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Exploring the Social Psychology of Complex Systems

A Pilot Study

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
Of the Graduate School of Education of Harvard University
In partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of Doctor of Education

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Dedication

To my amazing family, for all you have given me:

Dad: *Responsibility and the Dignity of Questioning*
Mom: *Joy, Music, and Spirituality*
Daniel: *The Love of Justice and the Life of the Mind*
Deborah: *Respect for Ancient Wisdom*
Michal: *Courage to Follow My Inner Voice*
Nathan: *Determination in Pursuit of a Dream*

I couldn't have done it without you.

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developed by Ronald Heifetz was a revelation. His ideas about leadership, authority, and systemic change inform this study in fundamental ways. Carol Giligan's work on moral development and relational psychology were also extremely influential. Her ideas inform this study in less direct but equally fundamental ways. I am grateful to have been able to work with both of them during my studies. Finally, Yaneer Bar Yam introduced me to dynamics of complex systems. His work is quite prominent in the literature review, and again I am grateful to have had the chance to study with him personally.

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Abstract

Exploring the Social Psychology of Complex Systems

Max Benjamin Klau

This qualitative study uses concepts related to dynamics of complex systems to analyze an exercise that builds upon a long tradition of classic social psychology experiments. It assumes a multilevel model of human behavior, in which individuals are nested within groups, which are themselves nested within a larger multi-group system. Milgram's obedience experiments and Asch's conformity experiments explored an *individual level of analysis*. The Robbers Cave experiment and the Stanford Prison Experiment explored a *group level of analysis*. This pilot study explores a third level that both transcends and includes these other levels: the complex system.

The field of complex systems crosses the traditional boundaries of disciplines and highlights a set of governing dynamics at work in fields as diverse as cell biology, economics, and neural networks. For the purposes of this pilot study, I review the complex systems literature related to the concepts of interdependence, self-organization, pattern formation, development, and complexity.

The pilot study focuses on an exercise that is part of a residential youth leadership program run by a national non-profit. In the exercise, adolescent participants are separated into seven or eight groups and told not to talk to or make eye contact with other groups. Over the course of several hours, participants begin challenging the rules, and this system of multiple groups transforms towards greater interconnection and interdependence. By including observation of three of these exercises, the research allows for cross case analysis of recurrent patterns.

The pilot study provides an opportunity to empirically explore the process by which a complex, multi-group social systems transforms from static segregation to dynamic interconnection. Informed by the complex systems literature, this research examines how the concepts of interdependence, self-organization, pattern formation, development, and complexity explain events in these simulated social systems.

Introduction

*Now we are close to knowing just about everything there is to know about
the pieces. But we are as far as we ever have been from understanding
nature as a whole. Indeed, the reassembly turned out to be much harder
than scientists anticipated. The reason is simple: Riding reductionism, we
run into the hard wall of complexity. We have learned that nature is not a
well-designed puzzle with only one way to put it back together. In complex
systems the components can fit in so many different ways that it would take
billions of years for us to try them all. Yet nature assembles the pieces with
a grace and precision honed over millions of years. It does so by exploiting
the all-encompassing laws of self-organization, whose roots are still largely
a mystery to us* (Barabasi 2003, p.6).

In recent years, the findings from a variety of disciplines have begun to converge.

From economics to political science to public health, a collection of underlying patterns

and governing principles is emerging. Dynamics such as interdependence, self-

organization, and complexity inform our understanding of phenomena as diverse as stock

market changes, international terrorism, computer virus promulgation, and cell biology

(Waldrop 1992; Bar-Yam 1997; Barabasi 2003).

With this study, I hope to connect these emerging insights to a long tradition of

social psychology research. Specifically, I am interested in exploring the micro-level

meaning-making of an individual (Nakkula and Ravitch 1998; Selman 2003) while

simultaneously exploring the macro-level dynamics of the complex system in which that

individual operates (Waldrop 1992; Bar-Yam 1997).

In order to explore this question, this pilot study assumes a multi-level model of

human behavior. In *Introducing Multilevel Modeling*, Kreft and Leeuw (1998) describe

the utility of this perspective:

> Multilevel models are developed for analyzing hierarchically structured
> data...A hierarchy consists of lower-level observations nested within higher
> level(s). Examples include students nested within schools, [or] employees

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nested within firms...The lowest level measurements are said to be at the *micro level*; all higher-level measurements at the *macro level*. Hence the name *contextual models* for models analyzing data obtained at micro and macro levels. Contextual models can have as few as two levels, as in the case of students (micro level) nested within school classes (macro level); or more than two, for example students nested within classes nested within schools...Once you know that hierarchies exist, you see them everywhere (italics theirs) (p. 1).

More specifically, this study attempts to integrate the nested perspectives of

1) Individual social psychology

2) Group social psychology, and

3) The social psychology of complex systems

In undertaking this pilot study, I hope to build upon the findings of a collection of classic experiments in social psychology that explored the first two levels included in this contextual model.

In Chapter One, I present an overview of these classic experiments, and explain how they relate to the multi-level model that informs this research. In Chapter Two, I present a review of the literature related to complex systems. This perspective represents a relatively unexplored level of analysis in the discipline of social psychology. Chapter Three, introduces the social psychology experiment that I explore for this pilot study. The exercise draws upon many elements of the classic social psychology exercises presented in Chapter One; however, it incorporates a level of complexity that makes it ideal for an exploration of systemic dynamics that both transcend and include individual and group behaviors.

In Chapter Four, I review the background, history, and philosophy of the organization that runs the exercise we observed for this research. The exercise is embedded in a week-long educational program with a very specific mission and

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philosophy. The educational program itself is but one project run by a national non-profit with a rich history and a clear mission. It is impossible to understand the exercise presented in this research without first reviewing the context in which it is based.

Chapter Five presents my methodology. Most importantly, I present and explain the research questions that guided this research effort. Informed by the multi-level model discussed earlier, these questions are:

1) *How do individuals understand their involvement in macro-level social system dynamics?*

2) *How do groups manage the transition from strict segregation to complex interconnection?*

3) *Are there macro-level patterns that emerge as social systems transform towards greater integration and interdependence?*

In this chapter, I explain in detail the qualitative methods I use to explore these questions.

Chapter Six presents my analysis of the data from the questionnaires filled out by participants at each exercise. Working with my research team, I used this data to generate codes and themes related to my research questions. In this chapter, these codes are presented and explained.

In Chapter Seven, I build theory regarding the social psychology of complex systems by examining the three composite narratives created as part of this research. This review of all three narratives allows for the exploration of patterns that appear across cases, and informs a collection of theoretical models developed in an effort to understand the processes at work in these exercises.

I conclude with a discussion, in Chapter Eight, of the ways the findings of this pilot study might inform our understanding of a variety of subjects, from social psychology to complex systems to current events.

As a final word of introduction, I would like to emphasize that this research grows out of a tradition of controversial and provocative social psychology experiments. As I explain in Chapter One, the designers of those experiments were greatly inspired by the political events of their own era. Stanley Milgram, for example, was motivated to pursue his famous investigation into the dynamics of human obedience as a response to the disturbing behaviors that occurred in Nazi Germany. Intrigued by the widespread conformity that characterized his own era, Solomon Asch developed his well-known exploration of the dynamics of conformity.

In each of these cases, social scientists shined a spotlight on some of the darker shadows of human behavior. Although the terrain they reveal is often uncomfortable and sometimes disturbing, their purposes were always noble. Inspired by a belief that scientific inquiry has the potential to improve the human condition, these researchers held to an idealistic notion that investigating these shadows might reveal a permanent way out of the darkness. At the very least, they hoped that their findings might generate new and productive public dialogues about important issues of clear relevance to the challenges of their era.

It is very much in this spirit that I pursued my own interest in this research. As with the classic social psychology experiments of past eras, I have chosen to explore some uncomfortable terrain. My fascination with these dynamics is very much inspired by recent world events, and a similar idealistic notion that, at its best, scientific inquiry

holds the potential to not only inform us about human behavior, but also to lead the way towards improving the human condition. At the very least, I hope that this work may promote and inform public debate about important issues in the best tradition of previous social science research.

In the years it has taken to plan and execute this research, I have taken seriously both the opportunity and the responsibility inherent in the pursuit of the social sciences. I recognize the profound limitations of this research in terms of its ability to inform us about real-world events in the months and years ahead. Despite all its flaws, however, I have made every effort to bring not only intellectual rigor, but also courage and compassion to this endeavor. We live in a turbulent era, rich with both danger and opportunity. The research presented here represents my own small effort to shine a light on the path towards a better future.

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Chapter 1

Introduction to Classic Social Psychology Experiments

The research presented here has its roots in a long history of social psychology research. Several of these studies have become classic experiments in the history of the discipline, and the details of their design and findings have become well-known far beyond the boundaries of social psychology researchers. In this chapter, I present brief overviews of these classic experiments.

The Individual Level of Analysis: Obedience and Conformity

In the 1960's, a social psychologist at Yale University named Stanley Milgram conducted experiments designed to explore the dynamics of obedience to authority. Deeply disturbed by the Nazi genocide of Jews during the Second World War, Milgram (1974) wanted to understand how ordinary individuals could participate in mass cruelty and violence. He states,

> The Nazi extermination of European Jews is the most extreme instance of abhorrent immoral acts carried out by thousands of people in the name of obedience. Yet in lesser degree this type of thing is constantly recurring: ordinary citizens are ordered to destroy other people, and they do so because they consider it their duty to obey orders. Thus obedience to authority, long praised as a virtue, takes on a new aspect when it serves a malevolent cause; far from appearing as a virtue, it is transformed into a heinous sin. Or is it? (p. 2)

In an effort to explore this question, he designed a simple experiment. For this study, a volunteer subject was brought in to serve as a "teacher" who would administer electric shocks to "learners" who failed to provide the correct response to a prefabricated series of questions. Unaware that the learner was a collaborator in the experiment and

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was not actually being harmed, the subjects were ordered to increase the intensity of the shock to lethal levels. Although most subjects expressed profound discomfort during the course of the experiment, 65% of subjects continued through the end of the experiment, despite the belief they were causing extreme pain in the learner (p. 35).

This high level of obedience stood in dramatic contrast to the levels of obedience predicted by both laypeople and professionals (psychiatrists, social psychologists, etc). Milgram presented groups of psychiatrists, college students, and middle-class adults with the design of the experiment and asked them to predict how many subjects would obey all the way through the highest level of electric shock. All groups predicted that "virtually all subjects will refuse to obey the experimenter; only a pathological fringe, not exceeding one or two percent, was expected to proceed to the end of the shockboard" (p. 31).

Milgram conducted numerous experiments involving alterations in the experimental design, and these variations inevitably yielded different results. For example, he altered factors such as closeness to victim (in another room vs. seated right next to the subject administering shocks), level of involvement in administering shocks (flipping the switch vs. reading the questions while another individual flipped the switch), and legitimacy of the authority figure (laboratory professional in a white lab jacket vs. an ordinary individual with no perceived expertise). While each of these alterations resulted in reduced levels of obedience, they did not undermine the basic finding of the study: To a remarkable degree, ordinary individuals will obey the commands of an authority figure, even if those commands appear to result in harming or killing another human being.

In the years since Milgram's experiments, subsequent research has both

expanded upon and refined these findings. Researchers have explored the nature of

authority that generates the highest levels of obedience, the role of gender in obedience,

and whether or not obedience rates have changed over time (for a review of this

literature, see Blass 1999). A complete review of this literature, however, is beyond the

scope of this chapter.

Solomon Asch's Conformity Experiments

In the early 1950's, social psychologist Solomon Asch (1951) set out to explore

the dynamics of conformity. Like Milgram, he felt compelled to understand how

ordinary individuals could participate in anti-social or violent activities. He states,

> Our immediate object was to study the social and personal conditions that
> induce individuals to resist or yield to group pressures when the latter are
> perceived to be *contrary to fact*. The issues which this problem raises are of
> obvious consequence for society; it can be of decisive importance whether or
> not a group will, under certain conditions, submit to existing pressures. (p.
> 177)

In his experiment, Asch gathered a group of eight individuals and asked them to

take a simple perceptual test. In this case, the task was to view flashcards presenting a

series of lines; participants were to match the length of the first line with that of three

other lines of various lengths. The subject of the experiment was unaware, however, that

seven of the individuals were collaborators who were part of the experiment. On

multiple occasions, the seven individuals unanimously selected a line that was clearly too

long or too short. The subject was then placed in the position of having to deviate from

the group by saying what he perceived to be the correct answer, or having to ignore his

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own senses in order to conform with the group. In his original experiment, Asch found that more than 30 percent of participants chose to conform with the group.

Asch also varied the experimental design, and found a variety of factors that dramatically reduced the level of conformity. For example, the presence of one "partner" who also deviated from the group made it much easier for subjects to resist the pressure to conform. Employing a smaller majority (for example, three collaborators as opposed to seven) resulted in lower levels of conformity. As with Milgram's experiment, these variations do not undermine the experiment's basic finding that a significant percentage of individuals will conform to group pressure, even when doing so requires disregarding the evidence of their own senses (Asch 1951).

Asch's experiment has been repeated numerous times in the decades since his findings were originally published. Researchers have explored the role of gender, the impact of the culture, and—in meta-analyses—the change in levels of conformity over time. For an overview of this literature, see Bond & Smith (1996).

The Group Level of Analysis: Studies of Group Conflict and Cooperation

Another series of social psychology experiments explored a different level of human organization. While Milgram and Asch focused on the behavior of *individuals*, a related series of studies analyzed the interactions of *groups*. Not surprisingly, the transition to this different level of analysis required more complicated research designs, and yielded a more complex set of findings.

The Stanford Prison Experiment

This well-known study was designed to explore the way situational factors influenced individual and group-level dynamics. Specifically, the study created a simulated prison environment in which subjects were randomly assigned to "guard" or "prisoner" roles. The dramatic and controversial results of the experiment have made it one of social psychology's most infamous studies.

The purpose of the study was to understand "emerging conformity pressures in 'total situations' in which the processes of deindividuation and dehumanization are institutionalized" (Zimbardo, Maslach et al. 2000). The method involved the creation of a simulated prison in the basement of the psychology department at Stanford. The subjects were all area college students, who had agreed to participate in an experiment scheduled to last for two weeks. The subjects were screened with a battery of psychological tests. Twenty-four students rated to be most average, healthy, and normal according to the screening process were selected to participate. They would receive $15 per day as payment for their participation.

At the start of the experiment, the students were randomly separated into a "guard" group and a "prisoner" group. The similarity of the subjects prior to the start of the experiment, combined with the thoroughly random inclusion in either group, made the ultimate outcome of the experiment all the more surprising.

The researchers took great care to create a "total environment." Guards were given military-style uniforms, and assigned shifts to ensure the prisoners were watched 24 hours a day. Prisoners received simple jumpsuits with sewn-on prisoner numbers. Individuals were only allowed to enter the basement area in the context of the experiment.

The results were dramatic. Within a day, the participants in the simulated prison began to take on the characteristics of their assigned roles with frightening sincerity. The prison guards became aggressive, dictatorial, cruel, and malicious. They created daily regimens of forced exercise, woke prisoners up repeatedly at random intervals during the night, withheld rations due to perceived insubordination, and willingly employed force to keep the "prisoners" obedient and subservient.

The prisoners quickly fell into a very different pattern of behavior. After an early and brief effort to revolt against the system was quickly struck down by the guards, the prisoners succumbed to despair and helplessness. The severity of the situation increased rapidly:

> Within 36 hours after being arrested, the first prisoner had to be released because of extreme stress reactions of crying, screaming, cursing, and irrational actions that seemed to be pathological. The guards were most sadistic in waking prisoners from their sleep several times a night for "counts", supposedly designed for prisoners to learn their identification numbers but actually to use the occasion to taunt them, punish them, and play games with them, or rather on them. (Zimbardo, Maslach et al. 2000)

Very early in the study, the researchers decided that the situation had become too violent, and the subjects' identification with their roles had become too complete. Although the experiment was designed to last for two weeks, it was called off after just six days.

Although this experiment was related to—and in some ways inspired by—the work of Milgram and Asch, it required more complex levels of analysis. Milgram and Asch were interested in the way individuals negotiated relationships of obedience or conformity. Subjects participated in those experiments only for an hour or two before being debriefed and released. In this case, the focus was on the dynamics between two

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groups immersed in a complete environment. They participated in a situation that institutionalized a set of norms, rules, and relationships over the course of six days. The results were a testament to the remarkable ability of institutional factors to overwhelm individual personalities, values, or behaviors. Again, the experiment demonstrated the surprising ease with which average, normal individuals can be compelled to take on roles involving violence or aggression towards others.

The Robbers Cave Experiment

Another influential study of group social psychology is known as The Robbers Cave Experiment (Sherif, Harvey et al. 1961). The name is derived from the location where the experiment was conducted: Robbers Cave State Park in southeastern Oklahoma, where researchers brought together 22 boys for a three-week experience at a rustic summer camp.

The experiment was designed to explore dynamics of group conflict and cooperation, and was carefully designed to control for a variety of variables. The boys were all white males about to enter sixth grade, from very similar geographic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Potential subjects were given a battery of psychological tests, and only the most stable and well-adjusted boys were admitted to the study. None of the boys in the study were social isolates, poor or failing students, or came from broken or unstable families. In addition, care was taken to ensure that none of the boys knew each other prior to the experiment. By creating a cohort of homogenous strangers, the researchers sought to limit the influence of pre-existing social or psychological

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problems, pre-existing friendship groups, and diversity of race, gender or socioeconomic status.

The experimental design included three distinct stages:

1) Experimental In-Group Formation

-In this stage, the boys were divided into two groups of eleven. The groups were separated, given names ("Eagles" and "Rattlers") and were repeatedly given tasks designed to foster a strong sense of group solidarity and in-group identity.

2) Intergroup Relations—Friction Phase

-In this stage, the two groups were brought together and given tasks designed to create competition and frustration between the two groups.

2) Intergroup Relations—Integration Phase

-This stage involved a deliberate attempt to foster cooperation and integration between the two groups. In this study, researchers provided the two groups with a superordinate goal—a task which would benefit both groups but neither group could complete alone.

Throughout the study, the researchers worked as participant-observers; they organized carefully chosen events and activities, while continually observing dynamics both within and between the groups.

The findings of the study were dramatic. Despite the homogeneity of all the participants, the two groups quickly developed a strong sense of in-group solidarity and identity and a negative attitude towards the out-group. During phase one, both groups rapidly negotiated internal status and authority structures, in which certain individuals

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emerged as clear leaders able to exercise a considerable influence on group norms and decision-making. During phase two, animosity and aggression between the two groups escalated rapidly. The Eagles and the Rattlers engaged in heated name-calling, teasing, and vandalism directed against the other group.

During phase three, however, the two groups were repeatedly given superordinate goals. (For example, a truck needed to get food for both groups appeared to break down, and the Rattlers and the Eagles had to work together to push it back to camp.) After several such experiences, the animosity, aggression, and sense of "us vs. them" slowly eroded, to be replaced by a general sense of respect, cooperation, and friendship. Although traces of the earlier antagonism remained, the high level of tension between the two groups had clearly been transformed into a general sense of camaraderie.

Thus, the Robbers Cave experiment highlighted a variety of social dynamics at work at the group level of analysis. The study demonstrated that even with an extremely homogenous sample, the creation of in-group identity and solidarity occurs quite rapidly, and that animosity and aggression between groups escalates with considerable speed and intensity. However, once this friction is created, it is not unalterable and irreversible. Through involvement in superordinate tasks requiring mutual cooperation for the greater good, norms of aggression and violence can be transformed into a culture of cooperation and mutual respect.

Towards a Multi-Level Model of Human Behavior

The scholars involved in these group-level experiments struggled with the challenge of integrating the sociological and cultural perspectives related to groups with

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psychological perspectives related to individuals. The interdisciplinary nature of this type of research suggested a multi-level model of human interaction, in which different findings would emerge at each level. For example, the authors of the Robbers Cave experiment state:

> The outlines of an interdisciplinary approach appear more clearly with the realization that *psychological* and *sociological* signify different levels of analysis. People studying human relations are approaching related, similar, or even the same problems at different levels of analysis, necessitating units and concepts appropriate for dealing with events on that level. If we are working on the psychological level, our unit of analysis is the *individual*; hence our treatment must be in terms of the individual's psychological functioning—in terms of concepts such as motives, judging, perceiving, learning, remembering, imagining, and so on. If we are working on a sociological or cultural level, our concepts are in such terms as social organization, institutions, value systems, language, kinship systems, art forms, and technology. [italics theirs] (Sherif, Harvey et al. 1961, p. 5)

By focusing on the group level of analysis while remaining alert to the individual level of analysis, these studies added a new level of complexity and sophistication to our understanding of human behavior.

The relevance of this insight to the multi-level model of human behavior presented in the introduction of this paper is unmistakable. With this dissertation research, my hope to is take this multi-level model one step further. Milgram and Asch analyzed individuals, and the Stanford Prison Experiment and the Robber's Cave Experiment analyzed groups. With this pilot study, my intention is to look at a third level of analysis: the system.

In recent years, dynamics at this level of analysis have been explored in a field known as complex systems. As these insights are central to the perspective I bring to this research, I present a review of this literature in the following chapter.

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Chapter 2

Literature Review of Dynamics of Complex Systems

The field of complex systems is an attempt to understand a set of governing

principles that seem to transcend the narrow focus of any single scientific discipline. Bar

Yam (2001) states,

> "Complex Systems" is the new approach to science studying how
> relationships between parts give rise to the collective behaviors of a system,
> and how the system interacts and forms relationships with its environment.
> Social systems formed (in part) out of relationships between people, the brain
> formed out of relationships between neurons, molecules formed out of
> relationships between atoms, the weather formed out of relationships between
> air flows are all examples of complex systems. Studying complex systems
> cuts across all of science, as well as engineering, management, and
> medicine...It focuses on certain questions about relationships and how they
> make parts into wholes. These questions are relevant to all systems that we
> care about. (Bar-Yam 2001, p. 4)

As this overview makes clear, the perspective of complex systems holds

considerable promise for advancing the discipline of social psychology. The authors of

the Robbers Cave experiment recognized that "the psychological and sociological signify

different levels of analysis...necessitating units and concepts appropriate for dealing with

events on that level" (Sherif, Harvey et al. 1961, p. 5). With the perspective of complex

systems, we find ourselves armed with units and concepts appropriate for understanding a

level of analysis that simultaneously transcends and includes both the psychological and

the sociological.

A major challenge of this perspective, however, is that it relates to so many

disciplines that a complete review of the literature is both difficult and unneccessary. For

example, a textbook devoted to the topic of complex systems includes chapters on neural

networks, protein folding, polymer dynamics, and thermodynamics (Bar-Yam 1997).

Clearly, this literature includes perspectives that are largely irrelevant to our interests here, as well as quantitative methods that are well beyond the limits of my own training as a social scientist.

As my research involves a qualitative analysis grounded in the perspective of social psychology, this review will highlight aspects of complex systems that can be clearly related to the human social dynamics I intend to explore. In this chapter, I will review the following concepts: Interdependence, Self-Organization & Pattern Formation, Non-Linear Dynamics, Development through Evolution, and Complexity. In each case, I will focus on methods and research most closely related to the qualitative social psychology at the heart of this research.

Interdependence

The field of complex systems emerged out of a recognition that, in many disciplines, scientists had reached the limits of their ability to reduce the world to ever smaller component pieces. Physics represents the clearest example of this trend: the discovery that matter is comprised of components called molecules was eventually followed by the discovery that molecules are comprised of atoms, which are themselves comprised of neutrons, protons, and electrons, which are themselves comprised of quarks. With each passing decade, we seem to grow closer to understanding the most basic building blocks of the physical world.

Eventually, however, this effort to reduce the world to its smallest component parts reaches its limits on two fronts: First, we get close to finding truly the smallest, most basic components of the phenomenon in question. Second, we realize that our knowledge about the individual parts provides very little insight into the actual working

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dynamics of the phenomenon in question. Essentially, there comes a time when the field must "zoom out" from its laser-like focus on component parts and begin viewing systems as a whole. From this perspective, scientists must begin to refocus not just on the pieces, but on the interactions and relationships between all the pieces. While reductionism may help us understand the parts, it is a perspective that completely ignores the interdependent relationship between these parts. The field of complex systems provides both a focus on this interdependence and a language with which to understand it.

Bar Yam introduces this concept by looking at three different types of systems and exploring what happens when a piece of the system is removed:

The first example is a material like a piece of metal or a glass of water. In these instances, it is possible to remove a component of the system (by cutting off a corner of the metal sheet, or removing a spoonful of water from the glass) without profoundly changing the system. Both the removed component and the larger part of the material remain more-or-less unchanged.

Compare this relatively low level of interdependence with what happens when you cut some roots or branches from a tree. While the tree as a whole may continue to grow, it will surely be impacted by the loss of the part. And the part itself will be profoundly affected (it will die) because of the removal.

This relatively higher level of interdependence can be compared to the results of removing a piece of an animal. Remove a leg or a lung, and both the animal and the part are profoundly affected.

Bar Yam (2001) states:

These three examples show very different kinds of interdependence. Recognizing that these different behaviors exist is an important part of

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characterizing all of the systems we are interested in. Consider the family or organization you are a part of. How strong are the dependencies between the parts?…These are key questions for understanding the system and how we might affect it by our actions. Just asking these questions when we think about our world is an important part of understanding relationships. (Bar-Yam 2001, p. 8)

This underlying interdependence—which may vary in degree or intensity-- is a key component of complex systems.

Self-Organization and Pattern Formation

When people make something, like a car, they put each part in a particular place to make a specific structure that will do a specific task. When someone paints a picture, they place each patch of paint in a particular place to make the picture. In nature we notice that there are patterns that form without someone putting each part in a particular place. The pattern seems to simply happen by itself. It *self-organizes*. (Bar-Yam 2001, p. 9)

Complex systems frequently involve complicated and intricate patterns. Consider, for example, the flowing lines that appear in desert sands, or the striking patterns of stripes on tropical fish or on zebras and leopards. A key insight of complex systems is that these patterns emerge through a process of self-organization. When each individual unit in a system follows some very simple rules, some remarkably sophisticated patterns can emerge at the level of the system as a whole.

In an attempt to explore this phenomenon, researchers in the late 1980's designed a computer simulation. The purpose was to "capture the essence of flocking behaviors in birds, or herding behavior in sheep, or schooling behavior in fish" (Waldrop 1992, p. 241). In the simulation, a large number of bird-like agents where placed in an on-screen environment full of obstacles. Each individual agent was programmed to follow three simple rules:

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1. Keep a minimum distance from other objects in the environment, including other "birds"

2. Match the velocity of the other "birds" in its neighborhood.

3. Try to move towards the perceived center of mass of "birds" in its neighborhood. (Waldrop 1992, p. 241)

When each simulated agent followed these simple rules, the results were dramatic. Flocks of "birds" always formed, and these flocks were able to navigate the environment with fluidity and agility. Flocks headed for a wall would suddenly part and then reform on the other side of the obstacle; whole flocks would seem to change direction almost in unison. Although each individual bird was following those three simple rules, some incredibly complicated and sophisticated behaviors emerged at the system level.

The phenomenon of self-organization has been explored extensively using a computer simulation tool called "cellular automata". Similar to the flocking simulation described above, this tool demonstrates system-wide pattern formation that occurs as a result of individual behaviors.

A classic example of this tool presents a model of panic in a crowd. In this model, individuals are represented by individual squares (a.k.a "cells") on a vast grid. The model breaks this large grid down into 3 x 3 subsections, and assumes that individuals in the crowd will be influenced by the other 8 individuals in their given subsection. Given these assumptions, it is possible to create rules about how individuals will behave. For example, the rule can state that an individual will panic if four other

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people in the subsection panic. If less than four other people are panicking, then the individual will remain (or become) calm.

The possible outcomes of this rule are presented below. In these diagrams, panicky individuals appear as black squares, and calm individuals appear as white squares. As you can see, different ratios within a given 3 x 3 subsection will dictate the status of the middle square (if four or more squares are black, the middle square turns black; if three or less squares are black, the middle square turns white):
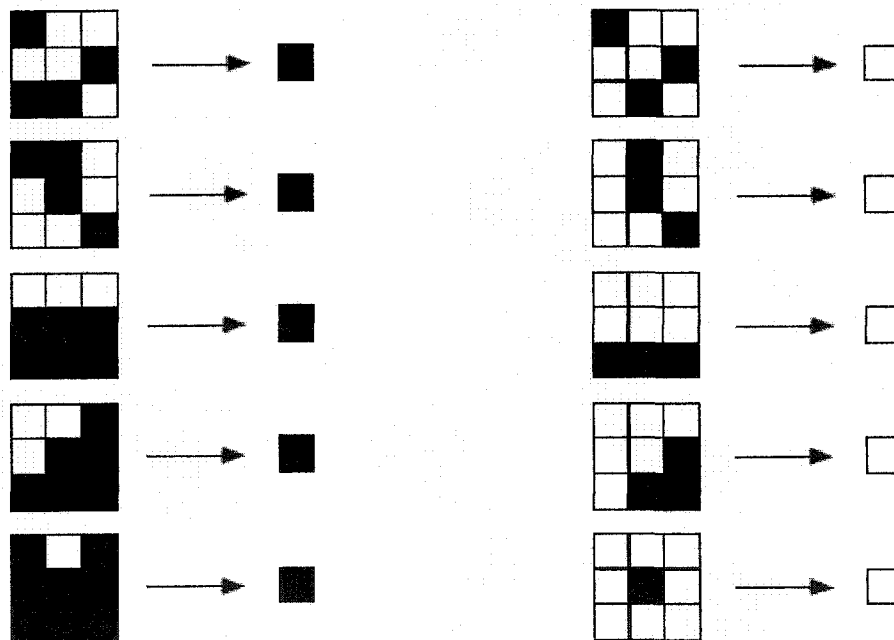
Of course, these subsections are just small pieces of a larger system. By "zooming out" to view the system as a whole, it becomes possible to view the global patterns that emerge over time as individuals continue to react to changes in their local environments. The diagrams presented below demonstrate how these patterns emerge and change over the course of time:

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"Cellular Automata" Computer Simulation
50 Iterations (Numbers 1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 20, 40, & 50 shown here)
Initial State: Less than 25% of individuals panicked

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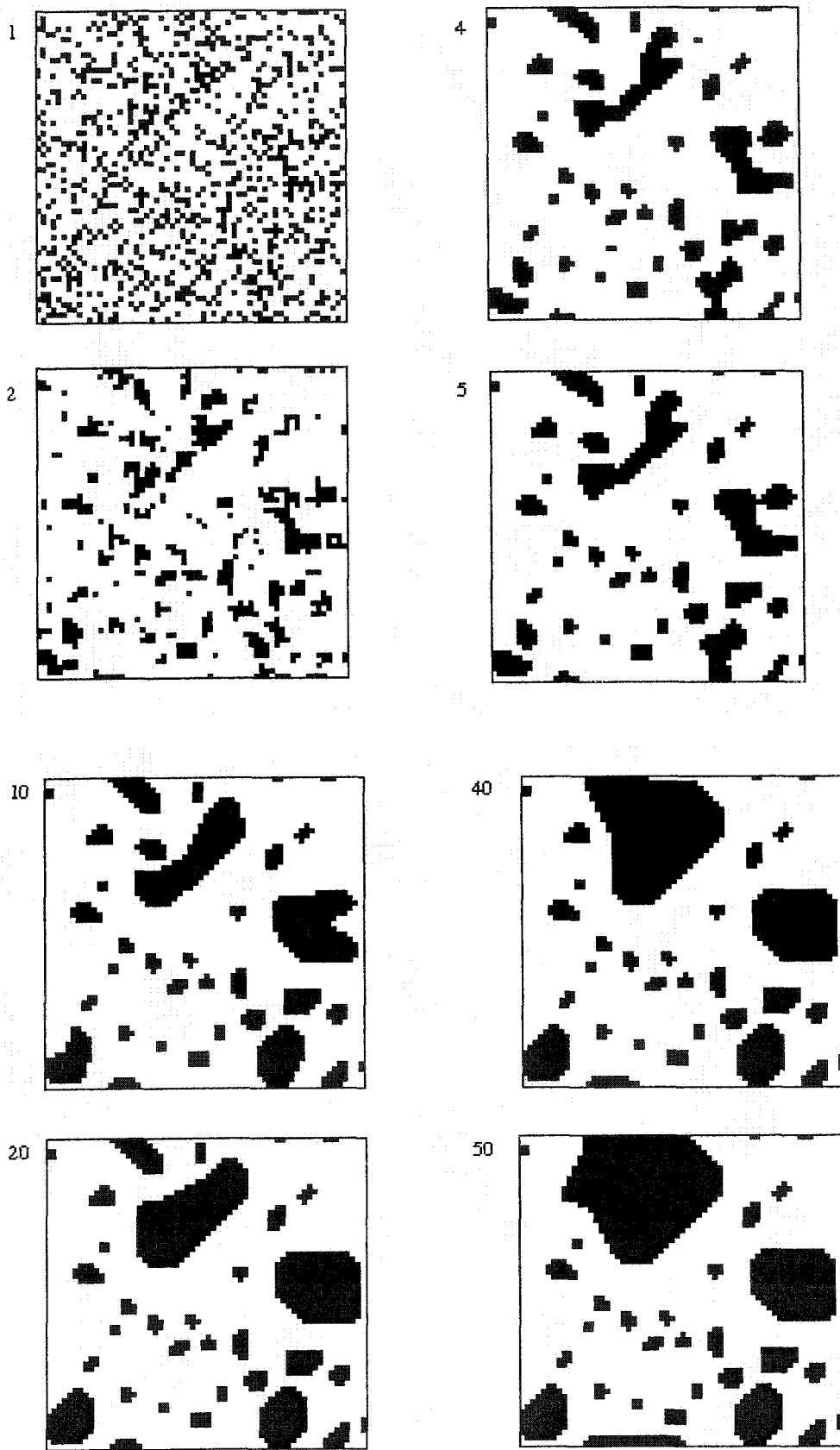
Bar Yam (2001) states,

> Over the first few updates, the random arrangement of dots resolves into areas of panic. Isolated panickers calm down and regions of higher-density become the areas of panic. Then over a longer time, the panicking areas grow and reach a stable configuration. We can try this from a different initial arrangement of panickers. In some cases the panicking areas grow until they combine and fill the entire space. For this panic rule, in this size space, starting from more than a quarter of the people panicked (black), the panic will grow to cover the space, while for less than this the panic will stay isolated. We can think about this more generally as a model of fads, mobs, and hysteria (Bar-Yam 2001, p. 14).

As with the flocking simulation, this computer model allows us to explore the connection between individual behaviors and larger systemic patterns that emerge from those behaviors. The crucial point here is that these sophisticated patterns in complex systems are not the product of one individual with the power to dictate the outcome; rather, the system self-organizes by following simple rules at a local level, and these simple rules generate complex global patterns.

It is also important to note that changes in the initial state of the system have major impacts on the patterns that ultimately form. For example, starting this system with slightly less than 25% of the individuals panicked generates a stable pattern of black and white zones; starting the system with more than 25% of the individuals panicked results in a very different outcome. Similarly, changing the initial parameters so that an individual panics when three other individuals in a subsection panic (as opposed to the rule of four presented above) creates dramatic changes in the patterns that ultimately form.

It may be useful at this point to explore the connection between these ideas and the social psychology experiments presented in Chapter One. The Milgram and Asch

experiments explored the level of individual behavior. Individuals in those experiments were faced with fairly simple choices: obey/ don't obey, or conform/ don't conform. The Stanford Prison Experiment and the Robbers Cave Experiment focused on a different level of analysis: intergroup conflict and cooperation. This level both transcends and includes the individual level of analysis. The cellular automata illustrations presented above ask us to consider a new, third level of analysis: the complex system. This level of analysis uses terms such as self-organization and pattern formation to explore a set of dynamics that simultaneously transcend and include both the individual and the group level of analysis.

Non-Linear Dynamics

> Edward Lorenz, a meteorologist, first drew public attention to this with his now famous "butterfly effect". Does the flap of a butterfly wing in Tokyo, Lorenz queried, affect a tornado in Texas (or a thunderstorm in New York)? Though unfortunate for the future of accurate weather prediction, his answer was "yes". (Wheatley 1999)

The "butterfly effect" mentioned above is perhaps the most well-known description of the concept of non-linearity in complex systems. The concept implies an environment in which apparently insignificant events can have dramatic effects on the system as a whole.

The term "non-linear" highlights this surprising relationship between the initial event and the subsequent outcome. Classical Newtonian physics makes the claim that "every action has an equal and opposite reaction". In this worldview, an increase in the force of a particular action is sure to generate an equal increase in the force of the related

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reaction: a clear, simple, linear relationship. In complex systems, however, events are not so cut-and-dry.

The phenomenon can be demonstrated through a variety of examples. Wheatley (1999) states,

> Hypothetically, were we to create a difference in values as small as rounding them off to the thirty-first decimal place (calculating numbers this large requires astronomical computing power), after only one hundred iterations the whole calculation would go askew. The two systems would have diverged from the each other in unpredictable ways. This behavior demonstrates that even infinitesimal differences can be far from inconsequential. (p. 121)

She also highlights the way non-linearity impacts organizations. She states,

> [M]any organizations have learned that events occurring in a relatively minor part of their business suddenly grow to threaten their overall viability. Before disaster struck in Union Carbide's plant in Bhopal, India, the plant contributed a mere 4% to corporate profits. However, this horrific tragedy led to a major restructuring of the entire company and a serious decrease in its overall evaluation. (Wheatley 1999)

In his book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Gladwell (2000) explores the non-linear nature of social dynamics like fashion fads or word-of-mouth marketing campaigns. One example he explores in-depth is the dramatic reduction in crime that occurred in New York City in the early 1990s. He states,

> From a high in 1990, the crime rate went into precipitous decline. Murders dropped by two-thirds. Felonies were cut in half. Other cities saw their crime drop in the same period. But in no place did the level of violence fall farther or faster. On the subways, by the end of the decade, there were 75% fewer felonies than there had been at the decade's start. (2000)

Gladwell suggests that this remarkable decline can be attributed to a new philosophy of crime control adopted by the New York City police during this time. The

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philosophy was based on the "Broken Windows" theory, developed by criminologists James Q. Wilson and George Kelling. The theory is based on the following logic:

> If a window is broken and left unrepaired, people walking by will conclude that no one cares and no one is in charge. Soon, more windows will be broken, and the sense of anarchy will spread from the building to the street on which it faces, sending a signal that anything goes. In a city, relatively minor problems like graffiti, public disorder, and aggressive panhandling...are all the equivalent of broken windows. (Gladwell 2000)

In the early 1990s, the New York City police began cracking down on these sorts of minor issues: covering over graffiti, outlawing the ubiquitous window-washing panhandlers, enforcing payment at at subway entrance turnstiles, etc. In the face of an epidemic of murders and felonies, it would have been reasonable to argue that these matters were too petty to waste time and effort on. However, focusing on these "small" issues generated a remarkable drop in all types of violence and crime.

Gladwell provides several other examples of non-linearity in social systems: the dramatic increase in the popularity of Hush Puppy shoes, a sudden rash of teen suicides in Micronesia, the way sales of new technologies like faxes or cellphones creep along for months until they suddenly explode exponentially. Once you know to look for them, examples of non-linearity appear everywhere. The perspective of complex systems compels us to expect this phenomenon to appear as a dynamic of the systems we observe, and provides us with a language with which we may describe and explain this dynamic.

Development Towards Complexity

In the natural world, systems naturally develop towards higher levels of complexity. Consider a relatively simple seed, which eventually develops into a far more complex tree, which continues to develop into an even more complex ecology of birds,

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insects, and animals. A human infant—already an incredibly complex system—

eventually develops into an intellectually and emotionally far more complex adult, able to

negotiate a similarly complex cultural, linguistic, and relational environment. The small

settlement of New Amsterdam, once a humble collection of homes, over the course of

many decades develops into modern New York—a city that is socially, technologically,

architecturally, and economically bewildering its complexity. These few examples

highlight a developmental process that occurs in all complex systems.

Bar Yam (Bar-Yam 2001) suggests that a major factor in the development of

social systems is the increasingly complex way in which they organize themselves.

Looking at long-term trends in human civilization, he suggests that a central theme

in the development of human social systems is a transition away from simple

hierarchies and towards a fully networked model of organization. A graphic

illustration of this change is as follows:

Hierarchy　　　**Hybrid**　　　**Fully Networked**

I

*Development
over Time*
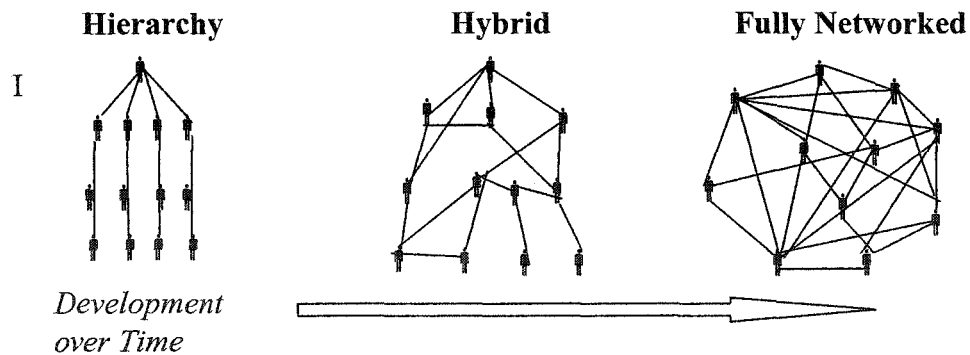
This diagram provides a visual metaphor for thinking about increased

complexity in a social system. The early form of organization—a rigid hierarchy—

is relatively simple. One individual is in charge, information flows in only one

direction (downward), and there is minimal communication horizontally between

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individuals in the hierarchy. As the level of complexity increases, communication

begins to flow more freely in multiple directions, and power may be distributed

among several individuals at the upper levels of the organization. In the fully

networked model, communication flows rapidly in all directions, and it grows

difficult to claim that any one individual is "in charge". At this point, the system

becomes so complex that it begins to make sense to focus on larger patterns of self-

organization, interdependence, etc.

Complexity

Clearly, the concept of complexity is deeply embedded in this new systems-level

of analysis. Not surprisingly, the field has some specific ways of understanding the term.

One way of understanding complexity is think about the amount of information

required to describe an item (or a system, process, etc.). A red dot is fairly easy to

describe; a human being requires considerably more information to describe. As Bar

Yam makes clear, a variety of quantitative methods have been developed to measure

complexity in this way. Frequently, it is possible to compute levels of complexity by

quantifying the amount of information involved in the description.

Another aspect of complexity involves understanding that the complexity of an

object frequently changes depending on the scale at which it is observed. For example, a

person viewed from several hundred yards away may look like little more than a speck on

the horizon. Zoom in closer, and you can clearly see arms and legs. Zoom in even

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closer, and details of the person's face and clothes become clear. As we move along the scale from coarse to ever more fine levels of observation, complexity tends to increase.

Although the concepts of description and scale provide useful insights into what we mean when we use the term complexity, they are of limited use in thinking about social systems. Social systems simply cannot be quantified or described in the same way as molecules in a glass of water or cells in a small organism. When thinking about complexity in a social system, we must find different ways to understand the concept.

The transformation from hierarchy to web described above is one way of understanding complexity in social systems. The computer simulation described below provides another way of understanding this phenomenon.

"The Game of Life" and Complexity in Social Systems

In his book *Complexity: The Emerging Science at the Edge of Order and Chaos*, M. Mitchell Waldrop (1992) describes developments in the way scientists have understood and explored the phenomenon of complexity. It is a story of challenging ideas that break down traditional boundaries in the way established disciplines understand the world, and of exciting new insights into the rules that govern complex systems.

In the story of the progress towards greater understanding of complex systems, the "Game of Life" plays an important role. The "Game of Life" is an attempt to use computers to model a complex living system. It is based upon the concept of cellular automata presented earlier in my discussion of self-organization and pattern formation; however, it is considerably more complex than the simple panic/ don't panic model

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described earlier. In this simulation, individual cells can move to a wide range of

possible states, depending on conditions in their immediate neighborhood. Waldrop

(1992) describes the rules of the simulation as follows:

> [I]magine a programmable universe. "Time" in this universe would be
> defined as the ticking of a cosmic clock, and "space" would be defined to be
> a discrete lattice of cells, with each cell occupied by a very simple, abstractly
> defined computer—a finite automaton. At any given time and in any given
> cell, the automaton could be in only one of a finite number of states, which
> could be thought of as *red, white, blue, green and yellow*, or *1,2,3,4* or *living
> and dead*, or whatever. At each tick of the clock, moreover, the automaton
> would make a transition to a new state, which would be determined by its
> own current state and the current state of its neighbors. (Waldrop 1992, p.
> 219)

In their efforts to design this simulation, researchers sought to create a

computerized social system that was able to sustain itself for long periods of time and

demonstrate the sort of complex patterns and ability to evolve and adapt that are found so

often in the real world.

This line of research led to a crucial discovery about the nature of complex

systems. After designing and testing hundreds of variations of these modified cellular

automata programs, researchers found that the systems that emerged according to

different sets of rules fit into four different categories:

Category I systems "contained what you might call *doomsday rules*: no matter

what pattern of living or dead cells you started out with, everything would just die within

one or two time steps. The grid on the computer would go monochrome." (Waldrop

1992, p. 224) In other words, the system would immediately settle into a very simple,

inactive, unchanging state.

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Category II systems were a bit more interesting. They would quickly settle into a slightly more complex pattern (like in the panic model presented earlier), and then remain, unchanging, in that fairly simple state.

Category III systems demonstrated exactly the opposite tendency: They were too active and were eternally changing. In these systems, "nothing was stable and nothing was predictable: structures would break up almost as soon as they formed" (Waldrop 1992, p. 226). If Categories I & II were characterized by static simplicity, Category III systems were characterized by constant chaos.

Category IV systems, however, were different. They produced "coherent structures that propagated, grew, split apart, and recombined in a wonderfully complex way. They essentially never settled down." (Waldrop 1992, p. 226) In other words, these relatively rare systems appeared to simulate dynamics found everywhere in the natural world: an ability to self-organize in complex ways, a remarkable balance between order and creativity, and an ability to continue changing and evolving without end.

A key insight grew out of researcher's attempts to understand why certain rules generated these different types of systems. After much experimentation, it was found that a key variable in these systems assessed the probability that any given cell would be "alive" in the next generation. When this variable (called by the Greek letter "lambda") was set too low, the result was category I or II systems. When it was set too high, the result was Category III systems. Set this variable within a small window somewhere in between the two extremes, and the result is a Category IV system.

Waldrop explains,

At very low values around 0.0 he found nothing but dead, frozen Class I rules. As he increased the values a little bit, he started finding periodic Class

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II rules. As he increased the values a little more, he noticed that the Class II rules took longer and longer to settle down. Then if he jumped all the way to 0.50, he found himself in the total chaos of Class III...But right there in between Classes II and III, clustered tightly around his magic "critical" value of lambda (about 0.273) he found whole thickets of complex Class IV rules...Somehow, this simpleminded lambda parameter had put the...classes into exactly the kind of sequence he'd wanted—and had found a place for the Class IV rules to boot, right at the transition point:

$$I \ \& \ II \rightarrow \text{"IV"} \rightarrow III$$

Moreover, the sequence suggested an equally provocative transition in dynamical systems:

$$\text{Order} \rightarrow \text{"Complexity"} \rightarrow \text{Chaos}$$

Where "complexity" referred to the kind of eternally surprising dynamical behavior shown by the Class IV automata. (Waldrop 1992, p. 228)

These computer simulations are an attempt to use technology and mathematics to model the dynamics that characterize living systems: self-organization, pattern-formation, evolution, and complexity itself. The findings of this line of inquiry suggests that complex systems are eternally walking a razor's edge between order and chaos. Systems that find this balance demonstrate a remarkable capacity for eternal renewal, creativity, stability, and transformation.

Conclusion

There is, of course, much more that could be said about complex systems. In selecting the five concepts presented here, I have given only the briefest overview of a fraction of the literature related to this field. On the other hand, even this small cross-section of concepts may push the limits of too many ideas to attempt to explore in one social psychology exercise. It is perhaps not surprising that the attempt to empirically

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explore dynamics of complex social systems requires walking the same fine line that the systems themselves must walk: As a researcher, I am constantly struggling to find the path that does not oversimplify the dynamics in question, but also does not grow so complex that no recognizable patterns or useful insights emerge.

It may be useful here, then, to step back and revisit the larger perspective we are trying to illuminate with this research. In a long tradition of classic social psychology research, scholars have explored dynamics at work at the individual level, as well as at the group level. Earlier in this chapter, the authors of the Robber's Cave experiment highlighted the challenges of simultaneously exploring different levels of analysis. They stated:

> The outlines of an interdisciplinary approach appear more clearly with the realization that *psychological* and *sociological* signify different levels of analysis. People studying human relations are approaching related, similar, or even the same problems at different levels of analysis, necessitating units and concepts appropriate for dealing with events on that level. (Sherif, Harvey et al. 1961, p. 5)

In this chapter, I present a few central concepts that are appropriate for talking about events at the complex system level of analysis. Dynamics at this level must be thought about in the terms presented here: interdependence, self-organization and pattern formation, non-linearity, evolution, and complexity. However, it is important to note that this level of analysis simultaneously transcends and includes the other levels of analysis. With this pilot study, I hope to provide some insight—grounded in empirical observations—into the way these multiple levels of analysis interact.

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Chapter 3

The Separation Exercise: Overview and Context

Introduction

My qualifying paper, entitled "Exploring Youth Leadership in Theory and Practice," involved the presentation of four case studies describing a selection of youth leadership programs. One of the programs I studied for this research was called "Camp Anytown," run by an organization called the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). Built into this week-long residential youth leadership program was a "separation exercise," in which the students were separated into groups and told not to talk to individuals in other groups or make eye contact with individuals in other groups. Over the course of three to four hours, however, the students began to break the rules, and this separated, hierarchical system transformed into an integrated, connected network with all the students standing together in a circle.

I was immediately captivated by the exercise. I recognized instantly that it grew out of the tradition of social psychology experiments presented in Chapter One. However, the presence of multiple groups added a level of complexity to this type of exercise that I had never read about before. As a student of complex systems, I realized that this exercise provided a remarkable opportunity to study in an empirical manner the dynamics of a complex human social system undergoing a process of change and transformation.

In this section, I will explain the separation exercise in greater detail. I will also provide brief overviews of the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) and the week-long Camp Anytown experience, in order to provide insight into the context

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in which this separation exercise occurs. Finally, I will explain why this particular exercise represents such a valuable and unique research opportunity.

Introduction to the Separation Exercise

The separation exercise is run multiple times every summer as part of Camp Anytown programs across the nation. The details of the exercise differ slightly at each site. For example, programming at different regions may include a slightly different list of groups, and the hierarchical ordering of groups is rarely exactly the same. In addition, program directors inevitably make different choices in the way they facilitate the exercise (these differences will be explored in the discussion section). Nevertheless, the general design of the exercise is quite similar across sites. The description below provides an introduction to the general purpose and structure of the exercise that is at the heart of this research:

The exercise begins first thing in the morning, on the last day of the week-long Camp Anytown experience. Every morning, the 40+ students wake up around 7:30, and are expected to be at morning circle by 8:00. This morning, however, when the students are done with role call and singing songs, they are not sent in to breakfast right away. Instead, the students are separated into different small groups: whites, Asians, Jews, Latinos, LGBT (lesbian, gay bisexual, transgendered), light-skinned blacks, and dark-skinned blacks.

The members of each group actually belong to these ethnic or identity groups (everyone in the white group is white; everyone in the Jewish group is Jewish, etc). There are also one or two "isolates" — individuals who do not belong to a group. Each

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group is given a badge to wear, such as a white square for the whites, a black circle for the dark skinned blacks, and a yellow Jewish star for the Jews. The instructions for the exercise are simple: you must stay with your group at all times; you cannot talk to someone outside of your group; and you cannot make eye contact with someone outside of your group.

The groups are then told that they may enter the cafeteria for breakfast in the following order: whites, Asians, Jews, Latinos, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered), light-skin blacks and dark-skin blacks. This order is intended to convey a clear hierarchy of privilege and access to resources. Once inside, the white group gets to sit down at a large table while the dark-skinned blacks have to stand while eating. At the end of breakfast, the Latinos are told to sweep the cafeteria floors. This sort of disparity is maintained in a variety of ways during the course of the exercise.

Of course, the purpose of the segregation exercise is to give students some experience with how it feels to take a stand against bias and bigotry. At some stage, one of the participants inevitably makes a decision to "break" the exercise by disobeying the rules, reaching out to another group, and attempting to transform the relationships among these segregated, hierarchically organized groups.

Once this initial act of "civil disobedience" occurs, program staff continue to reprimand participants to follow the simple rules of the exercise. However, the enforcement goes no further than the verbal reprimands. Eventually, more and more individuals begin to challenge the system by disobeying the rules and reaching out to other groups.

What follows is a fascinating process of transformation and reorganization at the individual, group, and system levels.

Although each of the three exercises that we observed for this research began in roughly the same initial state, they each developed very differently, and concluded with different outcomes. At every program, however, at the end of the exercise all the students head directly to a meeting room. In a conversation facilitated by the highly experienced educational staff, they spend the next two hours processing all facets of the experience.

The Separation Exercise in Context: The History and Philosophy of NCCJ

The National Conference for Jews and Christians (NCJC) was founded in 1927 by prominent members of the Christian and Jewish communities. The full, legal name of the organization was the National Conference of Jews and Christians for the Advancement of Justice, Amity and Peace. The organization was formed as a response to the rise in popularity of hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan, and the increasingly strident voices of anti-semitism and anti-catholicism at the time. The NCJC was "a human relations organization dedicated to addressing the nation's intergroup problems" (NCCJ 2004).

Soon after it's founding, the organization shortened its name to the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ). Co-chaired throughout the years by a prominent Christian and a prominent Jew, the organization dedicated itself to creating opportunities for interfaith dialogue and discussion between these two religious groups.

In the years since its founding, the NCCJ has continued to promote this sort of dialogue and discussion. Currently, it has offices in 38 states as well as the District of Columbia (NCCJ 2004). Although it continues to create programming around interfaith

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relations, the NCCJ has broadened its mission to address prejudice in all its forms: racism, sexism, homophobia, discrimination based on physical or mental disabilities, etc. In order to reflect this broader mission, the organization changed its name to the National Conference for Community and Justice in 1998. Today, its mission statement reads as follows:

> The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ), founded in 1927 as The National Conference for Christians and Jews, is a human relations organization dedicated to fighting bias, bigotry and racism. NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education. (NCCJ 2004)

At this point, the National Conference for Community and Justice has a 77-year history of promoting inter-group relations in America. The work of the organization has been lauded by multiple U.S. presidents, Pope John Paul II, and numerous local and national civic and religious leaders.

The organization pursues its mission in a variety of ways. At the national level, it has branches devoted to public policy, media and advertising, interfaith relations, economic opportunity, and education (both adult and youth). In pursuing these efforts, the organization's stated programming strategies are as follows:

- *Create cognitive and affective growth among the participants relative to bias, bigotry, and racism and produce understanding and respect across race, faith, and cultural lines.*
- *Address forms of prejudice and discrimination, including the dynamics that systemically exclude or oppress individuals and groups because of their race, faith, gender, age, sexual orientation, physical ability status, and economic or social class.*
- *Bring diverse groups of people together to engage in purposeful, goal-directed dialogue to learn about one another and begin to reduce the stereotypes and myths that support all forms of oppression.*

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- *Provide a means to raise awareness, educate, resolve conflict, advocate, and establish equity around the issues of bias, bigotry, racism, and other forms of oppression.*
- *Work to dismantle the systems that provide power and privilege to some groups while denying other groups these advantages.*
- *Work to empower individuals and institutions to develop, implement, and support systems of inclusion* (NCCJ 2004).

For our purposes here, it is important to recognize that the youth education component of the work done by NCCJ is clearly just one piece of a larger effort to promote intergroup relations through a variety of means. Furthermore, Camp Anytown is just one of the youth education initiatives run by the NCCJ. Several regions also run programs called "YouthLead" and "Building Bridges to Understanding", both of which bring together youth and educators for a series of meetings and activities over the course of an academic year. (NCCJ, 2004b)

Within this wider context of youth education programming, Camp Anytown is the most intensive and comprehensive youth program run by the NCCJ. Because it is a one-week residential program (usually occurring at a summer camp or similar facility), it allows for a uniquely in-depth exploration of the issues that the NCCJ is committed to addressing. Relative to other NCCJ youth education programs, it requires a considerable commitment of both time and emotional energy, and allows for the exploration of a broad range of topics in a highly experiential manner.

Camp Anytown: History, Philosophy, and Pedagogy

The Camp Anytown program was founded in 1957. It grew directly out of the mission of the NCCJ, and represents an effort to create a powerful and in-depth educational experience for youth. Unfortunately, a detailed history of the program's

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development over the decades is unavailable; however, it is clear that since its inception, the basic model of Camp Anytown has remained largely unchanged. It is a one-week (4-5 day), residential program for high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors, and it is dedicated to the anti-bias and anti-bigotry education that is the heart of the NCCJ's mission.

According to one region's website, the purpose and history of the program is as follows:

> The purpose of Anytown is to educate young people for effective leadership in our pluralistic society. Since 1957, over 25,000 young people have participated, moving on to responsible leadership positions in our community, state and nation. (Anytown 2004)

According to the national website, Camp Anytown program's are run by 26 of the 39 regional NCCJ offices (NCCJ, 2004b). While most of these regions run one Camp Anytown each summer, some regions may organize two or three sessions each summer. The numbers of programs run may vary in any given year based on participant interest, regional office staffing, availability of funds, etc. Most of these programs occur in the summer months, and are held at summer camps or similar facilities. Arizona is the only region in the nation that owns a camping facility dedicated to this type of programming. Not surprisingly, Arizona is unique in its ability to run multiple Camp Anytown programs throughout the year.

Despite these regional differences, there is no doubt that the programming at the heart of this research grows directly out of the NCCJ's institutional history, and is aligned with the national organization's clearly articulated mission and program strategies.

Camp Anytown's Mission

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Both marketing materials and my interviews with Program Directors make it clear that the mission that drives Camp Anytown is identical to the mission of the NCCJ. When I asked program staff about the mission of Camp Anytown, they inevitably recited the final sentence of the national organization's mission statement:

> NCCJ promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education. (NCCJ 2004)

Theory and Philosophy Informing the Pedagogy at Camp Anytown

Philosophically, the program draws upon a specific body of literature and set of theories related to both social justice and social justice education. A key text presenting this body of theory is *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, by Adams, Bell, & Griffin (1997). Although a complete review and analysis of this literature is beyond the scope of this chapter, an introductory overview of these ideas is essential for understanding the pedagogy employed at Camp Anytown.

Central to this body of theory are a series of definitions related to social justice. Collectively, these definitions illuminate the philosophy of social justice that informs the programming that occurs as Camp Anytown. A partial list of these definitions is as follows:

> **Oppression:** *A systematic social phenomenon based on the perceived and real differences among social groups that involves a domination of belief systems as well as institutional and cultural control of the subordinate group by the dominant. In this process, the oppressor's belief systems, logic system and culture are forced on the oppressed. The result is the exploitation of one social group by another for the benefit of the oppressor group.*

> **Diversity:** *The uniqueness of all individuals including differences and similarities in personality, values, identities, life experiences, and work roles.*

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Prejudice: *A set of personal beliefs, positive or negative, about a social group that leads individuals to prejudge people based on their membership in such social groups, regardless of individual differences among members of that group.*

Privilege: *A resource or state of being that is only readily available to some people because of their social group membership.*

Social Power: *Access to resources that enhance one's chances of getting what one needs in order to lead a comfortable, productive and safe life. Those with social power have the ability to influence the norms, culture, and institutions of society.*

Agent: *A social group that is positively valued, considered to be superior, the norm. Has access to social power.*

Target: *A social group that is negatively valued, considered to be inferior, deviant, or dependent, and has limited access to social power.*

Vertical Oppression: *When agents enforce dominant status with other members of the agent group.*

Agent to Agent Horizontal Oppression: *When agents enforce dominant status with other members of the agent group.*

Target to Target Horizontal Oppression: *When target group members enforce subordinate status among their own group or, if there is more than one target group, when on e target group enforces subordinate status with another target group.*

Internalized Oppression: *When members of the target social group adopt the agent group's ideology and accept their subordinate status as deserved, natural, and inevitable.*

Internalized Dominance: *When members of the agent group accept their group's status as normal and deserved.*

Empowerment: *When target group members refuse to accept the dominant ideology and their subordinate status and take actions to redistribute social power more equitably.*

Ally: *A member of the agent group who rejects the dominant ideology and takes action against oppression out of a belief that eliminating the oppression will benefit both agents and targets.*

These social justice definitions provide some perspective into the philosophical foundation of the programming that occurs at Camp Anytown. It is important to highlight the assumptions that are implied by this theoretical worldview:

1) There is a hierarchical organization of groups in the social structure of society ("vertical oppression," "agent," "target").

2) This social system fosters relationships of oppression between groups higher in the hierarchy and those below them.

3) The purpose of social justice education is to help students understand this social system, and empower them to change it to make the world more equal and just for all groups.

It is important to emphasize the direct connection between this theory of social justice and the separation exercise that occurs at Camp Anytown. While the week-long experience at Camp Anytown includes a wide variety of activities, the separation exercise is perhaps the most complete and comprehensive simulation of the theory that informs the program.

Pedagogy at Camp Anytown

NCCJ staff members made it clear that in order for me to gain access to what occurs at Camp Anytown, I had to agree not to make details of the programming widely available. The program is highly experiential, and the organization has a legitimate concern that the value and impact of the programming would be undermined if too many participants had a pre-existing awareness of exactly what occurs. Part of my agreement with the organization involves a recognition that I may have to completely disguise the organization if I choose to publish any findings of this research. The outcome of the

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separation exercise, in particular, could be easily affected by one or two individuals with insight into what that exercise involves.

For these reasons, then, I will not attempt to go into great detail here to explain all of the many activities that occur during the week. Rather, I will present a general overview of the methods at the heart of the Camp Anytown pedagogy.

The most important aspect of the pedagogy used at Camp Anytown is that the program is almost completely experiential. There is some small amount of time devoted to frontal lecturing; early on in the week, many of the definitions presented above are shown to the group and discussed; however, the vast majority of the activities are devoted to experiential learning.

Over the course of the week, participants explore issues such as racism, sexism, homophobia, interfaith relations, and discrimination against individuals with physical or mental disabilities. Although a variety of activities are used as triggers to kick-start these discussions, the heart of the pedagogy involves providing participants with a space to discuss the ways they have been personally affected by these issues. Frequently, participants are asked to explore they way these issues play out in real-time in the Camp Anytown community.

Not surprisingly, discussions relating to these sensitive topics frequently get emotional. Because of this, a major focus of the Camp Anytown pedagogy is on process and processing. At all levels of the program (senior staff, support staff, and participants), the week is characterized by a nearly constant discussion of how things are progressing, how people feel, and what issues are at play in the group dynamic.

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A considerable amount of individual attention is given to each participant. Typically, there are 15-20 staff members for a group of 40-50 participants. This low student/staff ratio goes a long way towards ensuring that no participant is overlooked or ignored over the course of the week. Every night, all participants are asked to fill out a brief evaluation sheet, presenting their thoughts about the day's activities and their feelings at that moment. Evening staff meetings are devoted to processing the responses to these evaluations and discussing individuals who seem to be having difficulty or may need extra support.

It is not uncommon for the staff to decide to change the planned schedule based on a collective evaluation of the community-building process. For example, at two of the three programs we visited, we were told that the staff might decide at the last minute to cancel the separation exercise. The exercise requires that a certain level of trust and comfort exist in the community, and on occasion the staff may decide that the group is simply not ready for the experience (fortunately for us, the separation exercise occurred at the three programs we visited!). Similarly, at one of the programs we visited, the staff made a decision to completely reschedule the week in order to more quickly explore the gender issues deemed to be playing a major role in the first days of the group dynamic. The specific details of the activities involved are less important than the recognition that the heart of the Camp Anytown pedagogy is in-depth processing, discussion, and a willingness to be flexible with the schedule based upon the perceived needs of the group at a given moment.

It is not surprising that a major emphasis of the week-long experience is on breaking down boundaries between groups. In accordance with the larger mission of

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NCCJ, the Camp Anytown pedagogy reflects a belief that diversity is beneficial, and that reaching out to other groups is an essential component of social justice. A colorful expression of this belief is a tradition known as "rainbow" that occurs at the camps: At almost any moment, a staff member can shout "Rainbow!" When participants hear the command, they are expected to stand up and switch seats in order sit next to someone who looks different or comes from a different background. The purpose is to ensure that the week is full of encounters across social groups.

This, then, is the context in which the separation exercise occurs:

- It grows out of an organizational mission to "promote understanding and respect among all races, religions and cultures through advocacy, conflict resolution and education. (NCCJ 2004)

- It is grounded in an educational philosophy that views the world as a hierarchy of social groups in which higher-level groups are engaged in oppressive relationships with lower-level groups.

- It aims to teach empowerment and equality through a highly experiential pedagogy in which processing and attending to real-time interpersonal relationships are given the highest priority.

Technical Details of the Camp Anytown Experience

Senior Staff: The Program Directors running the Camp Anytowns we visited had considerable experience and training. The director at the first site we visited (Separation Exercise #1) had a Masters Degree in Social Justice Education, and had been overseeing youth education at her region's NCCJ office for four years. She worked with an

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Assistant Director who was interning with NCCJ as part of his studies to receive a Masters Degree in Social Work.

The Director of at our second site (Separation Exercise #2) had been involved with Camp Anytown for six years, starting as a participant and working her way up to become Program Director. Significantly, during the week-long Anytown experience, she worked closely with another senior staff member who had ten years of experience facilitating the Camp Anytown programming.

The co-directors at our third site were both Clinical Social Workers with decades of experience working with youth in public schools. Although this was their first time formally running an Anytown program, both of them had served as support staff at least four times in the past.

Thus, at the programs we visited, we encountered senior staff with considerable experience facilitating the type of experiential programming that occurs at Camp Anytown. In two out of three cases, they also had relevant professional degrees.

Support Staff: As previously discussed, Camp Anytown includes a relatively large number of support staff. The organizational structure of the program includes two positions for support staff. The first of these positions is the role of "Advisor." These individuals are usually older college students or adult professionals with several years of experience with the program. They have usually attended the program as a participant, and then served as a counselor at least once; some of the invididuals we encountered in Advisor roles had seven or eight years of involvement with Camp Anytown. Advisors may also be teachers or social workers that have had an ongoing relationship with Camp Anytown over several years. The programs we visited included 3-5 advisors.

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The other role for support staff is "Counselor." These individuals are always younger—they are either still in high school or early college. They were recent participants on the program and are quite enthusiastic about returning to Camp Anytown to help others learn from the experience. These individuals sleep in the cabins with the participants, facilitate small group discussions, and report back to senior staff about dynamics in each bunk, challenges individual participants are having, etc. The programs we visited included 10-15 Counselors.

Again, this organizational structure ensures a very low staff/student ratio. It is also important to note that none of the staff (with the exception of the Program Director/s) is paid for the week of involvement in Camp Anytown. It is a tribute to the effectiveness and popularity of the program that it is able to attract such a large number of staff willing to dedicate so much time and effort without pay.

Participants: According to the Camp Anytown guidelines, participants must be high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors. In theory, participants at Camp Anytown are supposed to be nominated by teachers or guidance counselors, and then write an essay as part of a competitive process in which a few select individuals from each school will attend. In practice, it is rare that each participant at Camp Anytown is selected through this type of process. In fact, we found a different selection process at each program we visited.

For example, at the first program we visited, participants had arrived at the program through a variety of channels. Several participants had been encouraged to apply by teachers or guidance counselors, but had not had to write an essay or compete with other students from their school. Still others had heard about the program through a

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friend. As the start-date for the program approached, however, enrollment was still fairly low. A staff member at the local YMCA, hearing that several spots were available, signed up a group of about 15 inner-city youth at the last minute. These participants knew very little about Camp Anytown, and were actually surprised by the strong focus on social justice and experiential education.

In contrast, all the participants at the third program we visited had gone through an identical application process. They were all students at the same large inner-city public school, and every participant had been nominated by a teacher or guidance counselor, and had written an application with an essay stating why they hoped to participate. Due to high levels of interest, not all applicants were selected to participate, and some applicants had gone through an interview process to determine whether they would make the final cut.

The second program we visited fell somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. The participants were from a wide range of schools in the area (both public and private). Some of them had been nominated by teachers and had gone through an application process that involved writing an essay. Others had heard about the program through friends and had simply applied, without going through a selection process at their school. In this case all participants were well aware of the nature of the program, and had made an active choice to attend.

Participation in Camp Anytown costs approximate $400. Each region hsd some funding available for scholarships.

Concluding Thoughts: The Value of the Segregation Exercise as a Focus for Research

Although it is important to understand the larger context in which this exercise occurs, it is also worthwhile to highlight the reasons I found this exercise to be so compelling as a subject of research. The "Camp Anytown" separation exercise is a uniquely valuable subject of inquiry for the following reasons:

1) *Relevance of the Systemic Structure and Transformation*

The design of this exercise makes it an ideal place to explore the perspective presented in earlier chapters. It lends itself naturally to a multi-level analysis of events, with individuals nested in groups, groups nested in a complex system, and that complex system undergoing a process of transformation. The exercise represents a remarkable opportunity to empirically explore the concepts of self-organization, pattern formation, non-linearity, development, and complexity in a relatively controlled environment.

2) *The Exercise is Easily Researchable*

Although the segregation exercise raises a complex set of issues (obedience, conformity, group conflict and cooperation, system-wide dynamics), the exercise is simple enough to analyze in-depth. Because the exercise includes a manageable number of participants, and occurs in a limited physical space and a brief amount of time, it is possible to observe the system as a whole. Through the use of questionnaires (Appendix B), interviews (Appendix C), and direct observation (Appendix D), it is also possible to gather data regarding events occurring at all three levels of analysis.

3) *A Proven, Safe Environment for a Provocative Exercise*

As mentioned, the Camp Anytown separation exercise grows out of a tradition of well-known and controversial social science experiments. As with the work of Milgram (1974), Asch (1951), Sherif (1961), and others, this research employs deception and some degree of discomfort for participants. Naturally, any exploration of this type of exercise triggers important issues of ethics and participant safety.

A major benefit of focusing my research on this program is that the NCCJ has included this exercise in its Camp Anytown experience for several decades. The exercise is run multiple times every summer at locations across the nation by a respected non-profit educational organization. The experience is facilitated by highly trained educators in a safe and supportive environment, and has been in use for decades without any known incident of psychological or emotional trauma.

The fact that the exercise is built into a larger educational program also has ethical and safety ramifications. This research did not involve recruiting participants to engage in an experiment of my own design. Rather, I was simply able to harvest data from an existing exercise that was fully integrated into a larger educational experience. For this research, participants were not asked to reflect upon or discuss any issues they would not be expected to address in the course of their normal and voluntary participation in the Camp Anytown experience. These design elements ensured that this research could

be conducted in an ethical manner that supports the psychological and emotional safety and security of all participants.

2) *Replicability.*

Because Camp Anytown is run multiple times at multiple locations across the country each summer, it is possible to replicate this research. By conducting a pilot study and then replicating the research on two more segregation exercises, we were able to test the validity of interpretations drawn from single cases and present more detailed findings informed by cross-case analyses. This research design allowed us to explore whether dynamics observed in individual understanding, group interaction, and system-level transformation are idiosyncratic or appear repeatedly across multiple exercises.

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Methods

This research employed qualitative methods to conduct case studies of three different Camp Anytown separation exercises. The case study methodology is appropriate for this study for several reasons. First, it is suitable for exploratory research designed to generate theory regarding unexplored phenomena (YIN 1994). Second, it effectively explores the unit of analysis (an educational exercise) that is the focus of this study (MILES AND HUBERMAN 1994; YIN 1994; MERRIAM 1998). Finally, multiple case studies allow for cross-case analysis, which facilitates the triangulation of interpretations and promotes greater validity of emergent findings (MAXWELL 1996; MERRIAM 1998).

The process of creating these case studies involved several stages: recruiting research assistants, designing the questionnaire, requesting approval to conduct research, pre-program preparations, observing the actual exercises, distributing questionnaires, and engaging in the data analysis process with my research team. The details of these stages are presented below.

Recruiting Research Assistants

In order to enhance the credibility of this study, I conducted this research with the help of two research assistants (Maykut and Morehouse 1994). My criteria in selecting RAs were as follows:

1) Individuals had to have at least some academic background related to the
   issues at play in this research (social psychology, systems theory, etc).

2) Because of the focus on diversity in this research, individuals had to have

some sort of different background (regarding race, gender, culture, etc.) from

myself.

3) Individuals had to be willing to travel to observe programs, at times staying

overnight at rustic summer camp facilities.

4) Individuals had to commit to completing the data analysis process (the precise

details of which were not fully known at the start of the research).

Through word-of-mouth and an informational email sent out to several listserves,

I was able to recruit two research assistants who met all of these criteria. Because of the

amount of work involved, I provided each RA with a stipend of $500.

Brief bios of the research assistants are as follows:

1) Dumisani Nyoni

A student of psychology at Cambridge College in the United States, Dumisani Nyoni works on the coordinating team of Pioneers of Change—a global network of young leaders, activists, social entrepreneurs and change agents between 25-35 interested in understanding and having an impact on the systems that affect the communities, insitutions and societies around them.

Dumisani is a youth activist, leader, motivator and consultant with a range of experiences from building and coordinating global action networks, facilitating large and small gatherings, workshops and conferences to advising organizations on strategy development, team building and the inclusion and participation of youth in programs and processes.

An inspirational and motivational speaker, Dumisani has spoken and presented at events and conferences around the world including the Youth Employment Summit in Alexandria, Egypt, the Harvard International Development Conference at Harvard University.

2) Derria Byrd

Derria Byrd has seven years of experience working with education-focused non-profits in the Boston area. She has worked as a grant writer and program writer at Facing History and Ourselves, a human-relations curriculum development organization. She has been a teacher trainer and civic participation director for Jumpstart, a non-profit focused on early-childhood education. She has been a program manager at Building Excellent Schools, a charter school

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fellowship program. Currently, she serves as a professional development manager at Citizen Schools, a non-profit that runs after-school programming for area middle schools. She attended an Anytown program while in high school, and is a graduate of Brown University.

Designing the Questionnaire

In the design of the questionnaire, every effort was made to craft questions that were relevant to the research questions and would provide useful information for understanding the dynamics I sought to observe.

My efforts to design the instrument were guided by the following factors:

1. ***The purpose of the research.*** The goal of this research was to explore the psychology of systemic transformation. Ideally, each question would provide data relevant to some aspect of this phenomenon.

2. ***The multi-level model of human interaction that informed this research.*** The research assumed a multi-level model in which individuals are nested in groups, groups are nested in a larger system, and that system is governed by dynamics of complex systems. Research questions were therefore designed to explore these different levels of analysis.

3. ***A belief that human behavior has both cognitive and affective dimensions.*** The questionnaire was informed by a personal conviction that all human behavior is informed by both reason and emotion. Focusing solely on one while ignoring the other is sure to provide an incomplete picture of the dynamics in question.

4. ***The research questions that grew out of this purpose and model.***

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As previously discussed, the research questions driving this research were as follows: *How do individuals understand their involvement in macro-level social system dynamics? How do groups manage the transition from strict segregation to complex interconnection? Are there macro-level patterns that emerge as social systems transform towards greater integration and interdependence?"*

The five questions included on the questionnaire were designed with these central elements in mind. The questions, and the thinking that went into their design, are as follows:

1) Tell your story of what happened during this exercise and how events progressed. Be sure to include the important events that occurred over the course of the exercise.

This question grew out of my first research question: "How do individuals understand their involvement in macro-level social system dynamics." The hope was that responses to this open-ended question would provide insight into the way individuals understood their experience in the exercise. By exploring the connection between these individual narratives and the events we witnessed as outside observers, I could begin to understand the way individuals made meaning of their experience in larger systemic change.

2) What did it feel like being a member of your group? Why?

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This question was designed to explore the affective dimension of individual experience during the exercise. The intention was to augment the cognitive narrative elicited in Question 1 with data exploring each individual's related affective experiences.

3) In your opinion, what was the most important group? Why?

This question was designed to explore the group level of analysis. The purpose here was to generate data allowing for exploration of group-level psychological patterns or tendencies. For example, would we find that the majority of individuals in the bottom-most group were most attuned to the actions of individuals in the top-most group, and vice-versa? Would we find that most individuals in a particular group were primarily attuned to the groups immediately above and below their own group? This question was designed in the hopes of providing data to explore this level of analysis.

4) Why did you not break the exercise earlier?

This question was designed to explore the cognitive dimension of individual action in the context of the larger complex system. What factors influence individual efforts to promote change in a complex system?

5) How did it feel to break the exercise?

This question was designed to explore the affective dimension of individual action in the context of the larger system. How does it feel to promote change in a complex system?

Requesting Approval to Conduct Research

In the Spring of 2004, I began contacting regional NCCJ offices to explore the possibility of conducting this research. Fortunately, the Regional Directors I spoke with were intrigued by the research and were open to the possibility of our observing one of their Camp Anytown programs. Eventually, I was able to find Camp Anytowns occurring in three different regions that we would be able to attend. Soon after my initial contact with the Directors of these regional offices, I sent them a letter explaining my research purposes and methodologies and formally requesting cooperation and approval (see Appendix A). In the weeks before each program, I had several discussions with Program Directors to explore any issues and concerns.

It should be noted that the letter to Program Directors ensured that this research would preserve the confidentiality of staff and participants. For this reason, all names have been changed, and I do not reveal the location of the particular camps we attended.

Pre-Program Preparations

Because we were researching an activity built into a larger educational context, we did not have to recruit subjects. Also, because we were not asking participants to reveal or discuss anything beyond what they were expected to address as voluntary participants in the week-long Camp Anytown experience, we were not required to obtain parental approval or participant assent. We did, however, send out a letter to both participants and their parents to inform them of the purpose and nature of the research. For the Parental Information Form, see Appendix B. For the Participant Information Form, see Appendix C. Both this procedure and the text of the letters were approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to the beginning of the research.

Observation of the Separation Exercises

Data collection for this study focused on both understanding pedagogical decisions regarding the design and execution of each exercise and on exploring relational dynamics that occured on all three levels of analysis during the course of each exercise. Data collection involved site visits, direct observation of both the exercise and the processing session, and a participant questionnaire (Yin 1994; Merriam 1998).

Between the months of June and November, we were able to observe three separation exercises at three different Camp Anytowns. In all three cases, members of the research team arrived at the program the afternoon before the exercise was to take place. Given the pedagogical focus on processing group dynamics and attending to each individual, senior staff at all locations felt it was important to introduce us to the community in some fashion prior to our observing the separation exercise. In each case, we were introduced at some appropriate moment on the day before the exercise. Participants were told that we were researchers studying Camp Anytown, and that we would be unobtrusively observing events for a while. Our specific research focus on the separation exercise was never revealed, and at no point did participants ask us specific questions about our purposes. Although a few participants at each site recalled from the informational letters that researchers would be attending the program, our presence seemed inconsequential.

We observed the evening exercise, and sat in on the evening staff meeting in which the details of the morning separation exercise were presented and discussed. We were allowed to sleep at the facilities where the program was occurring. We were present

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at the morning circle and observed all three exercises from beginning to end. Members of the research team carried notebooks throughout the process, and made hand-written notes of what we then observed. Due to our commitment to preserve the confidentiality of participants, we did not videotape, photograph, or audiotape the exercise.

We also observed the processing session that followed the exercise; however, we did not take notes related to these discussions. Two of the three program directors made it clear that participants might not be comfortable discussing their experiences in the presence of individuals taking notes. For this reason, we have no written records of any of the processing sessions.

Due to the amount of time required to observe an exercise, as well as the difficulty of finding a time when all three members of the research team were available, we were not all able to attend each exercise. At Separation Exercise #1, I was joined by only one RA (Dumi). At Separation Exercise #2, both Research Assistants were able attend. This was the only exercise we all observed together.

Separation Exercise #3 took place in a remote location. Unfortunately, scheduling conflicts and prohibitive travel costs made it impossible for either research assistant to join me. At that exercise, however, I was able to recruit a member of the local program staff to serve as a Research Assistant. She was a white, female adult who taught high school English, and had attended at least two Anytowns prior to this exercise. She made it clear she was willing to observe the exercise as a Research Assistant, and the senior staff agreed that the exercise could be properly facilitated without her direct involvement. Thus, I was still able to obtain two sets of observational notes, allowing for the creation of a composite narrative based on multiple observations of the same exercise.

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Distribution of the Questionnairre

At Separation Exercise #1, we handed out the questionnaire immediately following the processing session that occurred at the end of the exercise. Participants were given 20 minutes to fill it out at that session. At Exercises #2 and #3, the questionnaires were distributed at small group discussions that occurred right after lunch.

In accordance with IRB-approved guidelines, participants were told that they were not required to fill out the questionnaire. At each location, a limited number of participants elected not to fill out the questionnaires. The questionnaire return rate for each exercise is as follows:

	Exercise #1	Exercise #2	Exercise #3
Total # Participants	42^1	50	46
# of Returned Questionnairres	23	48	45
Return Rates:	55%	96%	98%

I was unable to gather more specific data about exactly which participants did not fill out questionnaires or why. Clearly, the low return rate for Exercise #1 is likely to influence the findings from that exercise. For the other two exercises, however, a clear majority of participants took the time to fill out the questionnaires. The analyses

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[1] The number of participants in this exercise is based on my notes and has not been confirmed by the program director.

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presented in Chapter Six are all based upon the data retrieved from the questionnaires that we received from participants at each exercise.

Data Analysis

Data analysis included both single-case and cross-case analysis (YIN 1994). After completing a site visit, each researcher drafted an analytic memo to capture his or her interpretation of the observed events (Maxwell 1996). For Exercises #1 and #2, we were able to work together as a research team to develop a "composite" analytic memo that effectively integrated all of our interpretations. For Exercise #3, I was able to corroborate my own observations against the field notes written by the local staff member.

Again, although all members of the research team were not able to attend each exercise, in every case we were able to ensure that at least two researchers observed the exercise. This use of multiple observers allowed us to explore and test our interpretations of the events we witnessed at all three exercises.

After developing the composite narratives, we proceeded to analyze the complete set of questionnaires in an inductive, data-driven effort to generate grounded theory related to the exercise (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Boyatzis 1998). First, I typed up the full set of questionnaires from each exercise. Because so much of the analysis involved organizing responses according to the hierarchically arranged groups, I organized the transcriptions according to this hierarchical group structure (i.e., Whites, Latinos, Jews, etc.). Then, working alone, each researcher reviewed the set of answers to each question on the questionnaire, and developed a set of codes related to themes that emerge from the data (Maxwell 1996; Boyatzis 1998).

The research team then convened to compare our list of codes, clarify our understanding of themes and interpretations, and gather our work into single code book (for a partial selection of these codes, see Appendix D).

Working alone, I made the decision to present these codes as a response to my first research question: *How do individuals understand their experience in macro-level social system dynamics?* These findings are presented in Table #1, in Chapter Six.

In order to generate codes for the responses to Question #2 ("*What did it feel like being a member of your group? Why?*"), I used a two-step method. First, I organized the responses into grids according the hierarchical group structure created by senior staff at each exercise (see Appendices E, F, & G). Then, I analyzed each grid and used grounded theory to generate a set of codes related to these responses. These codes are presented in Table #2 in Chapter Six.

After reviewing responses to Question #3 ("*In your opinion, what other groups were most important during this exercise?*"), I decided to create quantitative analyses of these responses (Tables 3,4,5). I also present this data in a more graphic format, using visual charts (Charts 1,2, and 3). After presenting all of these analyses, I offer a cross-case analysis of this set of data.

In addition, I also used grounded theory to generate a set of codes related to the qualitative data from Question #3. Once again, I used a two-step method in which I first organized the data in grid form, grouping together responses related to each social group (i.e. all the comments that focused on white males were grouped together, etc). I used this grid to generate a series of codes related to the qualitative reasons why individuals chose to focus on particular groups in the system (Table 6).

In reviewing responses to Question #4 ("Why did you not 'break' this exercise earlier than when you did?"), I again engaged in a grounded theory analysis of the responses. Due to time constraints, I was unable to collaborate with my research team in generating these codes. Once I had generated a set of codes, I returned to the raw data to see how many responses fit in each category

I followed an identical process in analyzing the responses to Question #5 ("*How did it feel to 'break' the exercise?*"). Once again, using grounded theory, I generated a set of codes from the data. I then returned to the data to see how many responses fit in each category.

After completing a first draft of this dissertation, I sent it out for review by my research team. Derria and Dumi provided me with feedback regarding the numerous coding schemes I developed using grounded theory. Whenever possible, I have integrated their feedback into this analysis. In addition, working alone, they each attempted to fit the data into the various coding schemes. This allowed me to test the validity of these findings by exploring inter-rater reliability.

Finally, in an effort to address my final research question ("Are there macro-level patterns that emerge as social systems transform towards greater integration and interdependence?"), I engaged in a cross-case analysis of all three exercises. I reviewed the narrative memos to search for common themes, and compared the various analyses that relate to each exercise in search of patterns or insights that appear across all three case studies.

The research team also discussed these themes and efforts at theory building.

Again, when possible, I included their suggestions in this draft.[2]

Testing for Validity

As this study explored controversial subjects using an innovative research design,

the threats to the validity of description, interpretation, and theory generated were

significant and had to be addressed. The study design includes a variety of efforts to

minimize these threats, test the various types of validity, and enhance the credibility of

this study. The simultaneous use of direct observation and questionnaires allowed for the

testing of validity through the harvesting of "rich" data and the triangulation of multiple

data sources (Maxwell 1996). The use of a research team created a system of "checks

and balances...[that] increases the trustworthiness of the analysis" (Maykut and

Morehouse 1994, p. 131). More specifically, the debate that occurred within the

research team was designed to minimize the threat of researcher bias, and to create

feedback and comparisons that test for validity of description, interpretation, and theory

generation (Maxwell 1996).

Naturally, we had some concern that the use of a research team would generate

the problem of reactivity. Every effort was made to make observation of the exercise as

unobtrusive and inconspicuous as possible.

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[2] Overall, the data analysis process combined both collaborative efforts that involved my research team, as well as a fair amount of individual analysis. Although it would have been ideal to engage in a more collaborative effort, this was made difficult by two factors. First, it proved difficult to find a time when all three members of the research team could meet to engage in in-depth exploration of the data. Second, this research was an attempt to bring the perspective of complex systems to the discipline of social psychology. As my research assistants did not have an expertise in this subject, it was challenging to know how to effectively involve them while attempting to bring this perspective to the data analysis process.

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Fortunately, in all three cases, we found little evidence to suggest that the presence of the research team influenced the outcome of the separation exercise. At all sites, senior staff members had considerable experience with facilitating separation exercises, and none of them felt that the exercises we observed had progressed in an unusual or abnormal manner. In fact, all three directors expressed some surprise at the fact that the presence of two or three strangers holding notebooks and taking notes had such little impact on events. Ultimately, our experience supports Maxwell's claim regarding this threat to validity:

> [R]eactivity is generally not as serious a validity threat as some people believe. Becker (1970) points out that in natural settings, an observer is generally much less of an influence on participants' behavior than is the setting itself (1996, p. 91).

Chapter Five

Composite Narratives

Between the months of June and November 2004, we were able to visit three separate Camp Anytowns and observe three distinct separation exercises. As described in Chapter Four, in all cases we had at least two researchers observing and taking notes on the events that transpired. Soon after returning from each site visit, we reviewed all field notes and drafted a "composite narrative." This document presents the major events of the exercise in a manner that stays true to the notes taken by multiple researchers who observed each exercise.

With the narratives presented below, we do not claim to present every detail of what occurred at each exercise. Rather, our goal has been to create a description of events that accurately captures the overall progression of events, the pedagogical decisions made by staff, and the major incidents that influenced the outcome of the exercise.

In an effort to preserve the confidentiality of all staff and participants, all names have been changed, and the locations where the exercises occurred are not revealed.

In this chapter, we present all three composite narratives.

Composite Narrative: Separation Exercise #1

Morning Orientation Meeting

The morning of the separation exercise, all the counselors report to a 7am staff meeting. They are gathered in the common room of a staff cabin, and a very diverse crowd of approximately 20 teen-aged and twenty-something counselors are seated on the

floor. Thomasina, the director of the program, is seated on one of the two couches in the

room. She is a tall Asian woman with an army style buzz-cut hairdo. Seated next to her

is Drake, the program's assistant director. A white male in his late twenties, he is

unshaven and looks like he is barely awake.

Thomasina explains how the exercise is going to work. She says that the

delegates will be broken up by culture group—not all of them will be represented, and also

some people will be in their perceived culture group as opposed to their actual culture

group. The rules of the exercise are simple: Don't talk to anyone outside of your group;

don't make eye contact with anyone outside your group; and always stick together.

The list of groups (in hierarchal order, from bottom to top) includes the following:

1) Black Male

2) Black Female

3) Latino/a group

4) GLBT ("Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgendered"—this group included two staff
    members and no participants)

5) Jewish

6) Asian group (Four staff members, no participants)

7) White female

8) White male

Thomasina advised the staff: "Participate as if you have no idea of what it is

about. You are not to shift the dynamics. You are neutral. Filler. Sheep. It will be as if

all the camp stops leading except for me and Drake."

She continues: "If a delegate asks you what is going on or tries to break the

exercise, you can say some of the following things:

'I don't know what we are doing'

'This is a new exercise...we didn't do this when I was a delegate'

'Thomasina keeps changing things, so I don't know what we are doing...'

She explains that it ends when the exercise breaks and the delegates come together as some sort of community.

The hierarchy will be made apparent through some assigned tasks: The black females will have to clean tables. The latinos will sweep the floors after breakfast. The white men will have breakfast all laid out for them.

Finally, she explains that Tammy and Roger–two of the strongest personalities in the program–will be by themselves, without a group. This is done out of a belief that, with their strong personalities, these two delegates might end up breaking the exercise so early that the educational value of the experience is undermined.

Although the staff go on to discuss their concerns about the morning and specific delegates, the conversation has a superficial feel to it. This is a controversial exercise, and its effect on the delegates, staff, and the community as a whole are not given much weight. One staff person is obviously asleep during the conversation, and the assistant director, Drake, never says a word.

As a wrap up, the director offers the following encouragement: "We want to see if folks can be incited to riot against authority," she states. "Let's do it; it'll be great!"

Morning Circle/ Start of the Exercise

The delegates emerge from their cabins for morning circle, at 7:45 as always. Some look half asleep, while others already seem full of energy. One delegate-- a short

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black boy with a backwards baseball cap and a "Sean Jean" sweatshirt—has found a bottle of bubble liquid and is running around blowing bubbles into the air.

Someone shouts out, "Lead us in song!"

Another yells, "It's my birthday in two days!"

Soon, many in the group are singing "Happy Birthday." When that is done, a counselor heads into the center of the circle and starts to sing a call-and-response cheer about a little green frog. While some delegates are enthusiastic participants, not everyone is joining in. To the eyes of outside observers, it appears as though there is a curious lack of respect for authority among many delegates.

Following the cheer, Thomasina steps into the center of the circle.

"We are going to have an exercise this morning, " she states. "Drake doesn't know a lot about it; I will explain it to you all at the bottom of the stairs" (on the way into the dining hall for breakfast). "But first, Drake is going to call your names out and put you in groups."

Drake begins calling out names; he begins with the white males; when they have gathered around him, he hands them each a patch to wear on their shirt. In this case, it is a white square made of felt. As the group of white males makes their way down towards to he dining hall, he begins calling out the names of white females. They receive a white circle to pin on their shirt. He continues down the list, and soon delegates still in the circle begin to realize that the groups are similar to the culture groups they have been working in for the previous two days (blacks, latinos, Asians, Jews, etc).

It is not long before some of the delegates recognize the pattern.

"That's the latino group!" says Tammy quite loudly.

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Some of the black and latino delegates begin to get uncomfortable with having to wait so long. Latesha, a black female, says "I hate this going last! I feel outcast!". Mark, surrounded by other black males at this point, says, "I guess we're the niggers; why can't we be middle or first? Why we always last?"

Down at the entrance to the dining hall, Thomasina is explaining the rules of the exercise to each group as they arrive.

As the black group arrives at the entrance, she repeats the directions she has already given to the other groups that are already inside the dining hall eating breakfast. "This is a chance to get to know each other better. No talking or eye contact with other groups. Everything you do, you need to do together." She goes on to state that this is just an exercise, and it won't last all day.

The delegates mutter comments to themselves. "Why is Roger out there instead of with all of us?" asks one of the delegates, upset that the ever-charismatic Roger has been placed alone, without a group.

"Its just for the exercise," states Thomasina. "Now head on in to breakfast."

Someone says they need to use the bathroom, and Thomasina explains that the group must stay together. "If one of you has to go to the bathroom, you all need to wait outside the door while they are in there. And no interacting with delegates who are not in your group!"

Eventually, Roger—one of the isolates--makes his way down to the dining hall, walking alone. Thomasina explains, "You are not allowed to talk to, make eye contact with, or communicate with anyone else. I think you probably figured out that you are the only one with that patch, so don't talk to anyone else at all."

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By 8:20, all the groups have made their way into the dining hall for breakfast. Inside the dining hall, the atmosphere is quiet and reserved. Groups sit at separate tables, talking softly amongst themselves.

At one point, the black males appear to be making contact with Roger, who is sitting alone at a table. Quickly, Drake intervenes. "We told you not to talk to anyone outside your group! What do you think you're doing!"

The black males put up a halfhearted protest. "But he's our race! He should be with us!"

Drake shakes his head. "Follow the rules! Talk only to people in your group!"

Another black male stands up to get some more food. Thomasina quickly confronts him: "Where do you think you are going? You can't go somewhere without your whole group!"

The delegate shakes his head. "Come on guys," he says to the rest of the black males, who stand up and follow him to the food line. They are clearly frustrated.

After about 20 minutes, groups appear to be finishing their meals. Thomasina tells the black females that it is their job to clear off everyone's tables. They begin even though some groups are still eating. Thomasina leads the latino group to the broom closet, and hands them all brooms. Soon they are all sweeping up the floor in the dining hall.

Some of the groups are sitting in near silence (the white females, the white males, the Asians, the LGBT group). Other groups are growing increasingly boisterous (the black males and black females are laughing loudly at the unfairness of the situation).

Thomasina sees Roger talking to a latino delegate, and immediately intervenes.

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"You are not to be talking to people not in your group! It's a simple rule! Everyone else is following it without a problem! Why can't you?!?"

Over the next 10 minutes, as groups finish eating and the clean-up of the room is completed, groups begin to head outside to the field. Thomasina and Drake point them to places where they are expected to stay. It is a beautiful, clear, day, and the groups all have more-or-less clear view of each other. It is approximately 8:50.

The white males are sent to a cabin porch at the top of the hill. They sit down in chairs and begin chatting and laughing quietly. The white women sit on a picnic table at the edge of the field. The Asians are at a picnic table behind one of the cabins, essentially out of site. The two LGBT delegates simply stand on the field, as do the Latinos and black females. The three Jews sit on a set of stairs a the edge of the field, talking quietly to each other. The black females, in particular, are growing angry about the situation.

"Damn! White people sitting up there in rocking chairs, and we gotta stand up all the way back here near the woods!" says one woman angrily.

"Fight for your rights!", shouts another.

Tammy, the black female isolate, is alone in a chair on one of the cabin porches. She seems to be going to sleep.

Roger is alone on a different porch. His gaze keeps wandering towards the black males, who are gathered near some picnic tables at the bottom of the hill.

As the minutes tick past, the system remains essentially frozen. The black women, on occasion, laugh loudly, or someone shouts out a half-joking, half-serious cry of resistance. "Fight for your rights!" yells one delegate. "Black is power!" shouts

another. Despite the rhetoric, however, the group remains in its spot.

The black males are talking quietly together. At around 9:15, Drake approaches the group and throws them a beach-ball. "Here," he says, "You guys can play with the ball if you want."

A few delegates begin half-heartedly tossing the ball back and forth.

The system remains essentially static as the minutes slip by. Occassionally, a group walks to a cabin to use the bathroom; although the trip takes them in close proximately to some other groups along the way, nobody makes eye contact. After a few minutes in the cabin, the groups inevitably head right back out to where they were standing.

The black females occasionally shout something out to nobody in particular: "OK! We get the point! Enough already"

At approximately 9:35, Roger leaves his porch and walks into the cafeteria (walking right past where the black males are hanging out). Minutes later, he emerges holding a cup of coffee. He walks back to his porch, and stands there staring towards the black males for several minutes.

At 9:50, the black females all head over to the porch of the discussion room. A few of them head inside, and apparently turn on the radio. Soon loud music spills out onto the field for all to hear. Through the windows, it is clear that some of the women are dancing.

At this point, Roger is emboldened to leave his porch. He walks down towards the black males, and sits down on a picnic table next to them. A minute later, he breaks the rules and starts talking to them. He then heads up to the porch of the discussion

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room, where the black females are sitting.

"Yo! What's the point of this?" he asks them. "I can stand 10 minutes of this, but I can't do all day!"

The black females nod in agreement, but seem content to hang out on the porch, or inside with the radio. After three or four minutes of conversation, Roger heads back down to the black male group.

Despite the fact that music is now blaring across the field, the other groups seem to not be moving at all. The white men chat quietly on a porch at the top of the hill; the white women sit quietly at their picnic table; the Jews, latinos, LGBT group, and Asians are all stationed around the field. As before, a group will occasionally make its way to a cabin to use the bathroom, and then quietly return to their spot. But the system of groups remains essentially as it had been arranged since leaving breakfast.

At 10:10, the black males gather together as a group and start to head up the hill towards the porch where the black females are sitting. They make it about half the distance to the porch, and then stop. Although nobody confronts them for moving (actually, Thomasina and Drake have been inside a cabin for the last 30 minutes or so), they don't make it to join with the black females at this point. After a brief hesitation, they all turn around and return to their spot.

At 10:25, there is another flurry of movement. One of the black men seems to have had enough. "What is the point of this?" He asks to nobody in particular, "To waste time?". He heads back up towards to meeting room where the black women are listening to music, and the group follows. This time, they make it all the way to the meeting room porch. Soon, they are all inside dancing and chatting with the black women.

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The minutes continue to tick by. Despite the festivities going on in the meeting room—and the unmistakable fact that the rules of the exercise have been broken with no immediate consequences--the other groups are making no moves.

At around 10:45, a group of black men and women walk out on the porch and notice the Jews, still sitting on a set of stairs just a few yards from the meeting room porch. "Y'all still sitting here baking in the sun?" asks one of the black women. Although this could be taken as a chance to end their isolation, the Jewish group continues to avoid contact.

Soon after this exchange, two latino men head over to the meeting room. After a minute or two, they emerge to invite the rest of their group to join. At this point, the black women, black men, the latinos, and both isolates are comfortably hanging out in the meeting room or on the porch. The other groups (whites males, white females, Asians, Jews, and LGBT) are all still seated at separate locations around the field. The loud music continues to echo across the field. As the minutes continue to tick past, the remaining groups sit quietly in their places.

At 11:12, Thomasina makes the decision to end the exercise. She emerges out onto the field and blows a loud airhorn, and invites all the participants into the discussion room to debrief the experience. Slightly more than three hours have elapsed since the start of the morning circle.

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Composite Narrative: Separation Exercise #2

The exercise begins, in actuality, the night before the segregation occurs. The students are allowed to stay up late, while the staff retreats to the staff room for a meeting. In the staff room, the noise of kids laughing and singing sets the backdrop for the evening staff meeting.

John is the Director of the program. He had originally envisioned organizing an incident to kick off the exercise: There would be a (seemingly) spontaneous staff waterfight that gets out of hand, providing a reason for a dramatic change in tone and policies the following morning; however, the staff quickly agrees that this ruse is not necessary. The students have not really been coming together, and their general tendency to stay up too late and arrive late to the morning circle already provide enough reason to make the segregation exercise feel justified.

John explains that the rules for the delegates are simple and clear:

1) Stay in your group

2) Don't talk to anyone outside your group

3) Don't make eye contact with anyone outside your group

4) Always stay together

He then explains that some of the staff will be placed in groups with delegates. These staff members have their own rules:

1. No matter what, don't say anything beyond repeating one of these four rules (slight variations in wording are acceptable)

2. Staff are absolutely not allowed to break the exercise until the last delegate in their group has broken the exercise.

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He then makes it clear that the senior staff will play the role of "enforcers". They will not be a part of any group, and are responsible for enforcing the rules of the exercise. They will also hand out projects to groups designed to highlight stereotypes and distract them from taking action.

The next 30 minutes of the staff meeting involve staff sharing their concerns about the exercise. They are afraid to act mean towards the delegates, and are concerned about causing emotional pain. One of them fears she might actually enjoy the abuse of authority she is expected to display. John and Susan (the co-director) make it clear that they should keep in mind the big picture: This difficult exercise is done for a good cause, and there will be ample time to debrief with the participants and make the participants feel supported and understood when the exercise concludes. At 1am, the meeting ends, and staff head out to put delegates to bed.

We arise early the next morning to a clear and beautiful day. As usual, the bell in the central courtyard is rung precisely at 7am, telling the delegates that they have 15 minutes to get dressed and arrive at the morning circle. This morning, a surprisingly large number of delegates seem to have overslept. The group stands in an incomplete circle in the central courtyard, as straggler after straggler walks out to the courtyard and joins the circle. There is an awkward silence to the morning.

At about 7:20, John speaks up angrily, "Everyone stay quiet until all delegates and staff are outside!"

By 7:30, it appears as though the circle is complete. John emerges out onto the courtyard, and he doesn't look happy.

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"Things are going to be different today", he says ominously. "All sorts of people have been breaking all sorts of rules. We are your state-mandated guardians for the week, and we have decided we need to make a change because of how you all have been acting. So there some new rules we are going to follow today!"

Susan begins calling out names and gathering the students in groups. Each group is given a particular color arm-band (yellow for the Asians, brown for the black males, pink for the blonde women, etc). They are told the four rules, and then told to stand silently as the process continues. Within 10 minutes, the circle in the central courtyard has transformed into a field of isolated and silent groups. The silence is deafening.

Slowly, the groups are invited in to breakfast. White males first, then blonde white women, then non-blonde white women, Asians, Jews, Latinos, etc. It is 8am before the last of the groups is told to leave the courtyard and head to the cafeteria.

In the cafeteria, the scene is striking. The normally boisterous and irrepressible delegates are sitting silently in segregated groups. By the time we get there, the only group that has yet to eat—the black males—is just arriving. Kristin, one of the enforcers, speaks to them forcefully. "You guys will eat at this table."

One of them quickly points out that there aren't enough chairs for everyone in the group at the small round table.

"Then some of you will have to eat standing up. That's the way it is."

One of the members of the Jewish group speaks up. "We have some extra chairs—they can take ours if they want…"

Kristin's response is instant and icy. "Stay with your own group! This is none of your business!"

Another enforcer says loudly to the white men that they are welcome to go take a shower at this point if they want. The latinos are asked to clear the white male's tables.

Seeing that one of the black males has gone to the toaster on his own, she immediately chastises the group. "I told you to stay together! What is he doing off on his own? Can't you people follow directions? You know, you people don't even deserve this cereal. No cereal for you this morning!"

She proceeds to collect the small packages of cereal on the table, in some cases spilling milk into the laps of delegates who had only partially completed their meal.

At this point, enforcers begin sending various groups to different locations around the facility. An awkward silence fills the cafeteria.

I proceed to walk through the rooms of the conference center. Everyone seems to be looking down in silence. The multicultural group sits silent in a small conference room. The blond females are seated on a landing at the top of the stairs. The black females stand alone in the couryard.

Eventually, I bump into John, who explains some of the tasks that are being handed out: The Asians have been asked to write a report about why they are the "model minority". The South Asians have been asked to write a report explaining terrorism. The blonde females have been told to apply make-up and do each other's hair. The non-blonde white females have been told to create greeting cards for various American holidays. The multicultural students have been instructed to draw a map of the world and trace their ancestor's roots. The black females have been told to put together a "step show" dance routine.

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All around the conference center, the scene is striking. Silent, joyless delegates halfheartedly going through the motions of their assigned tasks.

Through a back window, I see a solitary black delegate sitting utterly alone. I later find out that he is the only Muslim in the group, and has been sent off by himself. In the front hallway, a black female delegate sits alone on a chair, with her knees pulled up under her sweatshirt and her head covered by her sweatshirt hood.

I turn a corner and find one of the delegates talking to the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered) group. He is explaining that their job is to organize a gay pride parade, and that they will have to do this while standing in a broom closet. He ushers five individuals into the cramped closet, and closes the door. Minutes go by, and nobody tries to leave. It is 9:17am.

I walk outside, and see the black women halfheartedly teaching each other dance moves. The black men are seated at a picnic table, and many of them seem to be staring in the same direction. I follow their gaze to where the white males are playing a casual game of Frisbee in a large field.

As the moments tick away, rumbles of discontent can be heard. One of the black males sings "We shall overcome" quietly. Another one says, "Damn! The white boys get to play Frisbee and we gotta sit here doing nothing? That's *messed* up!" But the groups remain isolated and everyone continues to follow the rules.

In the cafeteria, the mood is funereal. In one corner, the South Asians work quietly on a piece of posterboard exploring the causes of terror. The Asians whisper to each other as they explore what it means to be a model minority. The non-blonde white woman have created a pile of greeting cards covered with images of flowers, snow,

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turkeys, and other holiday images. The Jews, seated just outside at a picnic table, work on an article about reconstructionist Judaism. On occasion, an enforcer speaks up, reminding a delegate to "keep your eyes on your own group", or saying, "What are you, confused? The rules say stay together!"

The time is now close to 10:00am. I walk past the broom closet in the front hallway. The door is open about half an inch. I am shocked to see that the LGBT group is still inside, standing in complete silence.

The sense of quiet, oppressive, stasis is palpable everywhere. Nearly two and a half hours have gone by, and the exercise remains unbroken. Apart from some quiet grumbling and half-hearted songs of protest by an individual or two, there have been no meaningful challenges to the status quo.

Then, at 10:18, something happens. As I walk down the hall, I am passed by Eduardo, a member of the latino group. His fellow group-members are nowhere to be seen. As he walks up to the coffee station and begins preparing a cup of coffee for himself, he is spotted by an enforcer.

"Eduardo! What are you doing! You are supposed to STAY WITH YOUR GROUP! Put down that coffee!"

Eduardo is clearly nervous, but also resolved to resist the rules of the exercise.

"Or what? Put down the coffee or what? I'm done following these bullshit rules!"

John suddenly appears with a look of urgency on his face. "You know the rules, Eduardo! Get with your group! NOW!"

Eduardo puts down the coffee and starts making his way outside to where the rest of the latinos are standing. John looks furious, and Eduardo is clearly frightened. But he is determined to speak his mind. He is about to rejoin his group when he suddenly turns and heads towards the black females, still rehearsing dance moves in the courtyard.

John gets in his face. "GET. BACK. TO. YOUR. GROUP!!"

"Or what?" Eduardo replies, growing increasingly emboldened. "What are you gonna do to me?"

At this point, Kristin joins John in trying to quash this act of rebellion.

"Eduardo, what's the problem?" she says scornfully. "You're not proud of your people? You wanna be a sellout, and just leave them all behind? You're not proud of being Latino?"

Eduardo's nervousness is gone, replaced by a clearly simmering anger. "Yo, I'm proud to be latino. But you been telling us all week to resist oppressive systems, and that's what I'm doin' here! Yo! Everyone! Free Your Mind!!"

Both John and Kristin are trying to corralle him back into the Latino group, but he quickly dashes around them and runs to the black female group.

"Hey! Ladies! Join me in fighting this! Come on! Lets bring unity to Anytown!"

The group of six delegates averts their eyes. He stands with them for a few more seconds, but it is clear that none of them are going to break the rules. He runs across the courtyard to the isolated black women, and again invites her to join him. She looks away and shakes her head. Soon Eduardo is back with his latino group, loudly denouncing the enforcers.

Minutes more go by. The act of rebellion seems to have been ineffective.

Although there is a new energy simmering across the courtyard, the groups remain

isolated and obedient.

At this point, the enforcers have begun moving groups around a bit to change the

dynamic. At 10:30, I see the LGBT group led out into the courtyard. They had remained

stuffed into the broom closet for close to 45 minutes. The South Asians are led out, and

asked to continue working on their report at a picnic table a few yards outside of the

courtyard. The black males have begun to grow clearly restless. They emerge from one

of the dorms to the courtyard bustling with nervous energy. "Fuck the white man!" one

of them yells. Another starts singing "Wade in the Water". Still another says "Unite like

a fist!"

Across the courtyard, Eduardo sees the new possibility. He looks to his group,

saying "Come on, everyone! Stand up for what's right! Bring Anytown together!" He

begins to run towards the black males, and this time his peers follow him. Soon, the

black males and latinos are huddled together, bursting with renewed energy.

"Come on! Lets go! We gotta get everyone together!" Whooping and hollering,

the group sets out in search of other groups. As they pass the large bell in the center of

the courtyard, one of the black males yells, "Ring the unity bell!" Another black male

grabs the bell's handle and rings it loudly three times. At this point, it must be apparent

to everyone at the conference center that something unplanned is going on.

Many of the groups refuse to break the rules when they are approached. The

Asians, now seated at another picnic table near the courtyard, shake their heads. "There

must be a reason why they are doing this," says one delegate to the blacks and latinos

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gathered next to the table. "Just follow the rules! Don't mess it up!" The South Asians also remain apart, choosing to continue working on their report. The privileged blacks, however, do choose to break the rules and join the rebellion. When the group approaches the blonde white females upstairs, the delegates initially seem to redouble their efforts to apply make-up and style hair. After a few minutes of debate, however, this group chooses to break the rules and join the growing movement.

Moments later, the growing mass of delegates approaches the LGBT group, inviting them to break the exercise and join the "movement". The LGBT group is doing everything it can to turn their backs to the boisterous crowd. They seem to be looking to one of the staff members who was included in the group. As instructed, he is looking down silently and simply refusing to break the rules.

Somehow, word has gotten out at this group was spent 45 minutes standing in a closet, and the rebels are furious at the news.

A latino girl says to a female member of the LGBT group, "They locked you in a closet for 45 minutes! That's fucked up! You gotta join us in fighting this messed up system! Come on! Join us!"

The delegate being addressed keeps her eyes on the ground and just shakes her head. "We believe in following authority", she says. Another member of the group is visibly crying, but refuses to make eye contact with anyone standing around her. Finally, the delegate who spoke before looks at the large group of people standing around. "Please," she says quietly. "Just go. Please leave us alone"

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At a loss for how to proceed, the individuals in the movement look around at each other in confusion. Finally, Eduardo says they should just move on, and the group departs, leaving the LGBT group huddled together alone.

By 11:00am (nearly three and a half hours since the start of the exercise), it appears as though the movement started by the latinos and blacks has attracted all the members it can. They retreat to a large conference room to discuss how to proceed. Although voices are heated and passionate, they seem to be raising their hands and having a more-or-less orderly debate.

"We need to figure out what the movement stands for!" says one black female. "We need to bring everyone together," says a black male.

As the group begins work on a statement of principles, I head out to explore the conference center.

The multicultural group remains in a small conference room. The room has glass doors, so they have seen and been addressed by the large group of students who have broken the exercise. Apparently, they chose to continue following the rules.

The Jews remain outside at a picnic table. They are furious because an enforcer recently came by and tore up their report on reconstructionist Judaism. Although they are clearly furious about the exercise, they have chosen not to join the movement.

I realize that I have not seen the white males in some time, and I ask an enforcer where they have gone off to. He leads to me a basement room right off the courtyard, where the four members of that group are sitting in a carpeted, air-conditioned room watching a movie. Compared to the near-chaos and upheaval occurring upstairs, the calm, cool, leisurely atmosphere of this room comes as a bit of a shock. From this room,

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it is possible that this group may have no idea of what is happening upstairs. They may have heard the bell and seen some individuals walk past the small windows looking out at knee-level on the courtyard, and simply chose to keep watching the movie without exploring what was happening outside. The group members look at us briefly, then turn back to the television.

Back in the courtyard and in the conference rooms, the enforcers continue to attempt to reinforce the rules, but in a less strident manner. They are constantly milling about, reminding people to "stay in your group". It is clear, however, that it is possible , to break the rules of the exercise without suffering any real consequences. However, several groups have clearly taken their stand, and have no interest in joining the movement.

Minutes later, I return to the conference room where the movement has been developing its core principles. It seems they have agreed upon their mission, and have written up a sign declaring their values and purpose. The sign says:

What is the movement about?

> *-Unity of all identities*

> *-Respect (self and each other)*

> *-Assertion of Rights*

> *-Rejection of Oppression (monoculturalism)*

> *-Breaking the Cycle and Categories*

> *-Don't tell Anybody What to Do*

> *-Tell people what they CAN do*

> *-Be Peaceful and Non-violent*

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-Try hard to cause each other the least pain possible

The movement has also agreed upon a plan: They are going hold hands and walk out amongst the other groups. The individual at the front of the line with hold the sign, and individuals in the line will invite the other delegates to join the movement only if they choose to. Within moments, a long chain of delegates has snaked its way out of the conference room and towards to remaining segregated groups.

For the next ten minutes or so, the long chain of delegates weaves its way towards the various groups seated at picnic tables or in chairs near the courtyard. Most of the groups make it clear they have no interest in budging. When the human chain heads back toward the conference center, a handful of groups remain seated outside. The Asians, South Asians, isolated black female, and other black females have opted not to join the movement.

I find John and Susan gathered in the center of the courtyard. It is nearly noon, and they are deciding whether to allow the exercise to continue. Looking out around the courtyard, they agree that the groups that remain segregated look likely to stay that way for hours. Together, they make the decision to bring the exercise to a close, and send one of the enforcers off to ring the bell for lunch.

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Composite Narrative: Separation Exercise #3

The evening before the separation exercise occurs, the staff gather for their regular evening staff meeting. Things are very quiet; the participants have all gone to bed and everything feels calm and under control. Connie and Laura, the two Co-Directors of the program, explain the rules of the exercise to the staff.

Connie says that the participants will be separated into their culture groups, and members of each group will be given same-colored armbands to wear. The participants will be told to follow a simple set of rules:

1) Don't talk to anyone not wearing your same color armband

2) Don't make eye contact with someone not wearing your same color armband

3) Always stay together with everyone wearing your color armband

Connie and Laurie make it clear that they will be in charge during this activity; however, they have a list of guidelines for the staff to follow. Connie tells the staff, "No lying. If someone asks you when it will end, say that you don't know." Also, no military-style tactics. Apparently, both directors have seen the exercise run in a very aggressive, militant style, and do not want to emulate that here. They insist that there be no berating of participants or other sorts of staff activism. Essentially, the staff is just to obediently follow the rules, making no effort to break the exercise or go beyond Connie and Lauries' efforts to enforce the rules.

Connie says that Malcolm will be the isolate. An outspoken and well-liked black male, they think he would be most likely to break the exercise too quickly.

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Laurie states that she will be wearing a scarf during the exercise. When she removes the scarf, it will be a sign to the staff that they should stop offering any resistance to the groups coming together.

Finally, Connie tells the staff that some participants may be upset by the exercise. She says that if one of the members of their group is really angry or disturbed, the staff member should try to have a one-on-one conversation with the participant to try to calm them down.

The staff has very few questions. Everyone seems to understand the rules and is comfortable with what is going to happen. Conversation turns to a review of the events of the day and a discussion of how a few participants are feeling. After a few minutes of this process discussion, the meeting is over and staff head off to bed.

The next morning, Morning Circle starts at 8:15. The forty participants begin to gather around the flagpole in the central square. By 8:22, everyone has arrived and the group begins doing role call. After a few administrative announcements, Connie announces that the morning activity is going to start before breakfast today. She quickly and clearly explains the rules.

"You're going to be separated into your culture groups this morning. Each person will get a colored armband. You may not contact anyone with a different color armband. You must stay together as a group at all times; if someone in your group needs to go to the bathroom, you all must go to the bathroom together."

Laurie begins calling off names and handing out armbands. Soon, the circle around the flag has been replaced by a collection of separate groups.

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Connie says it is now time for breakfast, and begins calling off the order in which the groups can head into the cafeteria. Over the course of several minutes, she calls out the following list: white, Asians, Native Americans, Malcolm (the isolate), American-Born Hispanics, Multi-racial, Mexican-Born Hispanics, and African-Americans. The two Hispanic groups are huge—they easily include half the participants at this program.

Inside the cafeteria, participants stand quietly in line to get their breakfast. Usually, there are two servers handing out food in the morning; today, however, there is only one. Connie confirms that this decision was made as part of the morning exercise. The presence of only one server means that it takes a remarkably long time to get food. By 9am, the Mexican-born Hispanics and African-Americans are still standing in line while the first groups to enter the cafeteria are finishing their meals.

The cafeteria is very quiet; people aren't speaking much, and when they do speak it is in a quiet whisper. Laurie sees a lone Mexican-Born Hispanic female heading to the drink machine to get a drink. "You guys have to stay together!" she says to the group. The whole group grudgingly but quietly heads over to the drink machine.

At 9:13, the African-American group finally sits down at a table with their meals in hand.

At 9:14, Laurie makes an announcement. "Those who want to go outside for free time can go. Mexican-Borns—remember you must stay to clean up!".

The white and Asian groups quickly get up to leave. At this point, they have had more than 30 minutes to eat breakfast.

By 9:24, only the Mexican-Born Hispanics and the African-Americans are left in the cafeteria. Malcolm, the lone isolate, sits alone at a table quietly eating his breakfast.

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Outside, it is a beautiful, clear morning. The various groups are scattered around a fairly small area in front of the cafeteria building. Each group is studiously following the rules, and most of the groups seem to be having a good time. The Asians are playing with a volleyball. Nearby, the multicultural group is singing songs and laughing loudly. The white group, not so far away, is singing a round-robin version of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat". They keep laughing as people make mistakes. The three members of the Native American group sit together on a rock in the middle of the small field, talking quietly amongst themselves. Eventually, Malcolm emerges from the cafeteria and sits down on a porch, looking sad and alone.

Malcolm is sitting close to a soda machine. I notice for the first time that the machine has a handwritten sign taped on its front. The sign says, "Whites Only".

At 9:34, the African-American group emerges from the cafeteria. They stand in a small circle together, and begin talking about the weather. Inside the cafeteria building, the Mexican-Born Hispanics are busy sweeping the floors and wiping off the tables.

Occassionally, a group heads off together towards a cabin to use the bathroom. I follow the multicultural group inside, and realize that the bathrooms are also marked with handmade signs. Sinks, water fountains, and bathroom stalls are all marked as "Whites Only" or "Coloreds Only".

Because they are all standing in such a small area, the separation of the groups is striking. A few of the groups have moved to different areas of the field, but all continue to play games and talk amongst themselves. Since everyone seems to be following the rules, Connie and Laura are simply wandering around the field quietly. They don't have much to say.

Eventually, at 9:50, Laurie tells the American-Born Hispanic group to clean up the field area. They are given a trash bag, and begin wandering amongst the groups picking up litter.

At 9:52, the Mexican-Born Hispanic group finally emerges from the cafeteria. They find an area to stand in and begin chatting quietly amongst themselves.

In the small area, it is hard to miss the fact that the American-born Hispanics are cleaning up while all the other groups are busy laughing, singing, or simply standing around chatting. I hear one member of this group say to the others, "We should start marching!" But the other members of the group continue to pick up trash.

By 10:10, the separation exercise has been going on for close to 100 minutes. Although the groups have changed positions a few times, there have been no efforts to break the exercise. Most groups still seem to be having fun playing and singing together.

At this time, Connie and Laurie meet near the flagpole and raise their hands to make an announcement. "Its time for our morning sing! Remember, have no contact with the other groups! Please head over to the pavilion!"

The pavilion stands right next to the flagpole field. It is a concrete patio, with a collection of picnic tables arranged in the shape of a "U" underneath a large wooden roof. The groups all head over to this area and find places to sit. The area isn't very large, so the groups have to sit right next to each other to fit. Still, the participants all stay huddled together in their assigned groups. A few staff members have handed out a bunch of songbooks containing song lyrics; they then return to sit with their assigned groups.

By 10:15, they are all settled in. Connie tells them to start with the Anytown theme song. They groups start singing with a conspicuous lack of enthusiasm:

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"Anytown; Anytown; yellow black white red or brown;

Makes no difference when you come down to Anytown."

The contrast between the ideal of unity expressed in the lyrics, and the reality of the rigidly separated groups singing the song is unmistakable. When the song ends, there is muted applause and few giggles.

Connie stands in the middle of the tables with a stern look on her face. "African-Americans, I want you to lead us all in 'I Believe I Can Fly'. Please come stand here in the middle".

The African-Americans make their way to the center of the pavilion, and begin a very half-hearted rendition of the R. Kelly song. Connie is clearly unhappy.

"Come on! Lift it up!" she shouts. The singing gets noticeably stronger.

When they get to the end of the song, there is once again muted applause. Laurie walks over to where the multicultural group sits. "You guys need to pick it up!" she declares. "Why aren't you singing louder?"

The song-session continues in this fashion. The Mexican-Born Hispanic group is asked to lead everyone in "De Colores", a classic folk song with Spanish lyrics celebrating diversity. After that, Connie tells the white group to sing "Hero", by Mariah Carey. The chorus is all about strength and empowerment:

"And then a hero comes along, with the strength to carry on.
And you cast your fears aside, and you know you can survive
So when you feel like hope is gone, look inside you and be strong
And you'll finally see the truth: That a hero lies in you."

With each song, the disconnect between lyrics celebrating unity, diversity, and empowerment and the reality of the separation exercise grows more and more jarring.

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It is 10:25; the separation exercise has been going on for two hours. When the white group finishes singing, a young woman in the multiracial group raises her hand. "Can you clarify what you mean by 'contact'?" she asks the directors. It is the first student comment that goes anywhere near publicly challenging the rules of the exercise.

"You can sing, but don't make contact with the other groups," Connie replies. "Its really very simple."

Laurie asks the Asian group to sing a song called "I Wish". They are terrible— absolutely no energy or enthusiasm. Laurie actually stops them mid-verse and tells them to sit down.

"Asians, you are not doing it. Multiculturals, why don't you take over!" she demands.

When they are done, Laurie turns to the African-Americans. "A majority of you weren't singing. Why not?"

One of the participants says, "We don't know the words."

Laurie seems unsatisfied. "Is that all?"

At this point, Connie turns to Malcolm. She says, "Malcolm, lead us in 'Stand by Me'."

Malcolm, the lone isolate in the exercise, stands alone in the center of the pavilion. He begins singing weakly, and the rest of the participants soon join him in struggling through a rendition of the classic song that is utterly devoid of enthusiasm or conviction:

> *"No I won't be afraid, no I won't be afraid;*
> *Just as long as I know you'll stand by me..."*

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The sense of frustration and sadness in the group is almost palatable. Connie turns to Cathy, one of the counselors, and asks her to stand up alone to sing a song called "Don't Give Up". Cathy is clearly on the edge of tears as she stands up in front of everyone. As she begins to sing, her voice trembles with a mix of sadness and fear.

"Don't give up; you still have friends;
Don't give up, cause somewhere there a place where you belong. "

Eventually, she stops singing and just reads the words. The sound of her lone voice in the crowded pavilion is heartbreaking. When she finishes, the silence echoes through the pavilion.

The time is now 10:35. Connie asks a male in the white group to sing "You Gotta Be". This particular participant is confined to a wheelchair, and speaks English with a foreign accent. He wheels himself out to the center of the pavilion, and struggles through all the lyrics. It takes almost six minutes. The song about wisdom, empowerment, and strength sounds like a funeral dirge.

At 10:43, Connie notices that a counselor in the Asian group is crying. "Kristie— you're not singing!" She tells her to come up front to lead a song.

Audibly sobbing, Kristie makes her unsteady way up to the middle of pavilion. Far too upset to sing, all she can do is stand there shaking and crying.

Finally, things seem to have gone to far. A young woman in the American-born Hispanic group speaks out. "You guys are being mean to us! That's why we're all crying! You're telling us we gotta sing louder!".

Someone in the Mexican-born Hispanic group speaks up next. "You go keep telling us to stick together and now we gotta stay separate!"

The first participant to speak up is clearly very upset. "I don't know if this is a trick, but Kristie is upset and its not fair to put her on the spot and make us watch her cry!" There is no mistaking the anger in her voice.

One of males in the Asian group stands up and walks over to Kristie. He, too, is on the edge of tears now.

Connie keeps the pressure on. "John, sit down! This is Kristie's turn to lead the singing!"

John shakes his head. "I'm not going anywhere! This isn't fair!"

At this point, everyone has begun to chatter loudly. Laurie sees that an American-born Hispanic has ripped off his armband; others in the group decide to follow along.

"Who told you you could take off your armbands?" she asks sternly.

"I'm not going to let color come between us!" he responds angrily. When he stands up and walks over to Kristie to give her a hug, several other members of the group follow.

One girl in the Mexican-born Hispanic group seems angry at the fact that everyone is breaking the rules. "I understand why they did the separation—they wanted to make us feel different! But Kristie could say no if she wanted!" She has not moved from her seat, and seems to be in no rush to break the exercise.

At this point, Laurie casually removes her scarf. She and Connie step back and no longer continue to attempt to enforce the rules.

It has only been a few minutes since Kristie was asked to stand up front, but the change is dramatic. A group of 10 or 12 participants has gathered around her; they are giving each other hugs and talking about how awful it felt to be separated all morning.

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Participants have also gathered in two other groups, with lots of hugging and crying occurring all around. A few individuals are still sitting in their seats, watching all the action.

An Asian boy has walked over to the Mexican-born Hispanic girl who defended the exercise, and they are in a heated debate. "How can you stand by while we can't hang with our friends? How can you let her stay up there alone? It's not right! It's not right!". In response, the girl continues to shake her head and remain in her seat.

At this point, the large group gathered around Kristie begins to sing "Stand by Me". This time, the singing is loud and enthusiastic, and before long most of the participants gathered in the pavilion are singing along:

> *"If the sky that we look upon, should tumble and fall*
> *And the mountain should crumble to the sea*
> *I won't cry, I won't cry, no I won't be afraid*
> *Just as long as you stand, stand by me"*

When the song is over, Connie raises her hand to make an announcement. "Ok! We want to take some time to talk about this! Let's head back to the meeting room to debrief!" The time is 10: 55.

The participants are still busy hugging each other. Several are still crying. Slowly, they make their way out of the pavilion and head off to debrief the experience.

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Chapter Six

Questionnaire Data Analysis

As described in Chapter Four, after we observed the exercises described above, we distributed questionnaires to all participants. The questionnaires were designed to elicit both qualitative and quantitative data related to the research questions that informed this study. In this chapter, we present the results of our data analysis process.

Before presenting these findings, however, it may be useful to share some thoughts about the challenges of data analysis in this study. As mentioned in the literature review of dynamics of complex systems in Chapter Two, a central challenge in exploring complex systems is the fact that they are—not surprisingly--quite complex. This research generated a wealth of data and attempts to explore a multi-level model of human behavior. It has been a challenge to find ways to organize the data in a manner that provides meaningful insights into this complex model of human behavior.

In the pages ahead, I will explain my decisions regarding how to analyze and present this data; however, I recognize that alternative decisions might have been made that would have highlighted different dynamics or focused on different details. I make no claim that the analysis presented here is the sole "correct" way of understanding this data; however, the analysis presented here is grounded in years of research and study related to understanding complex systems. (Waldrop, 1992; Bar Yam, 2001; Barabasi, 2003)

Research Question #1: *How do individuals understand their involvement in macro-level social system dynamics?*

As discussed in Chapter Four, the first two questions on the participant questionnaire were designed to generate data related to this research question. As these two questions explore different dimensions of this question (cognitive understanding and affective experience during the exercise), we will present our analysis of these two questions separately.

The first question on the questionnaire was: *"Tell your story of what happened during this exercise and how events progressed. Be sure to include the important events that occurred over the course of the exercise."*

In analyzing this data, the research team reviewed the Question #1 responses from all three sets of questionnaires and engaged in a grounded theory analysis of the data. Working separately, we each reviewed the raw data and generated a series of codes related to themes we felt emerged from the data. We then worked together to create a master code list that covered the major themes that emerged from this analysis.

In many cases, two or three of us had created codes related to the same dynamic. For example, after reviewing the raw data, Dumi created a code called "Picking Up Parallels," which he defined as follows: "participants draw parallels between what is happening in the activity and examples from 'real life' and society at large." Derria had created a code called "Giving meaning to the system," and defined it as "delegates unravel what exercise actually was and what its implications were." In my own analysis efforts, I had created a code called "Symbolic/ Systemic Understanding," defined as "seeing the exercise as symbolic of larger societal dynamics." All of us had selected similar or identical examples from the raw data to support our coding scheme. We decided that all three codes were similar enough to combine into one code on the master

code list. In this case, this theme appears under the heading "Symbolic/ Systemic

Understanding" on the list that follows.

The question guiding this portion of our analysis was "How do individuals

understand their involvement in macro-level systemic dynamics?" The codes presented

in the chart below represent the twelve themes that emerged as immediately apparent and

highly relevant to this research question in our grounded theory analysis. They are

presented in no particular order:

Table 1: *Codes Related to Research Question #1: "How do Individuals Understand Their Involvement in Macro-Level Systemic Dynamics?"*

#	Code Title	Description	Example[3]
1	*Confusion about What Was Happening*	Lack of clarity regarding the purpose and goals of the exercise	"Well when Thomasina and Drake read the groups off I didn't know what was going on...."
2	*Awareness of Privilege Differences*	Recognition that groups received different types of treatment over the course of the exercise	"In the morning we were split into groups...We ate our meals separately and were served in an order based on the social power of the groups. The groups also served people if they were black women, swept if they were Hispanic men and were benefited hurt in other ways depending on the gender race religion of the people"
3	*Fear of Punishment*	Unwillingness to challenge the rules for fear of suffering consequences	"I think when the director told us not to bring up our dishes that's when I felt like we had to strictly follow the rules, and that 'reprimand' kind of stuck with me. I really didn't want to get in trouble"
4	*Matter of Fact*	Responses provide a	"We were put into certain

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[3] Text in this column presents direct quotations from participant questionnaires. Here—and in all subsequent cases in which participant quotes are presented-- no effort was made to correct spelling or grammatical errors.

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		simple, factual review of important events during the exercise	groups and told to follow each other when we need to go somewhere. Then, we went to a breakfast, and after we were told to go in the field and stand up. During breakfast my group was told to put away everyone's dishes. Eventually, we got tired of standing up in the field and went to the discussion room to go sit down, then to get beverages, then to the cabin, then stayed in the discussion room and played jump rope and danced."
5	*Symbolic/ Systemic Understanding*	Going beyond a simple description of the exercise to interpret larger systemic or symbolic meanings	"I think what happened was that they were trying to make white people rich and like first class. The spanish be maids and black girls be clean up people too. And I think that they were trying to make black males have no job."
6	*Faith in the Process*	Refusing to challenge the exercise out of a belief that the authorities must have a good reason for what they were doing	"People cried because they couldn't interact with the people they enjoyed being with. I felt the same but I know it was an activity."
7	*Oblivious*	Apparently unaware that anything unusual was going on	"It was not until the rebellion increased and actually told us what was happening did I begin to realize that the project we were working on was not the objective."
8	*Grapevine Rebellion*	Suggestion that a collection of small acts led up to a major break in the exercise	"Ibrahim came over and told us that he walked out and we should too. Later when we saw the big bunch of freed people we joined too."
9	*Avoidance*	An unwillingness to recognize what is going on	"I stuck with my group trying to stop thinking what was going on."
10	*The Power of One*	An emphasis on the one person or action that led to	"Karen was not singing so they made her get up and sing

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		a break in the exercise	and she was crying and someone took a stand and everyone followed."
11	*Emotional Response*	Focus on emotional experience over the course of the exercise	"Everyone ended up together and happy instead of apart and miserable, aggrevated even afterwards though people felt bad and still mad at themselves and others."
12	*Tension Build-up to Break*	Describing the exercise as the slow increase in tension (anger, frustration) that led to a public breaking of the rules	"Soon after awhile people in our group began to notice discrimination when seeing that we were denied certain privileges and given jobs such as picking up trash...When the groups were put to sing the ice broke. The groups couldn't take how the leaders were demanding and harsh...."

This list of codes provides some insight into the ways that individuals involved in this exercise made meaning of their experience. It is clear that different individuals tell very different stories about what happened. Some individuals seem unaware of anything going on beyond the boundaries of their own group, while others make a point to highlight the disparities occurring throughout the system. Some individuals describe their experiences as a dry, matter-of-fact list of events, while others struggle with the symbolic meanings and implications of the exercise. For some individuals, the primary story of this experience is confusion, or fear of punishment, or a simple conviction that the program directors must know what they are doing and have a good reason for doing it. For others, the primary story is mounting frustration with the unfairness of the exercise, and excitement when one or two brave individuals break the rules, making it easier for others in the system to challenge the rules as well.

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The second question on the questionnaire asked, *"What did it feel like being a member of your group? Why?"* This question was designed to explore the affective dimension of individual experience in this exercise.

In an attempt to make meaning of this data, I initially organized these responses on a grid. The groups were presented hierarchically in the order that was decided upon by the staff running each exercise. The responses of each group were listed horizontally (i.e. members of the white male group felt "awkward" or "depressing," members of the white female group felt "there are no words" or "uncomfortable," etc.). My intention here was to make it easier to explore themes that emerged at different levels of the hierarchy. For the grids created for each of these exercises, see Appendices E, F, and G.

After creating the grids, I used grounded theory to generate a series of codes related to the affective experience of individuals in these exercises. The codes presented below represent eleven themes that emerged from this analysis of the data. They are presented in no particular order:

Table #2: *Codes Related to Research Question #2: "What did it feel like being a member of your group? Why?"*

#	Code Title	Description	Example
1	*Guilt of Privilege*	Individuals in groups at the top of the hierarchy feeling bad about their relative privilege	"Awkward. I didn't really want the privileges I was given. I felt undeserving." "It was relaxing to just sit and watch TV..made me feel guilty and embarrassed to go outside and reunite with friends..."
2	*Misplaced*	Sense of being placed in the wrong group or being part of a group that does not accurately reflect an individual's identity	"I felt very offended because I am not all white. I'm only 25% Italian... I felt like they took one look at me and assumed I'm all white."
3	*Discomfort*	Discomfort generated by a recognition of the different	"Uncomfortable, because we were served by a black

		levels of privilege in the system	woman."
4	*Connection with History*	A sense that the experience in this exercise connected an individual to experiences from their own history	"The badge, which was a Holocaust star, made me feel like less of a person. It made me identity with my ancestry and the segregation of my own people in the past."
5	*Enjoyment*	A pleasant group experience	"Fun, because I like this group." "Fun because we found a fun thing to do."
6	*Pride at Group Membership*	Sense of pride related to the group an individual belongs to	"I'm very proud to be African-American, so it it didn't bother me a lot. I am proud of the goals I have accomplished and the things that I have been through."
7	*Comfort with One's Place in the System*	A sense of comfort with one's place in the system	"I felt very comfortable. [We were] treated neutral, not bad." "At first it felt good because I was with most of my friends."
8	*Anger at Separation*	A sense of anger at being forced to remain apart from others	"I felt annoyed. I didn't want to be separated from other people—I knew it was wrong."
9	*Anger at Treatment*	A sense of anger at treatment received during the exercise	"I felt angry and ignored."
10	*Confusion*	A sense of confusion about the nature of the exercise	"I felt confused because our group assignment wasn't that abnormal."
11	*Depression of Isolates*	A sense of depression expressed by isolates	"It felt depressing because I was isolated from everything and everyone."

Once again, the codes generated by a grounded theory analysis of the data

suggest that participants experienced a wide range of emotions during this exercise.

Some participants' primary experience was that of comfort or pride; for others, there was

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a sense of guilt of discomfort. For still others, the primary experience was frustration and anger.

Research Question #2: How do groups manage the transition from strict segregation to complex interconnection?

In an attempt to explore this research question, I analyzed the responses to question three on the participant questionnaire. Question Three states, "*What other groups were most important during this exercise? Why?*" My hope was that data provided by this question would allow exploration of group-level psychological patterns or tendencies. For example, would we find that the majority of individuals in the bottom-most group were most attuned to the actions of individuals in the top-most group, and vice-versa? Would we find that most individuals in a particular group were primarily attuned to the groups immediately above and below their own group? These are the types of questions we hoped to explore with this question.

My efforts to analyze this data involved two different methodologies. First, I created grids capturing quantitative data regarding the groups that were highlighted as "most important". Second, I once again used grounded theory to generate a series of codes related to the qualitative information presented in this data.

Below I present the quantitative findings. Reading these grids horizontally, it is possible to see all the groups designated as important by the members of a particular group (for example, reading across the "White Females" line in the grid below reveals that 3 individuals in that group mentioned White Males as most important, 1 mentioned the Jewish group, and 1 mentioned the Black Female group). In addition, reading the

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vertical columns provides insight into the amount of attention paid to a particular group by the rest of the system.

Essentially, the grids make it possible to explore the way individual responses aggregate into system-wide patterns of attention distribution. This perspective provides some insight into the experience of groups during this exercise. Was there a lot of focus on groups at the top of the hierarchy? At the bottom of the hierarchy? Were any groups essentially overlooked by the system? This analysis attempts to provide answers to those questions.

In reading these charts, it should be kept in mind that individuals could—and often did--highlight more than one group in their responses. Also, some individuals did not answer this question at all, so the number of responses connected to a particular group may not equal the number of individuals in that particular group.

Table 3: *Separation Exercise #1, Quantitative Attention Distribution Grid*

	White M.	White F.	(Asian)	Jewish	Latino	Black F.	Black M.	Isolates	All	None	Unspecified
White Males							1				1
White Females	3			1		1					
Jewish						1	1				
Latino	1				1	1	1			1	1
Black Female	1	1								1	1
Black Male	2			1		1	1				1
Isolates	1										1
Total:	8	0	1	1	2	4	4	0	0	2	5

According to this analysis, the group at the very top—the white male group-- received the highest level of attention in this exercise (they were mentioned 8 times). The two groups at the bottom--black males and black females-- were both mentioned four times. It is interesting to note that the white females and the isolates were not mentioned

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by anyone, and in this exercise nobody suggested that "all the groups were important" (as you will see, this is a common response in the other exercises).

Another way to present this quantitative data is through the following chart. This provides a more visual representation of the systemic pattern of attention in Separation Exercise #1:

Chart 1: *Separation Exercise #1, Attention Distribution*
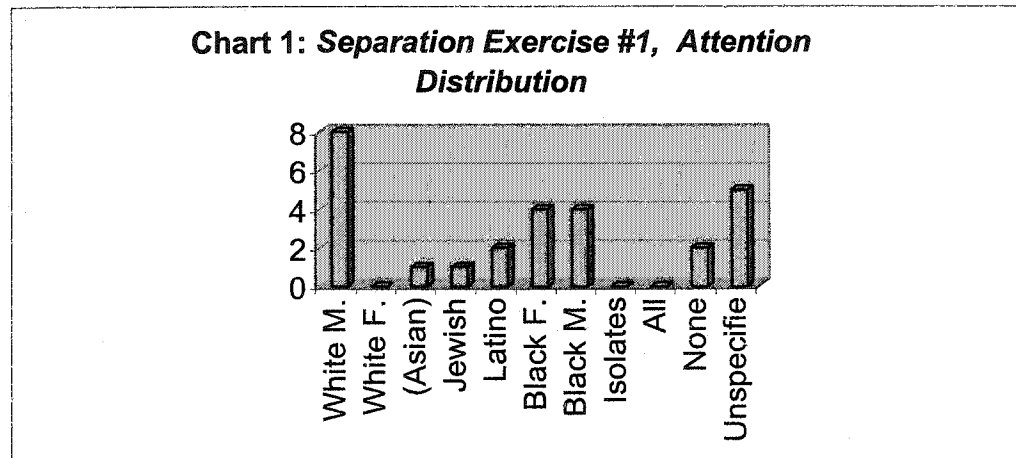
It is important to recognize that these patterns of attention do not reappear in exactly the same way at each separation exercise that we observed. Consider, for example, the grid presenting the data from Separation Exercise #2:

Table 4: Separation Exercise #2, Quantitative Attention Distribution Grid

	Blonde F.	Non-Blonde F.	White M.	Latinos	Jewish	Multi-Racial	Isolates	LGBTQ	Asian	S.Asian/ME	Priv. Blacks	Black M.	All	None	Rebels	Un-Specified	Other
Blonde F.				1				1				2	2		2		
Non-Blonde F.	1							1									1
White M.			1					1				1		2			
Latinos	1		1									4	3				
Jewish								1				2			1		
Multiracial	1			2								2	1				
Isolates												1	1				
LGBTQ													1	1	2		
Asian			1					1			1	2				1	
S.Asian/ME				1				1				1			1		

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Priv. Blacks				2								2	1		2	1	
Black M.			1	3	2							1		1	1			
Total	3	0	3	10	2	0	0	6	0	0	2	17	10	4	8	2	1

This grid reveals a system-wide distribution of attention that differs in some important ways from the findings from Exercise #1. For example, there is considerably less attention focused at the top of the hierarchy. The blonde females are mentioned three times, the non-blonde females are not mentioned at all, and the white males (who were the focus of so much mental energy in Exercise #1) here only garnered three comments. Apparently, much of this attention was instead directed towards the bottom of the hierarchy: the black males amassed a remarkable 17 votes as the most important group (70% more than the next highest groups). It is also notable that five groups received no comments, suggesting that nearly half the groups in the system (5 of 12) garnered little or no system-wide attention over the course of this exercise. Finally, it must be noted that in this exercise the assertion that "all groups were important" accumulated 10 votes—tying this category for second place in terms of number of votes received. In Exercise #1, there were no comments in this category. It is also interesting to note that votes for this category accumulated fairly evenly across all levels of the system, suggesting that one or two members of most of the groups saw the exercise as involving one interdependent system.

The chart presenting a visual representation of this system-wide attention distribution appears below:

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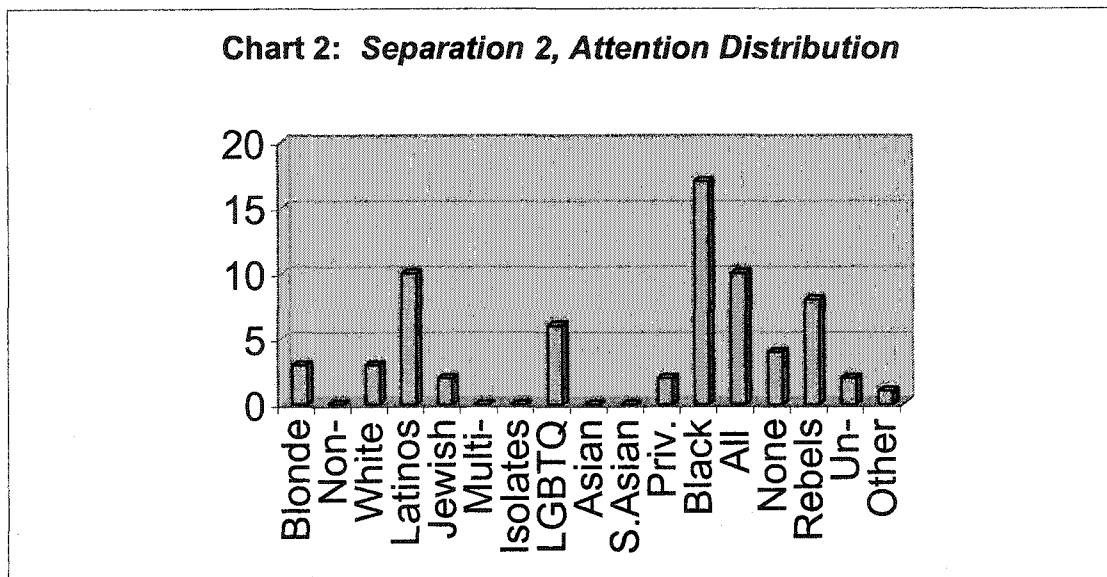
Not surprisingly, Separation Exercise #3 presented yet a different set of findings.

The quantitative data from that exercise is presented below:

Table 5 *Separation Exercise #3, Quantitative Attention Distribution Grid*

	White	Asian	Nat. Am	Am-Hisp.	Multiracial	Mex-Hisp	Isolate	African-Am	All	Unspecified	Other
White		2				2	1	1	2		
Asian		1				1	1	1	1		
Nat. Am.		1					1		1		
Am-Hisp	1	1		1		2	2		1		
Multiracial					1		1	1	3		
Mex-Hisp	3	1		1		3	3		7	1	1
Isolate	1						1				
African-Am.	1					1	1		1		1
Total	**6**	**6**	**0**	**2**	**1**	**9**	**11**	**3**	**16**	**1**	**2**

Once again, we see a unique pattern of system-wide attention distribution emerge

from this data. In this exercise, the African-American group garnered only three

comments—a considerable change from the pattern in Exercise #2. A moderate amount

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of attention flowed towards the top of the hierarchy, with the white group and the Asian group both accumulating six comments. The Mexican-Born Hispanic group—the only group asked to clean up trash during the exercise—gathered nine comments. The isolate, a black male very conspicuously sitting alone amidst the sea of groups on the field, received 11 comments. The category receiving the greatest amount of attention in this exercise (16 comments), however, was the assertion that "all groups are important".

The chart presenting a visual representation of this data appears below:

Chart 3: Separation Exercise #3, Quantitative Attention Distribution
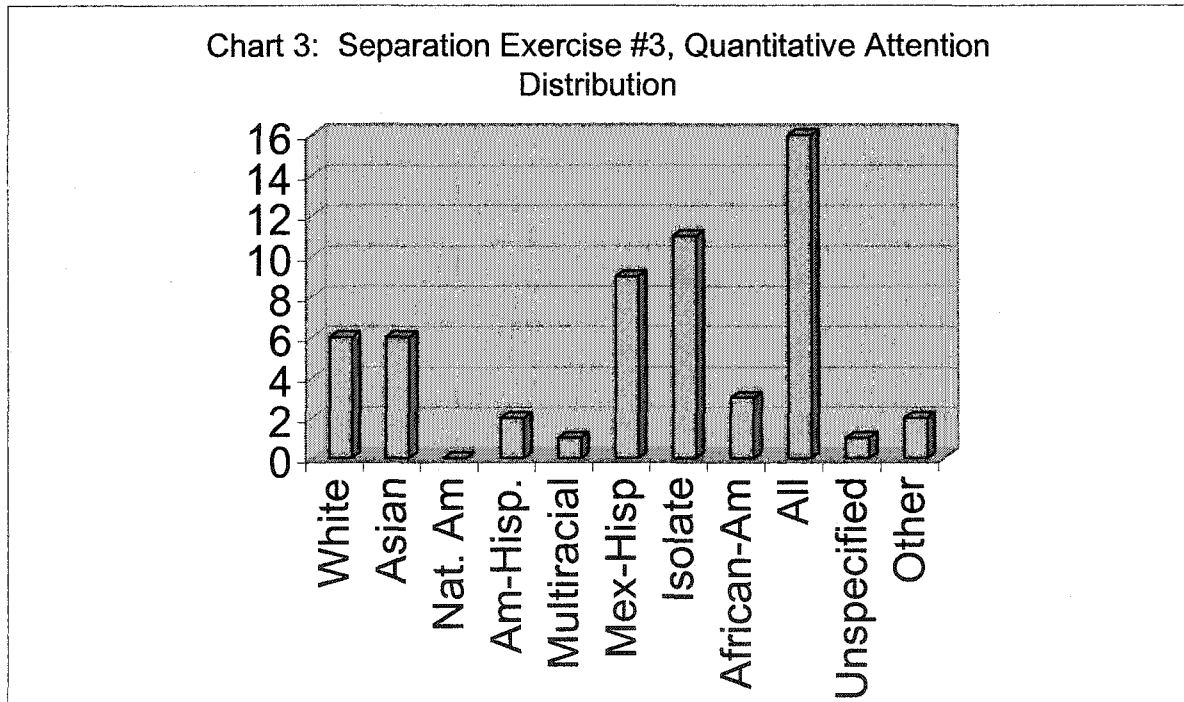
Engaging in a cross-case analysis of all three charts suggest some interesting findings regarding the social psychology of complex systems. First, the patterns are quite different across all three systems. In Exercise #1, there was considerable attention focused at the top of the hierarchy (White Males); in Exercise #2, there was considerable

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focus on the bottom of hierarchy (Black Males); in Exercise #3, the isolate received a considerable amount of attention. Despite the similarities in the initial set-up of each exercise (segregated, static hierarchies), there is no uniform pattern in the ways individuals involved in each exercise attend to the different groups involved.

There are other notable differences as well. In Exercise #1, no participant expressed a belief that "all groups were important". In Exercise #2, there was a considerable amount of attention paid to this underlying unity; in Exercise #3, this was the category of response that received the highest number of votes. Apparently, complex systems may differ in the degree to which individuals involved attend to the underlying unity of the system.

Grounded Theory Analysis of Qualitative Data

Once again, in an effort to organize this data into some coherent structure, I created grids to capture the qualitative data associated with this question ("What other groups were most important during this exercise? Why?"). These organizational grids are presented is Appendices H, I, and J. From those grids, I used grounded theory to generate the following list of codes related to reasons why individuals suggested that particular groups were most important. In this case, a relatively brief list of themes emerged quite clearly from the data. The list of seven codes is as follows. They are presented in no particular order:

Table 6: *Codes Related to Research Question #3: "What other groups were most important during this exercise? Why?*

#	Code Title	Description	Example
1	*Privilege of the Top Group*	A focus on the top group because of their relative privilege	"They were treated like kings." "They had the most privilege."

2	*Lack of privilege*	A focus on group that had less privilege	"They did the most cleaning."
3	*Public Mistreatment*	A focus on groups that suffered public mistreatment	"They were so heinously treated that they inspired others to stick up for them and rebel."
4	*Power of Authority*	A focus on authority figures because of their influence on the exercise	"I think the enforcers…are most important because they proved how little effort it takes for someone to agree and comply with oppression of themselves and others."
5	*Actions of the Rebels*	A focus on the individuals or groups who worked to "break" the exercise	"The were the ones who changed the course of the exercise by rebelling."
6	*Solitude of Isolate*	A focus on the solitary isolate(s)	"He was the only one by himself and that causes people to feel for him."
7	*Shared Experience and Responsibility*	An assertion that "all groups were important" because everyone was equally involved in the experience	"Everyone was extremely important because the exercise was about community."

As was discussed in the exploration of the quantitative data, these themes were not all equally present at all three exercises. For example, Exercise #1 had many responses focused on the privilege of the top group and no responses claiming that all groups are important. Other exercises generated very different patterns of system-wide attention distribution. Across all the exercises, however, these seven themes clearly emerged as central reasons why individuals focused their attention on various groups.

The codes suggest that fairly dramatic dynamics attract attention: conspicuous privilege, blatant mistreatment, public acts of challenging the rules, etc. It might also be important to note that many groups that did not engage in any of these actions tended to be largely overlooked by their peers. Groups in the middle of the hierarchy who neither suffered dramatic mistreatment nor engaged in public efforts to "break" the exercise frequently went unnoticed.

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Exploring the Connection Between the Individual and Systemic Change

The final two questions on the participant questionnaire were designed to explore the connection between individual experiences and the dynamics of systemic change. These questions grow out of a recognition that this exercise is designed to give participants experience with challenging systems of bias and bigotry, and that these individual actions generate system-wide change. Questions Four and Five were designed to provide insight into these dynamics.

Specifically, Question Four asked "Why did you not 'break' this exercise earlier than when you did?" The question is intended to explore the cognitive dimension of individual action in the context of the larger complex system. What factors influence efforts to promote change in a complex system?

For this question, we engaged in a grounded theory analysis of the responses to this question from each set of questionnaires. For each set of questionnaires, I generated a series of codes based upon analysis of the raw data. In this case, however, I returned to the raw data and attempted to sort the responses according to the codes. The result is the following list of responses, organized from most frequently occurring to least frequently occurring. The grid for Separation Exercise #1 is as follows:

Table 11: Exercise #1—Codes Generated from Response to Question #4 *("Why did you not 'break' this exercise earlier than when you did?")*

Code	Example	#
Fear of Consequences	"I had a sort of fear or dislike of punishment for breaking the rules."	11
No one else was breaking	"We didn't 'break' the exercise because everyone or nobody did anything."	2
Confused about exercise	"I honestly didn't know what we were doing."	2
Waiting to be saved	"Because I thought Thomasina was going to come and 'rescue us.'"	2
(No answer)	--	2

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Other	"Because some delegates were to pressure to make some decisions."	1
Tired of following rules	"I wanted to follow directions...but I got tired of standing and waiting so long."	1
I did break	"I did break the exercise."	1
Trusted authority	" I was given a rule and I followed it because I didn't think it was going to lead me in the wrong direction."	1

The chart provides insight into the reasons why individuals involved in Separation Exercise #1 hesitated to break the rules of the exercise. By far the most frequent response was fear of consequences. No other response gathered more than two comments. It is interesting to note, however, the sense of waiting on others that emerges from this list ("Nobody else was breaking" and "Waiting to be saved"). The fear of consequences seems to have been accompanied by an expectation that someone else would take a stand first, or that the Director, Thomasina, would step in to do something about the dynamics.

The responses from Separation Exercise #2 are as follows:

Table 12: Exercise #2-- Codes Generated from Response to Question #4 ("Why did you not 'break' this exercise earlier than when you did?")

Code	Example	#
Fear of Consequences	"I was scared of getting in trouble."	15
Confused about nature of exercise	"I was not sure if the exercise was real or fake."	9
Unaware of what was happening	" I didn't know any movement was going on. We were kind of secluded and didn't know what was going on outside of where we were."	5
Other	"My group broke very early we couldn't break too much earlier."	3
Didn't want to be a follower	"When the revolution began I didn't want to be a follower of something I didn't agree with wholeheartedly."	3
Afraid of leaving group	"I wanted to be with my Latino group but help ourselves at the same time."	3
Wanted to see what would happen	"Wanted to see how it shaped out"	2
Noone else was breaking	"Because I was waiting on others and it was not great thing that I did."	2
(No Answer)	--	2
Needed Help	"Because I needed help."	2
Not unified enough	"We couldn't break because we were not organized or unified enough."	2

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Knew it was fake	"Knew it was an exercise & FAKE."	1
Didn't think we would be accepted	"We didn't think our movements would be as valued by the group since we didn't receive any hardships."	1
Didn't care	"Because I really didn't care."	1
Thought it would be wrong	"I thought it would be wrong to do it especially when a whole movement wasn't started yet."	1
Not sure	"I have no idea. I am still thinking about that."	1

Once again, the fear of consequences easily tops the list; however, this time it is followed by a widespread sense of confusion about the nature of the exercise, which led many individuals to not know how to react appropriately. Also, several individuals suggested that they were simply unaware of what was happening for a long time during the exercise. Since groups were placed in many different rooms around the facilities at this exercise (as opposed to having everyone outside on the same field, as occurred at the other two exercises), this response is perhaps not so surprising. The remaining codes were only present in one or two comments, but provide an interesting overview of the reasons why individuals hesitated to take a stand.

The responses for Exercise #3 are as follows:

Table 13: Exercise #3-- Codes Generated from Response to Question #4 ("Why did you not 'break' this exercise earlier than when you did?")

Code	*Example*	#
Fear of Consequences	"I was scared about what was going to happen to me."	29
Confused about exercise	"Because I thought it was just an activity."	4
Needed Help	"Until people started speaking up, I honestly didn't know how to."	2
(No Answer)	--	2
Let others talk me out of it	"Honestly, I really wanted to break it, but I let the people around me talk me out of it and now I feel like crap for letting someone else have that power over me."	2
Not strong enough	"I was not strong enough to break it. I felt so bad because I thought I was too weak to."	1
Build up to anger, courage	"I guess it took me a long time to build up enough anger and guts to do so."	1
See what happens	"I wanted to get the full effect of what has	1

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	happened, and what is still happening."	
Didn't care	"The reason I didn't break it sooner is because I didn't think much of it."	1
Fake	"I did not break the exercise because I knew that it was not real."	1
Unaware	"I didn't experience in my opinion the full exercise because my group was inside cleaning."	1
Didn't want to be rude	"I didn't want to be rude or profane to anyone."	1

Once again, the code "fear of consequences" tops the list. In this case, it was included in a remarkable 29 responses; the next most frequently cited code (confusion once again) was only mentioned four times. Also, there was once again a sense of waiting for others to speak up ("I needed help.").

Reviewing these data, it is impossible to avoid a connection to the classic experiments by Milgram and Asch. In both of those studies, individuals found it hard to risk disobeying authority figures or not conforming with the opinions of their peers. This exercise, which clearly grows out of the tradition of those earlier social psychology experiments, reveals a similar dynamic.

It is important to note, however, that the story does not end with fear of consequences. Although there is widespread fear of initially breaking the rules of the exercise, eventually someone does break the rules, and the experience that follows that event is quite different from the experience that preceeds it. The static, segregated hierarchy begins to transform into an interconnected web. It is crucial to recognize the significance of that change.

Question Five on the questionnaire asked, "How did it feel to 'break' the exercise?" The intention of the question was to explore each participant's affective experience in the moments when they made a choice to 'break' the exercise; however,

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many individuals appeared to read it as "How did you feel when the exercise ended?"
Thus, the question proved to be poorly worded. It was sufficiently ambiguous to result in
multiple interpretations. Nevertheless, the responses generated by this question still
prove illuminating.

For Question Five, I once again engaged in a grounded theory analysis of the data
to generate codes. Due to the similarity of responses across all three exercises, I found it
possible to use the same list of codes for all three exercises. I was able to tally how many
responses fit with each code for all three exercises. The chart is as follows:

Table 14: Cross-Cases Analysis of Responses to Question #5 (*"How did it feel to 'break' the exercise?"*)

Code	Example	#1	#2	#3
Great! Empowering!	"Excellent! Once we realized we were right it felt empowering!"	41%	29%	53%
No Answer	--	23%	13%	7%
Ambivalent	"[I]t felt liberating to join hands with the peace chain. At the same time, I felt like I was betraying the groups that had chosen to stay separate."	18%	8%	9%
"We didn't break it"	"We didn't break it."	14%	19%	2%
Other	--	5%	2%	4%
Dissappointed	"I was disappointed in myself and my group that we didn't break it on our own."	0%	19%	2%
Relieved	"I felt relieved."	0%	8%	20%
Angry at non-breakers	"I felt bad since some groups did not join the movement, and the fact that they were persecuting themselves when they could be themselves just upset me."	0%	2%	2%
Total		100%	100%	100%

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Again, it seems to be the case that the vagueness of the question confused people. It just isn't clear whether individuals answered the question "How did you feel after you personally challenged the rules of the exercise," or "How did you feel when the exercise ended?" Recognizing this considerable flaw in the question design, it is still interesting to consider the responses.

Once again, this grounded theory analysis of the data generates a spectrum of responses.

Some individuals lamented the fact that they didn't break the exercise, others felt ambivalent, still others expressed relief. A few expressed anger or frustration at the individuals who didn't break the exercise along with them.

Amongst individuals who did not break the exercise, there is a powerful sense of regret, disappointment, and frustration. To provide a greater sense of these sentiments, some of the responses of individuals who did not actively break the exercise are presented below:

> *"We didn't, and I am ashamed of that."*
>
> *"It was nice to finally end this exercise, but I was disappointed in myself and in the group that we didn't break it on our own and depended on our counselors to do it for us."*
>
> *"Well we didn't and it felt really bad."*
>
> *"Discouraging—like I am not capable of accomplishments. I feel like I let everybody down but this is an experience I will grow/learn from and I am glad we did it."*
>
> *"I didn't, but I wish I did."*
>
> *"I felt bad we didn't break it and I was disgusted that I let myself get demeaned and degraded for four hours."*

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"I wasn't the one who broke it off first so I don't feel that great. I think maybe I should have started saying stuff with Tiffany when she first started talking."

"There seemed to be a sense of hope after the exercise was broken. Everybody had a lot of feelings towards this exercise so they were glad it was finally over. Yet I was ashamed that I wasn't the one who took a stand as well as disappointment at not doing anything. I was glad though that someone was brave enough to risk it all to be able to give support to other people."

These expressions of disappointment and shame provide insight into the emotionally challenging nature of the exercise. Participating in this exercise is not easy, and recognizing one's personal involvement in an unjust system is an emotionally painful experience. As was the case in famous experiments like Milgram's obedience studies, Asch's conformity studies, the Stanford Prison Experiment, and the Robber's Cave exercise, these experiences force participants to face painful emotions like shame, self-doubt, and frustration.

Again, it should be remembered that this exercise takes place in the context of a week-long program run by experienced staff. Immediately following each exercise, all participants engaged in an extended (close to two hour) processing session in which these difficult negative emotions were expressed and worked through to make sure the experience did not leave anyone with lasting psychological damage.

These comments may be powerful expressions of disappointment and shame, but it is important to note that not everyone in the system had this type of difficult experience. As indicated by the chart above, by far the most frequent response to question five in all three exercises was that it felt "Great! Empowering!" when the rules maintaining the static, segregated, hierarchical system were broken. The data suggests that individuals who actively took a stand against the injustice of the system reported feelings of joy, excitement, and liberation. A few of these responses are as follows:

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"Excellent! Once we realized we were right it was empowering!"

"If felt very liberating and exciting to break the exercise."

"It felt good, productive, and empowering."

"When I joined the 'revolution', it was like a weight was lifted off me and I started speaking up about them mistreating us and I tried to convince others to do the same."

"Freedom felt great. I took an active roll in organizing the revolt."

"Really good and empowering."

"It felt good, but only because I knew that we would help stop the degraded feeling many of the other groups experienced."

"I felt empowered, the fact that I was part of a group that was fighting for such a good cause felt wonderful, but at the same time not being able to get everyone to break the exercise was frustrating."

"It felt really good because I was able to talk to my friends and really realize that we need each other."

"It made me feel proud of our country and the wonderful people. It also made me realize that we have an excellent, intelligent generation, we just need to educate each other on what is going on around us when we are blinded."

"I felt free. No more restraint and control. I felt satisfied and happy because deep inside of me, there is no guilt."

"It felt good when the exercise was broken. It made me feel that I was much more one with the group."

"It felt gratifying. It felt very good. We all need everyone."

"I felt relieved and at the end when we all sung I was so happy—I could feel the love. It was awesome!"

"I didn't feel that it was completely 'broken'. However, it was broken for me personally. I was liberated by others as well as myself. Seeing others running around and saying "Join us! Come get liberated!" made it so much easier to follow what I knew was right."

For these individuals, the separation exercise provided a powerful lesson in the possibility of overcoming fear in order to take a stand for greater equality, freedom, and unity. The fact that these sentiments were so widespread is also a remarkable finding. Each of these exercises began as oppressive, segregated hierarchies that were eventually challenged by a few individuals from the lower end of the social system. Inevitably, however, these movements for justice and unity involved more and more individuals and generated profound changes in the structure and organization of the social system. In each case, large numbers of individuals expressed joy and excitement at having taken a stand for a more just, equal, and unified community.

Exploring Agency

Throughout this analysis, I have avoided any attempt to claim that some of the codes generated by this research are somehow better or more desirable than others. The complexity of this exercise makes it difficult to assess what makes for a "better" participant experience. For example, is it "better" for participants to be able to provide sophisticated cognitive descriptions of the experience, or is it "better" to provide insightful and honest descriptions of their emotional experiences during the exercise? Is it "better" to experience confusion, or anger, or enjoyment? In the face of the complexity of this experience, I have chosen to simply present these codes without trying to cluster them or rank them.

At some point, however, the researcher must confront the question of "different or better?" The analysis thus far has made it clear that the three exercises resulted in very different outcomes. Until now I have simply described the differences. With the

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analysis that follows, I attempt to examine whether one of these exercises was somehow more or less effective than the others.

In order to make this assessment, I returned to the purpose of these exercises. As discussed in Chapter Three, the purpose of Camp Anytown in general is to empower participants to challenge problematic dynamics of bias and bigotry. The separation exercise is designed to give participants a chance to demonstrate their ability to act in the face of these social dynamics.

In light of this purpose, it is possible to assess the degree to which each exercise succeeded at empowering participants in this way. In undertaking this particular analysis, I move from simple description to assessment.

In an effort to operationalize the concept of "empowerment", I chose to review the data for evidence of agency. For these purposes, I define agency as "a willingness and ability to take action to 'break' the exercise." For a more specific presentation of my use of the term, consider the following simple, three-code grid:

Table 17: Presentation of Codes Exploring Agency in a Complex System

Code	Definition	Example
Agency	A narrative describing a clear, proactive action that was taken to change the system.	"At one point, we heard people singing 'We shall overcome' and *I joined the revolution."* [italics mine]
No Agency	A narrative describing passively watching others take action, or actively refusing to get involved with changing the system	"Some individuals from the Hispanic group took off the armband...soon after everyone followed." "A group of people came to my group trying to get us to rebel but I did not participate"
Unclear/ No Answer	It is unclear whether the individual was active or passive during the exercise, or there was no answer given to question #1	"Frog-Kill-Eric-Jon-Picture-Holding Frog"

My intention with this analysis was to explore the effectiveness of the senior staff's efforts to generate agency within the system. Given the purpose of the exercise, the argument can be made that exercises with higher levels of agency are more effective in that they have empowered more participants to take action.

The results comparing all three exercises are as follows:

Table 18: Cross-Case Analysis—Coding for Agency in Responses to Question #1

Code	Exercise #1 (n=22)	Exercise #2 (n=47)	Exercise #3 (n=44)
Agency	32%	43%	7%
No Agency	59%	47%	89%
Unclear/ No Answer	9%	10%	5%

According to this analysis, Exercise #2 generated the highest level of agency (43%). This was the exercise which resulted in the formation of a movement, development of a nine-point mission statement, and a non-violent protest involving nearly half the participants. The other two exercises did not generate such complex behavior involving so many participants. In the discussion section, the unique aspects of Exercise #2 will be explored in greater detail.

The findings regarding Exercises #1 and #3 are somewhat surprising. A fairly high percentage of individual responses in Exercise #1 were coded as having agency (32%). Given the minimal amount of activity that occurred at the event, this level of agency is fairly high. It should be pointed out that Exercise #1 had the lowest level of questionnaire responses; approximately ten participants did not fill out a questionnaire. It may be the case that the individuals who did choose to fill out the questionnaires were the

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individuals who felt a sense of agency during the exercise, which might account for the high percentage.

For Exercise #3, the number is surprisingly low (7%). This may be a function of the set-up of the morning song session. At this exercise, all the participants were gathered together to participate in an all-group activity. When the Asian participant was asked to sing, but could only stand up and cry, everyone was riveted. When another participant came to her defense, the whole group saw it happen. Because of the nature of the exercise, the exercise of agency by a very few number of participants had instant and widespread influence on the system as a whole.

Again, the complexity of these exercises makes the assessment of "different versus better" difficult to undertake. The message of these analyses may be that, under the right conditions, the exercise of agency by very few individuals is more effective than the exercise of agency by many individuals under different circumstances. However, in light of the purpose of this exercise, the argument can be made that this analysis does speak in a meaningful way to the effectiveness of each separation exercise as an educational undertaking.

Theory-Building Based on Analysis of Composite Narratives

A major benefit to using the Camp Anytown separation exercise as a subject for research is the fact that it was easily replicable. Observation of three instances of the same exercise allowed us to explore in a meaningful way whether any patterns emerge across all three sites. After the detailed analysis of data gleaned from the questionnaires presented in the previous chapter, we are now able to step back and review patterns that appeared across all three composite narratives.

By reviewing all three composite narratives, I am able to provide an informed answer to the final research question informing this study: *Are there macro-level patterns that emerge as social systems transform towards greater integration and interdependence?* In addition, the information presented in the three composite narratives raises provocative questions about the nature and development of complex systems. With this chapter, I use the empirical data from these composite narratives to build theory exploring the dynamics of these complex systems.

Patterns that Appear Across All Three Exercises

Although all three of the separation exercises that we observed progressed in very different ways and resulted in very different outcomes, there were clearly some patterns that appeared. .

Each exercise began as a segregated, hierarchical social system (this was the default initial state in all three exercises). Then, the system entered a long period of stasis. Although the enforcers were kept busy policing minor infractions of the rules

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during the early hours of the exercise, the system in general felt static. There was near-perfect obedience to the rules, and almost complete conformity within each of the separated groups.
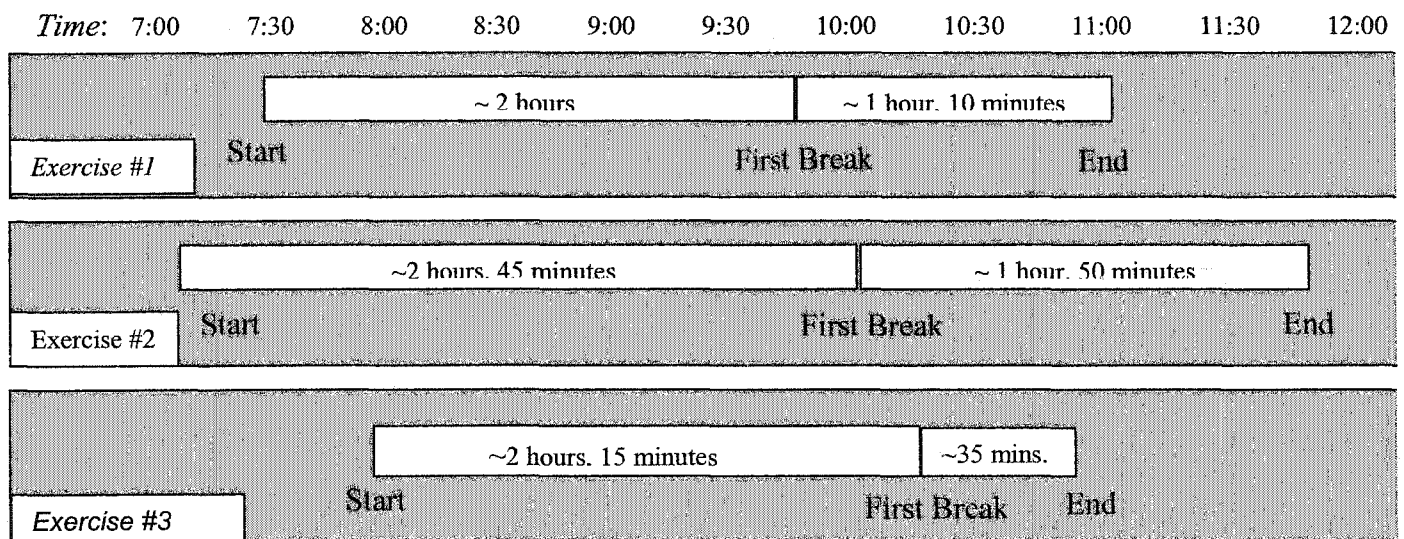
Eventually, after nearly two hours in all three cases, an individual from one of the lower groups in the social hierarchy makes a significant break with the system. This may be a very public effort to criticize the system and reach out to other groups, or it may be an emotional outburst about the unfairness of the situation. Whatever form it takes, this break represents a sort of tipping point in the development of the system. After this initial act of rebellion, the underlying social structure of the complex system begins a process of rapid and dramatic change. Coalitions begin forming: In Exercise #1, the Black Females, Black Males, and Latinos gathered together in a meeting room. In Exercise #2, the Latinos, Black Males, and Blonde Women gathered together to organize a movement, create a mission statement, and initiate a non-violent protest against the rules of the system. In Exercise #3, an American-Born Hispanic participant made a strident challenge to the system in defense of an Asian peer who was too upset to sing during the group song session.

The formation of these coalitions is really just the first step in a period of rapid and profound transformation of the social system. Soon, most groups are affected by the changes occurring in the system. As the minutes pass, the separated, hierarchical system transforms towards a complex, interconnected, and interdependent network. Each group—actually, each individual in each group—is faced with a decision: Should I become part of the network? Or should I maintain my separation? In all three of the exercises we observed, the majority of groups elected to join the integrated network,

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while a few groups and individuals chose a principled stance of isolation. At this point in

the development of each system, the staff ended the exercise and invited everyone back

to a meeting room to process the experience.

A very simplified analysis of this process of development over time is presented

here:

Table 7: Cross-Case Analysis—Development of Complex Systems Over Time

Time:	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00	11:30	12:00

	~ 2 hours	~ 1 hour, 10 minutes	
Exercise #1	Start	First Break	End

	~2 hours, 45 minutes	~ 1 hour, 50 minutes	
Exercise #2	Start	First Break	End

	~2 hours, 15 minutes	~35 mins.	
Exercise #3	Start	First Break	End

This chart graphically presents the start time of each exercise, the duration of time

before the first public break in the exercise, and then the time until the conclusion of the

exercise. Although the chart is a very simple representation of a complex transformation,

it suggests a fairly simple pattern in the way systems change over time. In all three cases,

the system remained largely static and unchanging for at least the first two hours of the

exercise. Then, some individual takes a stand that somehow "tips" the system into a

period of rapid and dramatic change. This basic developmental narrative appeared across

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all three exercises, suggesting that it may be generalizable to the process of development in real-world complex systems.

The Separation Exercise as a Complex System

In Chapter 2, I presented an overview of concepts related to complex systems. A core component of this research is the assertion that the perspective of complex systems provides a new level of analysis of human behavior that both transcends and includes the individual and group levels of analysis. In the data analysis presented in Chapter 6, I made an effort to integrate these levels in some meaningful way. In this chapter, my focus is on the separation exercises as they appear through the lens of complex systems theory. Essentially, my question is: How do the five concepts presented in Chapter 2 inform our understanding of the three exercises described in this research?

Interdependence

In Chapter 2, I presented Bar Yam's explanation of interdependent systems. He claimed that a key measure of interdependence involves what happens when a piece of the system is removed. Examples included a glass of water (a low level of interdependence), a plant (a medium level of interdependence), and an animal (a high level of interdependence).

It is interesting to explore the ways this concept might apply to the complex social systems explored in this research. It might be argued, for example that removal of different individuals may have different impacts on the development of the system. In Exercise #2, there was a female isolate who simply refused to cooperate or communicate

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with other groups, even when they made concerted efforts to include her in the movement. It may be the case that taking her out of the exercise would have made very little impact on the way things developed. On the other hand, Eduardo from the Latino group played a significant role in the narrative of that exercise; events would not have progressed in exactly the same way in his absence.

This way of thinking is consistent with the way scholars of complex systems have understood the spread of fads, computer viruses, diseases, etc. Particular individuals inevitably play a disproportionately important role in the promulgation of these phenomena. For example, researchers investigating the AIDS epidemic have explored the ways that the disease has traveled through social networks. They have found that, while most individuals have two to ten sexual partners in their lifetime, a very small number of individuals have hundreds—even thousands of sexual partners. Not surprisingly, these individuals seem to play a major role in spreading the disease (Barabasi 2003, p. 135-138). In his analysis of social trends, Gladwell highlights the importace of "connectors"—individuals with an incredibly large and diverse number of social contacts (Gladwell 2000). These individuals play a significant role in spreading ideas, fads, and other social phenomena rapidly through society. An argument can be made that somehow removing these individuals from the social system would have a significant impact on the development of the system. Again, this analysis suggests that some individuals (like Eduardo) play a major role in the development of a given social systems, while others (like that female isolate) have minimal impact on events in the system.

There is a limit to the utility of this way of understanding interdependence. While there is surely a value to the scientific analysis of how particular individuals impact complex systems, there is also a clear danger to any logic that designates one individual or group as "important" and another individual or group as "expendable," "irrelevant," or "unimportant." In the discussion section, I will briefly consider the implications of this line of thinking in greater detail.

Self-Organization and Pattern Formation

In Chapter 2, I explained these concepts through the example of cellular automata, computer simulations designed to explore the way simple individual actions at the local level generate complex global patterns. Cellular automata simulations can be programmed to start at different initial states (i.e. an individual will "panic" if four other individuals in the area "panic"; the simulation will start with 25% of the individuals in panic mode...); different decisions about these initial states lead to different outcomes.

It is possible to apply these terms to the separation exercises. The initial state is a condition of strict segregation, and a social architecture that is rigidly hierarchical, with resources and privilege distributed disproportionally at the top. All participants in the exercise receive the same instructions: Don't talk to anyone outside your group; don't make eye contact with anyone outside your group; stay with your group at all times. The system then enforces these rules through the actions of the senior staff.

A central focus of this research was exploring how these systems develop, given these initial states and guiding rules. We found that the system remains static in a fairly extended period of calm and conformity until eventually, individuals from the bottom

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levels of the hierarchy challenge the status quo, triggering a period of rapid change towards a more interconnected, networked social structure. Individuals in the system are then faced with the decision of whether to connect with the network, or negotiate a way to remain isolated from the networked social system.

In the discussion section, I will explore the ways these findings may relate to events in social systems in the real world.

Non-Linear Dynamics

Each of these separation exercises provides fascinating examples of the non-linear nature of complex systems. In each case, a lone individual or a small group makes a decision to challenge the status quo. These relatively minor acts (the Black Women head into the meeting room; Eduardo goes to get a cup of coffee; a Latino woman angrily defends a crying Asian woman who has been asked to sing) eventually trigger major changes in the system. These are remarkable examples of the power individuals or small groups have to create change in a system.

Development Towards Complexity

In Chapter 2, I present the notion that systems develop towards complexity. In his discussion of human civilization, Bar Yam argues that one way to understand complexity in social systems is the development from simple forms of organization (a strict hierarchy) towards more complex forms of organization (a network or web). The relevance of this concept to the separation exercises is readily apparent. In each case, the complex system began as a strictly enforced, segregated hierarchy. As each exercise progressed, this hierarchy was transformed. Over the course of time, the architecture of

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the social system developed away from the simple hierarchical structure and towards a complex and interconnected web.

A diagram attempting to capture this transformation might look as follows:

Development Over Time
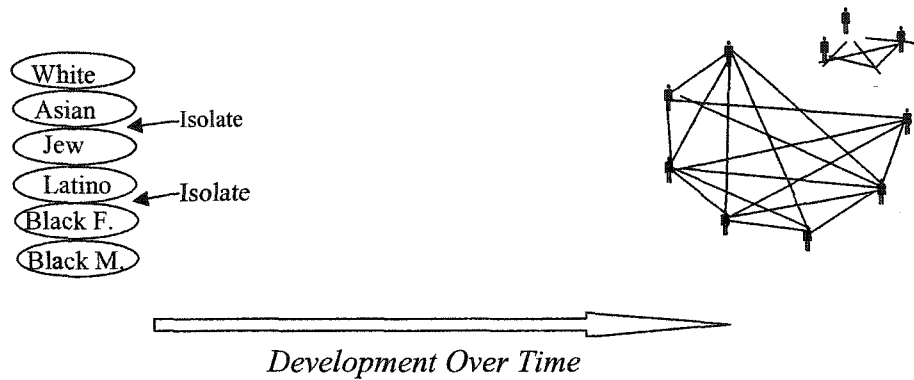
This is a simplified representation of an extremely complex process. However, it highlights a transformation that occurs in the underlying architecture of the social system over the course of time. The simple, static, segregated hierarchy that is created at the beginning of the exercise grows ever more interconnected over the course of time. By the end, the system has transformed into a largely interconnected web, with a few groups or individuals remaining separate from the network.

During the exercise, an individual takes an action that "tips" the system towards a rapid transformation towards greater interconnection and complexity. As this process continues, the challenges participants must face begin to change. Early on, participants struggle against the strict boundaries of a static, segregated hierarchy. The earliest efforts to break the exercise are focused on breaking out of this system. As events progress, however, it is hard to claim that the words "static," "hierarchical," and "segregated" are still relevant. Consider, for example, the events in Exercise #2: Once the initial effort to break the exercise occurred, a movement formed that included the Black Males, the

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Latinos, and the Blonde Females. The system developed towards an ever-more

interconnected network, and groups at all levels found themselves faced with a decision

to join or remain separate from a remarkably dynamic and democratic web.

Complexity

In Chapter 2, I presented a few of the ways that the concept of complexity is

understood within the literature related to complex systems. Applying these concepts to

the three separation exercises provides new and provocative ways of understanding

dynamics of human organization and behavior.

According to the literature, one aspect of complexity is the concept of scale. In

general, objects (or systems, processes, etc.) are simpler when viewed from a distance. As

you "zoom in" on the system, the level of complexity increases. That certainly holds true

for these exercises. From a 30,000-foot birds-eye view, the system can be described in

one sentence: *A complex system, transforming from a simple hierarchy into a more*

complex, interconnected web. There may be other descriptions that are equally

appropriate, but from that scale of analysis it is not difficult to describe the exercise in a

sentence or two.

A closer look requires considerably more information to capture the complexity

that comes into view. The grids presenting the quantitative and qualitative data related to

Question #3 ("In your opinion, what other groups were most important during this

exercise? Why?") are one example of an effort to capture the complexity at this level of

analysis. Even though these grids represent efforts to simplify and organize a large

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quantity of information into an easy-to-use format, they require far more than a sentence or two to be explained accurately.

Look even closer, and the complexity grows even more dramatic. In order to begin to understand the experience of each individual in these systems, it would be appropriate to read all of the questionnaires from each exercise. This means 20-45 pages of data related to each exercise. And of course, the questionnaires themselves represent simplified representations of each individual's experience during the exercise.

This discussion of the importance of scale in understanding complexity highlights a second relevant concept: the amount of information required to describe each system. As discussed in Chapter 2, more complex systems require greater amounts of descriptive information.

This aspect of complexity provides an intriguing new perspective on the process and outcome of the three different separation exercises. In the grid that follows, I attempt to quantify the information involved in the design and execution of each exercise in this study:

Table 16: Cross-Case Analysis: Complexity of Program Design

	Exercise #1	Exercise #2	Exercise #3
Initial Status *(same for all exercises)*	1) Individuals Separated into Hierarchically Organized Groups		
	2) Individuals Given Armbands/ Patches		
Initial Instructions to Participants *(same for all exercises)*	3) "Don't talk to anyone outside your group."		
	4) "Don't make eye contact outside of your group."		
	5) "Stay with your group at all times."		
Specific Guidelines for Counselors	6) "Be Filler. Be sheep."	6) "Reinforce the rules by repeating instructions when appropriate."	6) "Just follow the rules."
		7) "Only break when the last member of your group breaks."	7) "If student is very upset, pull them aside."
			8) "Watch for when I remove my scarf."

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	7) White group eats first, gets double servings for breakfast	8) White groups eat first, get double servings	9) White group eats first
Privilege/ Resource Allocation	8) Black women clean up plates	9) Black males do not get enough chairs to sit in	10) Asians get ball to play with
	9) Latinos Sweep cafeteria floor	10) Black males do not get to finish meal	11) Mexican-Born Hispanics pick up trash
	10) Black males get ball to play with	11) White males get to play Frisbee, drink water, watch movie	12) "White's Only" bathrooms, soda machine
Formal Activities Assigned/ Organized During Exercise	(none)	12) Blonde females put on make-up, write report about women in media	13) Morning Song Session (all groups brought together for sing-along)
		13) Non-blonde females design greeting cards	
		14) Latinos translate English songs into Spanish	
		15) Jews write report re: reconstructionist Judaism	
		16) Multiracial draw maps of where ancestors came from	
		17) LGBT organize gay pride parade	
Formal Activities Assigned/ Organized During Exercise (continued)		18) Asians write report about being model minority	
		19) South Asian/ Middle East write report about terrorism	
		20) Privileged Blacks write report re: Affirmative Action	
		21) Black Females do step routine	
		22) Black males do step routine	
Total # of Rules:	10	22	13

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Final Organizational State:	-Black females, black males, latinos together in meeting room listening to music	- Formation of "Movement" - Drafting of 9-point mission statement -Self-Organized Non-Violent Demonstration	-Students remove armbands -Join together in groups for hugs, support -Many join in singing "Lean on Me"

This is an imperfect effort to quantify the rules required to structure each of these exercises; it is appropriate to view this quantitative record as more of a rough sketch than a definitive description. Despite these limitations, however, the grid provides some intriguing insights into the relative complexity of the three social systems.

According to this analysis, Exercise #1 was the least complex of the three exercises we observed (it requires only 10 descriptive rules). It involved the standard initial set-up, as well as the basic rules of the separation exercise. The Program Directors at this site were very clear that they were completely in charge of the exercise, so they provided minimal guidelines to the counselors. They simply had no activities organized during the exercise. In fact, in this exercise the two senior staff spent the last hour of the exercise in their cabin, essentially leaving events outside to develop on their own.

In Exercise #2, the situation was dramatically different. The system included the basic set-up and rules for participants; however, the senior staff provided the counselors with very specific directions, and made it clear they were an important and empowered part of the exercise. Then, the senior staff designed a specific activity for each of the groups in the exercise, making sure the assignments matched the unique identity of each of the groups. This collection of tailor-made activities represented a considerable increase in the level of complexity of this social system (22 descriptive rules). The enforcers also stayed active all the way through the last moments of the exercise.

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Exercise #3 fell somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. Again, there was the standard set-up and participant guidelines, and this time a few more instructions for the counselors (although these directions were less concrete than in Exercise #2). There were some unique elements to the resource/ privilege allocation design (signs designating "Whites Only" bathrooms and soda machines). Also, the staff integrated a morning song session into the separation exercise. This involved bringing all the groups together in a relatively small space, and having different groups lead songs. This activity made the exercise more complex than Exercise #1 (in which participants were essentially left to their own devices for most of the experience); however, with 13 descriptive rules, it was clearly less complex than the myriad individual assignments employed in Exercise #2.

When comparing the complexity of each program's design with the eventual outcome, some intriguing questions emerge. Exercise #1 essentially fizzled (for lack of a more technical term). It felt stagnant and boring to the observers, and essentially limped to a close with the black females, black males, and latinos listening to the radio in the meeting room. They were essentially just "hanging out," with no talk about heading outside to invite in any other groups. And those other groups were still in the locations that they had been placed in hours earlier; there was little reason to believe any of them were going to move anytime soon. In fact, it is questionable whether this exercise ever really "broke."

Exercise #2 could not have been more different. Once the initial act to "break" the exercise occurred, the whole facility crackled with energy. Early acts of "rebellion" coalesced into a movement. These individuals sat down and drafted a nine-point mission

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statement defining their values. They then organized and executed a non-violent protest, in which they created a human chain, held up a sign declaring their mission, and diplomatically approached groups that had not yet broken the exercise. When the exercise was finally brought to a close by the senior staff, the movement had retreated to a meeting room to figure out how to proceed with bringing together the rest of the groups. Even as an outside observer, it was an electrifying experience to be a part of.

Exercise #3, once again, fell somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. There was energy and movement for much of the morning, as the segregated groups sang songs, played games, and moved to different locations on the field. The song session represented a major reorganization of the whole social system. For the duration of that activity, all the groups were packed into a small space, where the two directors very publicly enforced the rules of the exercise. Also, the disparity between the lyrics of the songs and the rules of the exercise made the injustices of the exercise jarringly apparently. When someone finally broke the exercise, the system rapidly came together. (Given the structure of this exercise, it is also not surprising that so many participants claimed that "all groups were important" in this exercise). Although this exercise clearly achieved its pedagogical goals, it did not involve large numbers of participants in a self-organized movement with a mission statement and a non-violent protest. The outcome was simply less complex than what occurred in Exercise #2.

Given these outcomes, an argument can be made that the complexity of the program design has a direct impact on the complexity of the ultimate outcome. The design of Exercise #1 made it unlikely that a self-organized movement would emerge. From the birds-eye view of the complex system, there simply was not enough activity:

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too little guidance, too little provocation, too little structure to engage with or rebel against. Similarly, it is equally unlikely that Exercise #2 would fizzle, with no one attempting to challenge the system. In that case, there was just too much energy, too much provocation, too much structure demanding to be engaged with or rebelled against. With so much complexity in the design, a complex outcome was essentially pre-ordained.

There is a danger here of mistaking correlation with causality. I recognize there may be other factors that influence the outcome of these exercises. Nevertheless, the connection between structure and outcome is intriguing. For anyone interested in creating or managing complex programs and systems, the findings of this analysis represent provocative food for thought.

In addition, this discussion of the relative complexity of each separation exercise leads naturally to a discussion of the "Game of Life" simulation presented in Chapter 2. Again, the "Game of Life" is a computer simulation based upon the cellular automata concept. It represents an attempt to simulate complex systems that demonstrate dynamics found so often in the real world: self-organization, pattern formation, an ability to balance stability and change, creativity and order, and a sustained capacity for adaptation and change. These "Category IV" systems are relatively rare, and fall right on the edge between too much order (Category I & II systems) and too much chaos (Category III systems).

Although this analysis is surely open to competing interpretations, I would argue that there is value in attempting to categorize the separation exercises according to this nomenclature.

The case can be made that Separation Exercise #1 was somewhere between a Category I and Category II system. It is not really accurate to say it had a "doomsday rule," suggesting that nothing at all happened with this system. It is more appropriate to say that it developed into a fairly simple pattern (groups arrayed around the field), and then essentially settled into a low-energy, essentially unchanging state.

Separation Exercise #3 was perhaps on the line between Category II and Category IV. It was a far more active system—groups sang songs, played games, moved around the field frequently, etc. Then the whole system was squeezed into a small holding environment, where it was forced to confront its internal separation in a dramatic fashion. When the exercise broke, the system very rapidly integrated; all participants had to do was walk a few feet to connect with individuals from other groups.

Separation Exercise #2, however, fell solidly in the realm of a Category IV system. It demonstrated all the dynamics we expect to find in the real world: It self-organized in surprising and important ways; it generated remarkable creativity; it seemed always to be right on the line between order and chaos as enforcers challenged the activities that led to the development of a full-blown self-organized movement. It adapted and transformed in surprising ways, yet remained sustainable and controlled (remember, when the exercise was brought to a close the movement had gone back into the meeting room to discuss how to proceed after concluding a non-violent protest).

As described in Chapter Two, the "Game of Life" simulation represents an effort by computer programmers to design a computer simulation that mirrors the dynamics found in real life: self-organization, complexity, creativity, and the ability to balance adaptation and stability, order and chaos. Category IV systems are "special" examples of

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this simulation in that they produce these life-like dynamics. Essentially, the code created by these programmers contains the parameters required to effectively simulate life in a small digital univserse.

In much the same way, the senior staff at Exercise #2 have created a "special" example of the separation exercise. The same way programmers created parameters required to simulate life digitally, the educators at this program have created the conditions under which a real-life educational simulation generates dynamics that bear a remarkable similarity to real-world historical events.

Although the implications of this finding will be discussed in greater detail in the discussion section, the final task in this cross-case analysis will be to examine the choices made by senior staff in crafting these educational simulations. If we view these educational exercises as real-life equivalents of the "Game of Life" digital simulations, then it is vital that we explore the ways senior staff structure the exercises. Essentially, our questions are as follows: What tools do senior staff have at their disposal to set the parameters that guide the development (and, ultimately, the outcome) of these educational simulations? How do these pedagogical decisions made by the senior staff relate to the complexity of the social systems they create?

Authority and Leadership in Complex Systems

Just as the digital "cells" in the "Game of Life" operate according to a set of parameters created by computer programmers, the participants in these separation exercises operate within a structure created and managed by the senior staff. Any action taken by a participant over the course of the exercise occurs within the context of that

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pre-set structure, and in some very real ways those pedagogical decisions define the range of possible outcomes for the system.

In analyzing these dynamics, it is helpful to draw a distinction between authority and leadership. This distinction is a core element of the theory of adaptive leadership developed by Ronald Heifetz, and presented in his book *Leadership Without Easy Answers* (Heifetz 1994). His argument that authority and leadership are two different concepts provides a perspective that brings clarity to this analysis.

Heifetz states,

"In our everyday language, we often equate leadership with authority. We routinely call leaders those who achieve high positions of authority even though, on reflection, we readily acknowledge the frequent lack of leadership they provide" (Heifetz 1994, p. 49)

In an attempt to bring clarity to the matter, he distinguishes between the two terms in the following way:

Authority can be understood as a formal position of power within an organization, government, family, etc. Individuals in positions of authority are expected to fulfill certain needs of the group. Specifically, they are to provide direction for group movement, protection against outside threats, manage group norms, and settle internal conflicts.

Leadership, in contrast, is not a role or a formal position, but rather an activity. Adaptive leadership involves the attempt to move a group to adapt to new challenges or new realities (a definition with a clear relevance to the separation exercises described here). Having a position of formal authority provides resources that are helpful in attempting to exercise leadership; however, individuals with no formal authority are able to exercise this type of leadership as well.

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When viewing the design and execution of the separation exercises through this lens, some interesting dynamics emerge. First, it is apparent that the individuals with authority at Camp Anytown have a considerable influence on the way the exercise is structured and facilitated. Although all three exercises shared some basic underlying rules, the Program Directors in each case made unique pedagogical decisions that had major impacts on the exercise. The directors at Exercise #1 essentially left the system alone for the last half of the exercise; the Directors at Exercise #2 gave each group a tailor-made activity to work on, actively enforced the rules, and challenged the participants right up to the final moments of the activity. At Exercise #3, the Directors called everyone together for a morning song session, and spent the final hour of the activity enforcing the rules while making groups sing in front of their peers. These are all major pedagogical decisions, and each had a considerable influence on the experience of the participants and the outcome of the activity.

Also, in each case program directors made the decision to use the most outspoken and confident participants as isolates, out of a belief that these individuals would break the exercise too quickly and undermine the value of the experience for others. Again, these were significant pedagogical decisions that surely influenced the progress of the activity.

In making these decisions, the authorities had to balance some complicated obligations. First, they were responsible for maintaining the safety of all the participants. This exercise is grounded in a tradition of controversial social psychology experiments, and the dangers of doing emotional harm to the participants were very real. The authorities took this responsibility seriously, and worked hard to find a way to challenge

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participants and create a meaningful learning experience while also supporting and protecting the participants from any real harm.

Second, by its very nature, this exercise is based upon a confusing paradox: The authorities create an experience of strict segregation and oppressive control in order to teach participants the value of interconnection, responsibility, and freedom. As enforcers, they angrily tell participants to "Stay with your group!" As program directors, they are at that very moment trying to promote a willingness and ability to challenge authority in order to bring the system together. Clearly, this requires striking a delicate balance.

The situation presents a very real tension between the demands of authority and the demands of leadership: How does an authority figure take seriously the obligation to provide direction and protection while simultaneously creating conditions where participants are empowered to take genuine responsibility for improving the system? How does an authority figure fulfill appropriate expectations that he or she will maintain equilibrium and quell conflict, while also creating the freedom and disequilibrium that is essential to creativity, self-organization, and adaptation?

Our analysis of the composite narratives thus far provides some useful insight into these questions. As we have discussed, the authorities in Exercise #1 provided relatively little structure and guidance. The senior staff did not empower the counselors in this exercise in any meaningful way, and they had no organized activities for participants. In this case, these decisions resulted in a low-energy, static system. It is interesting to note that this was the only exercise in which no participant suggested that "all groups were important," suggesting a conspicuous lack of awareness about the interdependence of the

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system. Also, this was the only exercise where participants voiced an almost child-like dependence on the authority figure: In response to the question "Why did you not 'break' this exercise earlier?" two individuals made comments along the lines of "Because I thought Thomasina was going to come and 'rescue us' eventually."

In this exercise, authority provided both minimal structure and minimal engagement with the participants. The result of these decisions was a stagnant, low-energy system with no awareness of its own interdependence and some element of child-like dependence on the authority figures. In other words, the authorities failed to create conditions that encouraged the exercise of leadership by participants. While there is a danger of confusing correlation with causality here, the research suggests that self-organization, creativity, and adaptation do not simply appear in the absence of structure and disciplined attention from the authorities.

The authorities in Exercise #3 made some very different decisions. They stay engaged with the system throughout the exercise, and facilitated a group song session for the final half of the morning. The activity brought the whole system together into a small space, where they had little choice but to focus on the directors as they enforced the rules of the exercise and demanded that different groups step up to lead songs. This was a highly structured activity that was strictly controlled by the two authority figures.

The case can be made that the consequences of these actions are revealed in the data that came out of this exercise. This system had the highest level of self-awareness of its own interdependence. It also had the highest number of participants in the "Great! Empowering!" category from Question #5 ("How did it feel to break the exercise?") Because the song session brought everyone together in such a small space and created

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such a clear focus of attention, the actions of a few individuals very quickly influenced the whole system. In this case, the decisions made by the authorities appear to have fostered a recognition of the unity of the system, and created conditions in which the exercise of leadership by a few individuals quickly affected the system as a whole.

Exercise #2, once again, was a more complex experience. The authorities created a remarkable array of structured activities, most of which were tailor-made for particular groups. The authorities also stayed highly engaged with the system all the way through the exercise. Paradoxically, the program with the greatest amount of structure generated the greatest amount of empowerment. According to this research, it appears to be the case that the best way to ensure high levels of participant empowerment, creativity, and self-organization is to create systems that are highly structured and actively managed. The implications of this finding are explored in greater detail in the discussion section.

Chapter 8

Discussion

Issues of Generalization

My intention with this research has been to explore the experiences and meaning-making of participants in a series of social psychology experiments. While I hope the findings provide qualitative insights into the workings of complex systems, it is difficult to know exactly how relevant these findings are to real-world events. As Maxwell (1996) notes, qualitative reasearchers "rarely make explicit claims about the generalizability of their accounts" (p. 96).

I would like to offer one interpretation regarding the way this research might relate to events in the real world. In this analysis, the "Game of Life" simulation has been discussed at length. This computer simulation is intended to generate dynamics found everywhere in the natural world (self-organization, adaptation, stability, complexity, etc). A "Category IV" simulation holds a special status in that it seems to accurately recreate these dynamics in a digital universe.

This way of understanding the generalizability of a computer simulation is closely related to the way Maxwell describes the generalizability of qualitative research. He states, "[T]he generalizability of qualitative studies usually is based, not on explicit sampling of some defined population to which the results can be extended, but on the development of a theory that can be extended to other cases" (1996, p. 97).

Based on this logic, the case can be made that Exercise #2 in this research should be singled out for special attention. That real-life educational simulation was unique in the degree to which it generated dynamics that closely mirrored real-world events.

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Everything about it—from decisions made by the senior staff to the experiences of the participants—has the potential to provide valuable insights into the functioning of real-world complex systems. For these reasons, I will refer to that particular exercise repeatedly in the discussion below.

Complexity and the Discourse on Social Justice

In Chapter Three, I presented an overview of the philosophy and pedagogy that informs the work done by Camp Anytown. The program is rooted in a list of social justice definitions drawn from the book *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, by Adams, Bell, & Griffin (1997). You will recall that this list included terms such as "agent," "target," "vertical oppression," "horizontal oppression," etc. After presenting those definitions, I made the following claims:

> *These social justice definitions provide some perspective into the philosophical foundation of the programming that occurs at Camp Anytown. It is important to highlight the assumptions that are implied by this theoretical worldview:*
>
> > *1) There is a hierarchical organization of groups in the social structure of society ("vertical oppression," "agent," "target").*
> >
> > *2) This social system fosters relationships of oppression between groups higher in the hierarchy and those below them.*
> >
> > *3) The purpose of social justice education is to help students understand this social system, and empower them to change it to make the world more equal and just for all groups.*
>
> *This represents an overview of the philosophy that informs the pedagogy employed at Camp Anytown. It is important to emphasize the direct connection between this theory of social justice and the separation exercise that occurs at Camp Anytown. While the week-long experience at Camp Anytown includes a wide variety of activities, the separation exercise is*

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perhaps the most complete and comprehensive simulation of the worldview that informs the program.

This analysis of the development of complex social systems raises some important questions about this discourse on social justice. It is clear that this assumption of a hierarchical, segregated social architecture accurately describes the social systems presented here before the "tipping point" occurs; however, once the system begins its rapid transformation towards a more dynamic, networked, interconnected social architecture, the case can be made that these assumptions--and the discourse they generate—are no longer appropriate.

Prior to the moment when the system tips, individuals must struggle with challenge of changing a static, hierarchical, and segregated social system. Once the system tips, the challenges are quite different: How do participants manage relationships and relational boundaries in a remarkably dynamic and interconnected network? How do you choose whether or not to connect with the network? How do you manage your relational boundaries in a remarkably dynamic, diverse, and interconnected network? Challenges of oppression and hierarchy seem to be replaced by challenges of managing partnerships and negotiating boundaries.

I am aware that this is controversial terrain. There is a real danger in suggesting that the oppressive systems that once so clearly defined the social architecture of the United States are gone (I do not believe they are). On the other hand, there is a danger in carrying on a discourse related to matters of social justice that does not take into account the reality of a changing social architecture informed by our growing understanding of complex systems.

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This research highlights the nature of the changes in the social architecture that occur following the moment when a social system "tips" towards greater interconnection and complexity. Once that episode occurs, the opportunity for dramatic individual actions that challenge a static system rapidly passes. The challenge in a post-"tipping point" social system is for all the participants in the system to engage in a new, sophisticated conversation that recognizes the need for cooperation, open communication, and respectful conflict resolution that honors the inherent dynamism and interdependence of the system. It is my sincere hope that the findings of this research might help to promote exactly this sort of productive discourse.

"Holding Opposites" in the Social Psychology of Complex Systems

In *Leadership and the New Science: Discovering Order in a Chaotic World*, Wheatley states, "The two forces that we have placed in opposition to one another—freedom and order—turn out to be partners in generating healthy, well-ordered systems" (1999). In this analysis, I have on several occasions highlighted the way complex systems balance seemingly opposite forces: creativity and stability, constant change and underlying consistency, etc. This language of complexity including opposing forces appears repeatedly in the literature.

In the analyses presented in Chapter Seven, I highlight some instances in which the findings of this research involve these types of paradoxical opposites. For example, in my analysis of the responses to the question *"What did it feel like being a member of your group? Why?"* I noted that an individual's place in the social hierarchy has a major influence on that individual's experience in the exercise (i.e., individuals at the top

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struggle with issues of guilt and shame, while individuals at the bottom struggle with

issues of anger and frustration). At the same time, individuals in a given group do not all

have identical experiences, suggesting that individuals are able to choose how they

respond to the experience. The two truths coexist together: Systemic influence and

individual choice are present at the same time.

I have also mentioned the paradox that emerged in my analysis of the correlation

between the complexity of the program design and the complexity of the eventual

outcome. The exercise that most effectively simulated the complexity of the real world

was able to balance two seemingly opposite forces: structure and freedom.

In light of the focus the literature places on this phenomenon, it is perhaps not

surprising that these examples emerged from this research. For the purposes of this

discussion, I address it here to highlight that the study of complex systems involves the

study of these types of opposites. To borrow a quotation that Wheatley uses to open a

chapter entitled, "Change, Stability, and Renewal: The Paradoxes of Self-Organizing

Systems":

> *She who wants to have right without wrong,*
> *Order without disorder,*
> *Does not understand the principles of heaven and earth.*
> *She does not know how*
> *Things hang together.*
> *   -Chuange Tzu, fourth century B.C.* (Wheatley 1999)

The Interdisciplinary Nature of Research Exploring Complex Systems

As I explain in my review of the complex systems literature, this subject

challenges traditional boundaries between academic disciplines. Bar Yam states,

> Studying complex systems cuts across all of science, as well as engineering,
> management, and medicine…It focuses on certain questions about

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relationships and how they make parts into wholes. These questions are relevant to all systems that we care about. (Bar-Yam 2001, p. 4)

Informed by this assertion, it is important to locate this research within the growing—and broadly interdisciplinary—literature exploring complex systems. My goal with this research has been to bring the perspective of complex systems to a long history of classic social psychology experiments. We should not be surprised, then, to discover that the findings that emerge from this research echo the findings of other scholars exploring complexity as it appears across all of the physical and social sciences. As Wheatley states,

> One of the principles that guides scientific inquiry is that at all levels, nature seems to resemble itself...If nature uses certain principles to create her infinite diversity and her well-organized systems, it is highly probable that those principles may apply to human life and organizations as well. There is no reason to think we'd be the exception. Nature's predisposition towards self-similarity gives me confidence that she can provide genuine guidance for the dilemmas of our time. (1999)

As just one example of the way the findings from this social psychology research reinforce work done in widely disparate fields, consider the following work done by management scholars. In a book called *Built to Last: Successful Habits of Visionary Companies*, Collins and Porras (1994) researched large, complex companies that have continued to thrive across many decades. A key finding of this research is that the companies that manage to change, adapt, and excel throughout the years embrace "the genius of the 'and'." They state:

> The "Tyranny of the OR" pushes people to believe that things must be either A OR B, but not both. It makes such proclamations as:
>
> - You can have change OR stability
> - You can be conservative OR bold...

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- You can have creative autonomy OR consistency and control...

Instead of being oppressed by the "Tyranny of the OR," highly visionary companies liberate themselves with the "Genius of the AND"—the ability to embrace both extremes of a number of dimensions at the same time. (1994)

On the surface, this literature seems to be far removed from the social psychology research presented here; however, the themes are unmistakably familiar: adaptation, creativity, stability, an ability to integrate opposing forces. The argument can be made that this research is not really about bringing the perspective of complex systems to social psychology. Rather, it is about ushering social psychology into a perspective that scholars in dozens of other disciplines have already been exploring for years.

Removing Parts from the Whole: Understanding Interdependence in the Separation Exercises

In Chapter Seven, I offer an analysis of the way scholars of complex systems might understand the interdependence of the social systems presented in this research. I note how scholars understand interdependence by exploring what happens when you remove a part from the whole system. I then discuss how scholars have highlighted the way that individuals with unusually large and diverse social networks seem to have a strong influence on the dispersion of fads, ideas, diseases, and other types of "epidemics" throughout the social system. I mentioned how removing Eduardo from Exercise #2 would surely have had a significant impact on the outcome of the exercise, while removing a silent isolate might have had no effect on how events transpired.

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I also noted, however, that care must be taken in pursuing this line of thinking about the interdependence of social systems. There is a risk to any scientific analysis that declares some individuals to be important and essential, while others are essentially unimportant or insignificant. History is full of examples of social systems that tried to "remove component parts from the whole": the Nazi Holocaust, ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, the genocide in Rwanda, the current atrocities in Sudan. These events represent some of the darkest episodes in human history.

Ultimately, any discussion of the interdependence of social systems must balance a scientific exploration of the relative influence of different individuals or groups with a moral exploration of the sacredness of all human life. Perhaps the most concise and well-known analysis ever made regarding the moral dimension of "removing component parts from the whole" was offered by the German cleric, Martin Niemoller. He states:

First they came for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist.
Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew.
Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was Protestant.
Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak up for me.

The "Tipping Point" Within the Context of the Separation Exercise

A primary goal of this research has been to understand and explore the development of complex social systems. A central finding of this research is the fact that these systems remain essentially static and unchanged until someone eventually takes an action that "tips" the system. Once this "tipping point" occurs, the system begins a rapid process of reorganization towards a more networked and interconnected social architecture.

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In the introduction to his book *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*, Gladwell (2000) states,

> *The Tipping Point* is the biography of an idea, and the idea is very simple. It is that the best way to understand the emergence of fashion trends, the ebb and flow of crime waves, or for that matter, the transformation of unknown books into bestsellers, or the rise of teenage smoking, or the phenomena of word of mouth, or any number of the other mysterious changes that mark everyday life is to think of them as epidemics. Ideas and products and messages and behaviors spread just like viruses do (p.7).

When we view the events in these exercises through this lens, we are compelled to explore an obvious question: What is spreading through these systems like a contagious epidemic?

I would argue for the following interpretation: The exercises described in this research compel us to consider the dual phenomena of freedom and responsibility as contagious epidemics. Consider the example of Exercise #2: The system is initially static, segregated, and hierarchical. Eventually, however, Eduardo becomes "infected" with a desire to challenge these norms and take responsibility for changing the system. At some point, the system tips, and the decision to exercise this freedom and responsibility becomes highly contagious. Within an hour, more than half of the individuals in the system have joined together in a movement, drafted a nine-point mission statement, and organized a non-violent protest.

On the one hand, this is a strange way to think about freedom and responsibility. We are used to thinking of these terms as ideals, or values, or as rights and obligations. Viewing them as "contagious epidemics" that "infect" participants in a social system casts the terms in a new light. Perhaps a more positive set of terms is more appropriate: these phenomena are "transmissible" "energies" that "infuse" the social system over time.

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On the other hand, these metaphors have a clear relevance and resonance with events in the real world. Consider the events of the Civil Rights era in the U.S. In the 1950's, Rosa Parks famously refused to give up her seat on a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama. This was an isolated "outbreak" of freedom and responsibility that seemed to "tip" the country in much the same way that Eduardo's actions tipped the social system in Exercise #2. Within months of Rosa Parks' arrest, a widespread movement to boycott the busses in Montgomery formed. They planned and executed a number of non-violent protests that challenged a static, hierarchical, and segregated social architecture. Rosa Parks' initially isolated "outbreak" soon became widely transmitted, "infusing" a great many individuals across the United States in the months and years that followed with the energy to challenge a segregated social system.

In his discussion of the complexity of human civilization, Bar Yam notes that in the year 1970, mainland Central and South America were a "patchwork of military dictatorships and democracies...By the early 1990s a transition had occurred to almost universal democratic governments" (2001, p. 53). He calls the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980's "the largest scale at which government change took place" (p. 54). In recent months, we have seen democratic elections occur in Afghanistan, the Palestinian territories, and in Iraq.

In a recent issue of the New York Times, journalist Thomas L. Friedman (2005) wrote a column entitled "The Tipping Points." The article talks about the recent election in Iraq as one of several tipping points occurring simultaneously across the Middle East. Friedman concludes with the following thought:

> Indeed, in the Middle East...tipping points are sometimes more like teeter-
> totters: one moment you're riding high and the next minute you're slammed

to the ground. Nevertheless, what's happened in the last four weeks is not just important, it's remarkable. And if we can keep all three tipping points tipped, it will be incredible. (p. 54)

Conclusion

To conclude this discussion of the implications of this research, I offer the following three thoughts:

1) The Complex System as a "Superordinate Goal"

In my discussion of classic social psychology experiments, I mention the "Robber's Cave" experiment as an example of work that explored the group level of analysis. Again, that research brought 22 young boys to a camp in Oklahoma, where they were separated into two groups (the Eagles and the Rattlers). In the first stage of the experiment, the two groups were separated and allowed to form their own internal norms and authority structures; in the second stage, the two groups were placed in situations designed to generate conflict and animosity between the two groups. In the final stage of the experiment, the two groups were given a superordinate goal that benefited both groups, but that neither group could accomplish alone.

With this research, I have endeavored to bring into focus dynamics occurring at a level that both includes and transcends the individual and the group level of analysis. On the one hand, the complex system level of analysis is frustratingly uncertain, dynamic, and difficult to grasp. On the other hand, I hope the reader will agree that there does seem to be something going on up there, and the dynamics at work at that level of analysis are becoming increasingly well understood.

Perhaps, in the years and decades ahead, the complex system level of analysis may serve the same purpose as the superordinate goal in the Robber's Cave experiment.

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For the Eagles and Rattlers, animosity and aggression turned to cooperation and mutual respect when they had to work together to figure out how to get a broken-down food truck back to camp. Perhaps the same transformation may happen in the real world as we grow more and more aware of the need to tend to an inherently unified, interdependent system that transcends and includes us all.

This would surely not be the end of all conflict and disagreement; no doubt the Rattlers and Eagles had some serious debates about how to get that truck back to camp. But the debate that occurs as groups struggle to accomplish a superordinate goal is surely different from the debate that occurs as groups engage in conflict and aggression in the absence of that goal. If there is indeed a set of dynamics that transcends the many groups in a complex system, then perhaps we can begin working together to tend to these dynamics in a manner that is deliberate, cooperative, courageous, and compassionate.

2) *It's Not About Working Smarter as Individuals; It's About Working Smarter Collectively*

In a book called *Managing as a Performing Art: New Ideas for a World of Chaotic Change*, Peter Vaill (1991) explores the challenges of succeeding in an environment of constant change (he calls this situation "permanent white water"). He notes that individuals frequently push themselves to "work smarter" in order to deal with this environment, but they do so in ways that prove to be ineffective:

> Working harder and harder—the "workaholic" strategy; studying harder and harder—what...I call the "technoholic" strategy; and trying to be more clever and politically astute in the organization—a "powerholic" approach (p. 29).

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Vaill suggests that these strategies are ultimately insufficient for addressing the challenges of a rapidly changing environment. He suggests a different array of adaptations that are more appropriate for a complex system undergoing a process of transformation. In place of these strategies, he recommends "(1) working collectively smarter, (2) working reflectively smarter, and (3) working spiritually smarter" (p. 29):

> To work collectively smarter is to remain in touch with those around us, both with their ideas and with their energy...Working collectively smarter...should give us access to other's support and them access to ours. The sense that one is embedded in a support system can be a crucial comfort—not a luxury—in the permanent white water...
>
> Reflection, the second new approach to working smarter, is the capacity to reconsider what the world is presenting to us, to examine the grounds on which an idea rests and the assumptions that must hold true if a proposal is to work as intended. Reflection is the capacity to "notice oneself noticing"; that is, to step back and see one's mind working in relation to its projecs....
>
> Finally, I raise the somewhat risky idea that we need to work spiritually smarter. It is risky because of the baggage so many of us bring to the discussion...To work spiritually smarter is to pay more attention to ones' own spiritual qualities, feelings, insights, and yearnings. It is to reach more deeply into oneself for that which is unquestionably authentic. It is to attune oneself to those truths one considers timeless and unassailable, the deepest principles one knows. It is not easy in the modern organization to maintain this attunement; it has to be worked at, yet I don't think we hear enough talk about what working at it involves. I want to put such talk back on the agenda (pp. 30-31).

3) *The Wisdom of My Own Spiritual Tradition*

A major challenge in the study of complex systems is that the topic may frequently become overwhelming. In many ways, this research has represented my own personal attempt to reduce the challenges and opportunities of this uncertain era into something more easily managed and understood. There is, however, always a danger that the presence of uncertainty will lead to confusion; that the scale of the challenges will lead to despair; that the effort to coordinate multiple perspectives will lead to paralysis.

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In the face of these many challenges, I have found no better guide and inspiration than the words of a sage from my own Jewish tradition. Writing many thousands of years before the advent of social science and the formal study of complex systems, Rabbi Hillel distilled all the important issues raised by this research into the following three simple questions:

> *If I am not for myself, who will be for me?*
> *If I am only for myself, who am I?*
> *If not now, when?*

Letter to Program Directors

Max Klau

10 Craigie St. Apt. 5 Somerville, MA 02143 *maxklau@juno.com* **(617) 623-7281**

May 2, 2004

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to confirm your acceptance of my request to conduct field research at your upcoming youth leadership event. Attending your program would represent an important contribution to my research effort, and I deeply appreciate your willingness to participate in this study.

In recent phone and email exchanges, I explained my interests in pursuing this research. In addition, I provided you with a copy of the research proposal that presents these interests in detail. I recognize that my attendance at your program is contingent upon your acceptance of the purposes and methods that inform this project. Thus, I encourage you to contact me with any questions, comments, or concerns you may have about the material presented in that document. Also, I recognize your right to withdraw from participation and inclusion in the study at any point for any reason.

I understand that this field research should be conducted in a manner that makes a minimal impact on the running of the program and the experience of the participants. Any interviews with educators or senior staff will be conducted at a mutually agreeable time that does not interfere with their responsibilities during the program. Data collection for this research will involve non-intrusive observation of the segregation exercise and the processing session that follows. The one aspect of the study design that will require a change in normal routines involves a brief questionnaire. I will also ask participants to take 20-30 minutes immediately following the exercise to fill out a questionnaire designed to explore their experience during the exercise.

In an effort to maintain the confidentiality of those who participate in the study, the location of the program, as well as the names of directors, educators, and participants, will be changed for the final paper. However, there is a possibility that the context provided in the final product may allow some readers to surmise the identity of the individuals involved. By approving my attendance at the program, you are demonstrating a willingness to participate in this study while recognizing that confidentiality cannot be absolutely guaranteed.

Finally, I understand that my research team is fully responsible for providing ourselves with room, board, and transportation while conducting this research. Apart from coordinating the logistics of where and when we may conduct observations of programming and interviews with staff, your organization is not responsible for any administrative or financial concerns regarding these details of my visit.

Once again, I deeply appreciate your willingness to participate in this study. I will be in touch in the days before the program to finalize logistics and answer any additional questions that you may have.

Sincerely,

Max Klau
Doctoral Candidate
Human Development and Psychology
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Appendix B

Parental Information Form

July 5, 2004

Dear Parent of an Anytown Delegate,

I am writing to tell you about research that I will be conducting at the Anytown program your child plans to attend this summer. I am a student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education studying how individuals and groups interact. I would like to observe a specific exercise in which delegates are asked to explore dynamics of prejudice and discrimination. I will also ask delegates to fill out a questionnaire about the experience. The exercise itself usually lasts about 90 minutes, and the questionnaire will take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Finally, I will interview a few of the participants briefly (for 5-10 minutes) to make sure I understand my observations.

I will not ask your child to share any information he or she would not normally discuss as a camp participant. I will not record your child's name or any other identifying information. Your child will be told that he or she does not have to fill out the questionnaire or take part in an interview.

I feel it is important to inform you that this research is occurring and that both my university and the Anytown staff have given their approval. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, feel free to contact me at (617) 413-6316 or email me at maxklau@juno.com. I would be happy to answer any questions or tell you more about my research.

Sincerely,

Max Klau
Doctoral Candidate, Human Development and Psychology
Harvard Graduate School of Education

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Appendix C

Participant Information Form

July 5, 2004

Dear Anytown Delegate,

I am writing to tell you about research that I will be conducting at the Anytown program you will be attending this summer. I am a student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education studying how individuals and groups interact. I would like to observe a specific exercise in which delegates are asked to explore dynamics of prejudice and discrimination. As part of this research, I will ask delegates to fill out a questionnaire about the experience. The exercise itself usually lasts about 90 minutes, and the questionnaire will take no more than 30 minutes to complete. Finally, I will interview a few of the delegates briefly (for 5-10 minutes) to make sure I understand my observations.

I will not ask you to share any information that you would not normally discuss as a camp participant. I will not record your name or any other identifying information. You will be told at appropriate times that you do not have to fill out the questionnaire or take part in an interview.

I feel it is important to inform you that this research is occurring and that both my university and the Anytown staff have given their approval. If you have any questions or concerns about this research, feel free to contact me at (617) 413-6316 or email me at maxklau@juno.com. I would be happy to answer any questions or tell you more about my research.

Sincerely,

Max Klau
Doctoral Candidate,Human Development and Psychology
Harvard Graduate School of Education

Appendix D

Sample Code Book

1) Label: Confusion about What Was Happening
Definition: Uncertainty about nature or purpose exercise
Included Codes: "Eclipsing Inaction" (Derria)

Examples:

"I really didn't know what was going on all I knew was to not talk to anyone except the people in you own group and at the end I got mad because I wouldn't try to talk to other people and they would not talk back which got me angry" (White woman, 17, Q1)

The reason is because I didn't know what it was about so I didn't press the matter when I knew that there was something wrong with this picture" (White woman, 17, Q4)

"Well when Thomasina and Drake read the groups off I didn't know what was going on...." (Black Male, 16, Q1)

"I was basically lost in the beginning...(Q1)" "Because of how Thomasina acted toward one group when they broke the rule and I honestly didn't know what we were doing" (African American Female, 14, Q4)

2) Label: Awareness of Privilege Differences
Definition: Recognition that some groups have more or less than others
Included Codes: Awareness of Privilege, Recognition of Perks, Discomfort with being Served with Privilege

Examples:

"The white men, because they were all treated like kings got there food given to them and didn't have to do anything" (White woman, 17, Q3)

"In the morning we were split into groups...We ate our meals separately and were served in an order based on the social power of the groups. The groups also served people if they were black women, swept if they were Hispanic men and were benefited hurt in other ways depending on the gender race religion of the people (White woman, 17, Q1)

"White men had the most priviledge (read: served first, had everything ready for them, got the best location to sit).

The whites had the most freedom. (African American Female , 15, Q3)

"The white group because they are so set on obeying the rules and having things given to them and my group have to fight for the stuff we do here...." (Black Male, 15, Q3)

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3) Label: Fear of Punishment
Definition: Unwillingness to break exercise because of fear of punishment
Included Codes: Fear of consequences of breaking (Dumi)
Examples:

"I didn't break the exercise at all, mostly because I was following the rules and didn't want to get yelled at/ in trouble. And when I did ask if we could leave and talk to people my counselor said no". (White woman, 17, Q4)

"First I thought Thomasina would get mad and there'd be some type of penalty, then I didn't care" (Isolate black male, 17, Q4)

"We did not talk to anyone because we was going to get in trouble" (Latino, Male, 15, Q4)

"I didn't want to get screamed at because Thomasina was acting mean" (Latino, Male, 14, Q4)

"Well, I wasn't so sure what would happen if I broke the exercise. I wasn't sure about what the consequences would be." (Black Male, 15, Q4)

"I think when the director told us not to bring up or dishes that's when I felt like we had to strictly follow the rules, and that "reprimand" kind of stuck with me. I really didn't want to get in trouble" (Jewish Male, 17, Q1)

"I was worried I would be scolded" (Latino, Male, 16, Q4)

4) Label: Ambivalence about Breaking Rules
Definition: Mixed emotions generated by trying to break the exercise
Examples:

"It felt good because I was no longer bored but at the same time I felt as if I was breaking a rule and I would be punished" (Isolate black male, 17, Q5)

"It felt good because I was a bit nervous because I thought Thomasina would be mad" (Latino, Male, 14, Q5)

"Like we did something wrong, but it had to be done" (Black Male, 16, Q4)

"When we broke the exercise it felt a little weird because none of the counselors stopped us. They watched us do exactly what they told us not to do." (Black Male, 15, Q5)

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5) Label: Happiness about Breaking Rules
Definition: Sense of relief, joy when exercise is broken
Included Codes: "Free at Last" (Dumi)

Examples:

"It felt good!"
"it felt liberating!" (p 21)

6) Label: Nonsense/ Non-Serious Answer
Definition: Answers make no sense, or are clearly not serious efforts
Example:

"Frog–Kill–Eric–Jon–Picture–Holding Frog"

7) Label: Matter of Fact
Definition: Answers are simple descriptions of events that occurred with minimal interpretation
Examples:

- We were put into certain groups and told to follow each other when we need to go somewhere. Then, we went to a breakfast, and after we were told to go in the field and stand up. During breakfast my group was told to put away everyone's dishes. Eventually, we got tired of standing up in the field and went to the discussion room to go sit down, then to get beverages, then to the cabin, then stayed in the discussion room and played jump rope and danced.

- We played a question game where we can only ask questions which I won and we practiced a lot we also showed some drawings. Frogs killed by Eric stepped no stomped on it.
- during this exercise my fellow males and I were bored. We had to sit in a low, cool area and were allowed to talk amongst ourselves and play with a Spider Man ball.
- At first I was wondering what was going on with this activity. They had us sitting on the bottom of the camp with no one around us. After about an hour and a half we finally got up to see what was going on. Then I went to take a shower.

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Appendix E:
Grids Presenting Responses From Exercise #1 to Question #2: "What did it feel
like being a member of your group? Why?"

White Males	Awkward. I didn't really want the privileges I was given. I felt undeserving	Depressing, because I wanted to follow rules.			
White Females	There are just no words. I really don't know.	Uncomfortable because we were served/had our tables cleared by the black woman group. It was also hard to watch the Jewish group and the black woman group bake in the hot sun	I felt very offended because I am not all white. I'm only 25% Italian…I felt like they took one look at me and assumed I'm all white.		
Jewish	It was uncomfortable…not being treated fairly. The badge, which was a Holocaust star, made me feel like less of a person. It made me identify with my ancestry and the segregation of my own people in the past.				
Latino	Fun because I like this group.	I felt like I was appreciated for being my race	Bad 'cause they was making us clean but good 'cause it was fun…we was just hanging out	Fun because we found a fun thing to do.	I felt downsized. Lower than others. The only other group I felt equal to was the black females.
Black Female	I felt like a slave because we had to put away everyone's dishes. I also felt like a child because everyone had to follow me wherever I went.	It felt good most of the time when they didn't put me down.	It was cool being in a group of people that I never got to know before.	They had us pick up everyone's dishes that's when I started thinking like why do they have all black females picking up dishes?	

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Black Male	It felt the same as any other day because that is who I hang out with. We felt like we was the tightest or closest because we spent so much time together.	At first it felt good …because I was with…most of my friends. Later on it got boring because we were lonely. We felt privileged because we didn't have to clean like the others.	Kind of bad because we went last for everything.	It was true to put me in that group because of the stereotypes and how we act.	
Isolates	I felt alone because there was no group and I was bored as hell.	It felt depressing because I was isolated from everything and everyone. It felt horrible because all I wanted to do was TALK!			

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Appendix F

Grids Presenting Responses to from Exercise #2 to Question #2: "What did it feel like being a member of your group? Why?"

Blonde F.	It did not feel too bad, because we felt we were doing something meaningful	I try hard not to demonstrate the media's version of a woman...I plan on using the anger I have now; putting it towards CHANGE	We were very confused because our group assignment wasn't that abnormal	It felt kind of petty and pathetic that we were sitting around putting on makeup....	I felt privileged and isolated...
Non-Blonde F.	I felt like I was being forced to fulfill the role of a woman as my mother always told me not to. But...I felt like I was making someone else's job easier...				
White M.	It was relaxing to just sit and watch TV...made me feel guilty and embarrassed to go outside and reunite with friends, not knowing how they would react and judge us.	It felt comfortable...being comfortable allowed us to block out some things we saw but also made us feel guilty	Not only did we all know each other, we were constantly isolated from the other groups...I was ashamed of my group's special treatment		
Latinos	Our group was dysfunctional...I enjoyed it at times...I felt like I didn't want to listen to the authority, but then didn't have the guts to stand up to it	It felt great because I have a lot of pride	I felt by listening to the adults and they saying good job I was making my people proud but I was wrong	It didn't feel any different than what I see everyday because of stereotypes...	Normal. We all understood each other yet most of the group was against rebelling.
Jewish	OK. We were not particularly stereotyped or anything	I resented being told I am only a Jew because I consider Judaism simply my religion, not who I am...	Lonely, boring, and without the people I wanted to be with		
Multiracial	I felt ashamed because I didn't know much about my family coming here from Panama	I was nervous but could relate to everyone there	I felt very comfortable...[we were] treated neutral, not bad but not the best		
Isolates	I loved that I was representing my people but it was not great being alone...	I hated it being all by myself. I loved it when...the revolt came over and tried to bring me over to their side			

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LGBTQ	It felt terrible being considered only a lesbian. It felt dehumanizing, degrading, and embarrassing	Suffocating. Because I was shut in a tiny closet with four other people. Because all the seriousness and fear and unfairness felt was so overpowering	It was sad because some people came over to us and tried to get us to break free and some of our members started to cry	Aweful---being constantly reprimanded by authority figures feels bad.	
Asian	I don't really know how I felt...I felt kind of "dissed" that I was in a "typical" Asian group with mainly Chinese and Viet.	I felt annoyed. I didn't want to be segregated from other people...I knew it was wrong	I felt like I wanted to scream because I couldn't look anywhere or move around and I felt so confused	It felt very stereotypical. I felt as if they expected manners and discipline. For us to be smart and silent.	
South Asian/ Middle East	Not terrible because personnally I have never been a victim of terrorist stereotypes	I don't like being separated, but I thought it was something done for a reason...	I felt like they expected us to know everything about terrorism, which I obviously don't. I also didn't know why I was in the group I was in...I am also latina & multiracial...		
Privileged Blacks	It felt weird. We were all black but then again I felt connected to them.	It felt normal...our group wasn't really affected or yelled at	I felt angry and ignored	I felt insulted because the topic we had to write about made me feel like I couldn't make it to college without affirmative action	
Black M.	I felt fine, because I know everyone in my group	It felt good because we were trying to make a stand against all the advisors and co-directors.	I felt the authority was being abused...[B]lacks have been oppressed for so many years that it felt like we all immediately understood our situation.	I felt important because I had a job to hold just like everyone else in the group.	I felt trapped and it reminded me of Jim Crow and the sixties. Because we were so oppressed.

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Appendix G:

Grids Presenting Responses from Exercise #3 to Question #2: "What did it feel like being a member of your group? Why?"

White	It felt like everyone was looking at us because we were white & we had most of the privileges	I was ashamed because we received special attention	No variety... kinda boring...We weren't expressing any negative reactions such as anger or frustration	misplaced.. Because my whole life I've lived in a mixed community		
Asian	Bad... Because some of my good friends is not here	Comfy and belonged because they are my own race...They know what my culture is	Even though my group was having fun I felt isolated and lonely			
Nat. Am.	Sad that I wasn't with people I normally talk to; sorry for people who had to clean	I didn't really feel anything because...we were just talking about our culture...				
American- Born Hispanics	Angry and frustrated... I was separated from my buddies; my group had to pick up trash...	I was getting to know what descrimination felt like...it was pretty exciting	Unjust...they made [us] do manual labor and clean up. I was frustrated	"we were treated below and less what the other groups were"	I felt proud because it was some of my friends and we stuck together	It was fun...everyone was getting along and when we got mad we all calmed each other down
Multiracial	I am proud to be mixed	...because we all had a little bit of everything in us, so its not like we were separated totally	It felt cool I mean I got to say what I wasn't to say and my words were heard clear	I felt OK because my group was very friendly and playing around		
Mexican- Born Hispanics	I was going to do something but I was not sure if to do it	I felt proud but bad. I'm very good to communicate with my race. I also felt bad because I saw [isolate] alone	I felt mad and sad being a member of the hispanics. The reason is that I now realize what hey actually went through years ago...	It felt very bad because now we understand how it is to be a Mexican who is always bossed around...	...After we got out I was thirsty so I went to the drinking fountain bu it said it was for the white people only so I got a little madder...	It felt fun..I just felt like telling the negative people to shut the FUCK up and who cares everyone cleans in life make the best possible about it.
Isolate	Uneasy and boring. I felt like I was in trouble...					

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African-Americans	They were disrepecting us by telling us that we needed to move…	I felt OK at first…but then I was pissed because I didn't like the attitude we was given	I didn't feel anything about being in my group I just wanted to know why we were separated by race	I liked being in my group because I was comfortable	I am very proud to be African-American, so it didn't bother me a lot. I am proud of the goals I have accomplished and the things I have been through	

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Appendix H

Table 6: *Separation Exercise #1, Qualitative Attention Distribution Grid*

White Males	"they were all treated like kings got their food given to them and didn't do anything. Which I think is just wrong"	"[They] had the most privilege"	"They got to go to breakfast first and had their food set up already"	"The white group was favored and was most important because their food was prepared..."	"[They] had the most freedom"
	"Because they are so set on obeying the rules and having things given to them and my group have to fight for the stuff we do here."	"People set their table for breakfast"	"It was as if they were masters, and everyone else were slaves"		
White Females					
(Asian)	"People sometimes forget them...Asians are not bad people...they are nice"				
Jewish	It was hard to watch the Jewish group...sit in the hot sun...				
Latino	"they were the only people that cleaned"	"they did the most cleaning"			
Black Female	"Both the African-American groups were the most important because those participating in those groups broke the segregation barriers..."	"they were the only people that cleaned"	"[they] cleaned up after [the white males]"	"they did the most cleaning"	
Black Male	"They have become go-getters from years of internalization and they were able to help somewhat break up the group"	"We had the most people"			
Isolates					
All					
None	"No group was important. Not even mine because we	"there are no other important groups...I was			

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	should be together"	only thinking about our group and getting out of the sun…"			
Other	Others, because they are people I know				

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Appendix I

Separation Exercise #2, Qualitative Attention Distribution Grid

Blonde F.	"they had to serve the 'better' groups"	"the latinos, blacks, and women, because they had the impact of creating a diversified front"		
Non-Blonde F.				
White M.	"they got all the privileges..they represented a group who benefited from oppression"	"the single group that was treated fairly was the white male and was the least likely to revolt due to the special treatment we received"	"they literally got to sit and relax basically throughout the whole exercise"	"[they] were treated with more respect"
Latinos	"[they] were necessary in organizing [the revolution]"	"they tried to assemble a successful march with powerful songs"	"they helped me realize I was right when I said I wanted to rebel"	"We were the ones who got the worst stereotypes"
Jewish	"they were the first 'non-colored' group to join the movement"			
Multiracial				
Isolates				
LGBTQ	"they are a group that is constantly oppressed…"	"[they] were so heinously treated that they inspired others to stick up for them and rebel"	"[they] were locked in a closet"	"Their being put in a closet was the thing that inspired most people to feel what was happening was wrong"
	"they are some of the biggest groups of people that been isolated in society"			
Asian				
S.Asian/ME				
Priv. Blacks				
Black M.	"[they] started the revolution"	"[they] were forced to march"	"they were the ones who made us realize what we were being forced to do"	"they started to rebel"
	"they broke the exercise"	"they started the revolution"	"they had to 'step' to entertain"	"tried to assemble a successful march with powerful songs"

Rebels	"they brought a lot of people together"	"we were the ones that changed the course of the exercise by rebelling."	"the first ones to walk out. They started the domino reaction"	"they understand oppression from their history and were the first to recognize it"
	"they abolished my ignorance"	"The black group, the latino group, and the Jewish group. I felt that all of us were able to unite similar to the Civil Rights movement"		
All	"All groups were important...they had different levels of oppression just like in society"	"they were all stereotyped an then worked through it"	"They were all important because they all showed the oppression and although we know it is wrong we still choose to not help one another"	"we are all the same no matter what"
	"Everyone was extremely important because the exercise was about community"	"They were all important because we all had to stop listening to the staff"		
None	"Not only did our group fail to break out but no other groups even attempted to contact us"	"no group was better than the next"		
Other	"the groups with the most number of people because they had the most influence"	"because we spend most of our time off to ourselves we never saw too much of any group"	"he's important because he was the first to say that this exercise of oppression was bullshit"	"I think the enforcers/authority figures were most important ... they proved how little effort it takes for someone to agree and comply with oppression both of themselves and others."

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Appendix J

Separation Exercise #3, Qualitative Attention Distribution Grid

White	"they were treated better than other groups."	"because of the way they were treated"	"They supposedly was better and you can look at the history books"	"they didn't clean, they had a lot of space for them like two bathrooms and the water fountain and the soda machine"
	"they made us feel like shit"	"they got all the privileges and they got to do everything they wanted"		
Asian	"without them, no one would have had enough courage to stand up and break the rules"	"they were told they were not good enough to sing"		
Nat. Am.				
Am-Hisp				
Multiracial	"Our culture group was really cool and down to earth. We were similar in race also our thoughts and actions"			
Mexican-Hispanic	"[they] did all the dirty work"	"they were forced to work just like their ancestors did"	"they had to work hard they did good and were getting yelled at like bitches"	"they were the only ones working and doing something"
Isolate	"it was profound to see one person isolated and treated badly alone"	"he was the only one by himself and that cause people to feel for him"	"It showed that people still have emotions even people that don't show it"	"The group with only one person in it was most important"
	"Even though some people might look fine on their own, they might be in real pain and not be able to show it"	"this individual was important because although the groups were separated they wanted to associate with him"	"there are people like that but you don't actually notice because they are not your friends"	
African-American	"[they] were the last to eat"	"they suffer so much and did so much"	""they went through stuff like this more than others"	
All	"Every group was reacting differently, yet all the same all at once"	"All the groups were important because without them the exercise would not have been as effective"	"It looked to me that no group standed out more than any other they all were the same"	"we should all be happy we can be with each other"
	"we are all one, we were all important in this life-changing lesson"	"we were all treated importantly because we all have our views on life"	"All groups are important because once a person threw down his bandana, they all did as well"	"I love my friends very much and not being allowed to talk to them really hurt"

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