SM0#2) name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films (films and television).

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.
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