HATE GROUPS FOR DUMMIES: HOW TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL HATE GROUP

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REFLEXIVE STATEMENT

Both of us have been involved for many years in teaching and research concerning topics ranging from propaganda and prejudice to the psychosocial roots of mass violence and genocide. Clearly the analysis of the functioning and structure of hate based organizations falls within the domain of our interests. It is our perspective that only through an understanding of the psychological mechanisms that play a role in enmity ranging from the individual to the national level can we work to combat hate as a destructive force within our society.

INTRODUCTION

Hate does not exist in a vacuum. Rather, hate is learned, often from one's family, but also through the groups that one joins. Throughout the history of the United States the public has primarily associated hate groups with acts of hate and violence against individuals such as Matthew Shepard[1] and James Byrd.[2] However, hate groups have also been increasingly associated with a large number of domestic terrorist attacks ranging from church burnings to the bombing of the Federal Building in Oklahoma. Consequently, given the persistence of hate-related crime, violence, as well as terrorism, an exploration of the psychosocial functioning of hate groups is imperative.

There are several key aspects necessary for the successful creation of a hate group. It is important to recognize that hate itself is often more of a "means" than an "end" for these organizations and particularly their leaders. In other words, while hate may be the glue that binds and subsequently drives the organization, the motivations behind individual membership are typically grounded in psychological needs such as belongingness, status, recognition, and power. As such, it is possible to create enmity where none previously existed simply by utilizing a variety of psychosocial mechanisms and pairing these with historically inaccurate perspectives of specific minority groups. Therefore, we must understand the variables that allow for the creation of a hate group before devising strategies to reduce the effectiveness of such organizations.

WHAT IS A HATE GROUP?

Both the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League track and maintain records concerning hate groups and hate group activities in the United States. Using their definitions as a foundation, we define hate groups as any organized group whose beliefs and actions are rooted in enmity towards an entire class of people based on ethnicity, perceived race, sexual orientation, religion, or other inherent characteristic. Note that there are two major components to this definition. First, a hate group must be organized. The level of visibility within the community, organizational structure (e.g. chapters), and degree of activity related to the promotion of beliefs (e.g. publications) all have and impact on whether an organization is classified as a hate group. Smaller groups that have not come to the attention of the community, do not engage in organized activities (e.g., publishing, rallies, or meetings), and efforts organized by one or two individuals are not considered to be hate groups. According to the Southern Poverty Law Center (2003), there were 751 active hate groups within the United States in 2003. Organization is such an important component in the identification of a hate group that some researchers use the term "organized racism" to define groups with an openly racist, anti-Semitic, homophobic, or other bias (Blee, 2002).

The second major component of the above definition is the clear use of enmity towards a specific group as a primary organizational focus. Consequently, the fundamental belief system of the group and the majority of organized group activity are focused on the promotion of hate. Informal activity however may meet a broader range of psychological needs. The Anti-Defamation League (2004) identifies the most common hate group targets within the United States to be African-Americans, Jews, Hispanics, and gays/lesbians. Recent immigrants and Catholics are also mentioned as targets of hate groups but to a lesser extent. The Southern Poverty Law Center breaks down hate groups in the United States into six categories: Neo-Confederacy, Neo-Nazi, Racist Skinheads, Black Separatists, Klan, and Other. The category "other" includes a range of organizations ranging from white supremacist groups such as those identified with the Christian Patriot and Identity movements to anti-gay organizations such as the Westboro Baptist Church.

Hate of course is not limited to the United States. Rather, hate extends to all of the major regions of the populated world. For example, the Imperial Klans alone have been identified in such disparate parts of the globe as United States, Sweden, Australia, Brazil, Canada, and South Africa. Additionally, the Internet serves as a global forum for spreading hate and interconnecting individuals and groups both personally and organizationally. *The Hate Directory: Racial, Religious, Ethnic, Gender and Sexual Orientation Based*

Hatred on the Internet contains 118 pages of links to web sites, news groups, listservs, chat rooms, etc. with hate-based agendas (Franklin, 2004). Unfortunately, the listings of web sites in *The Hate Directory* that focus on combating hate on the Internet are only one page in length.

ARE HATE GROUPS DESTRUCTIVE?

Levin and McDevitt (2002) provide evidence that most hate crimes in the United States are not committed by those involved in hate groups. Thus, on the surface it might appear that hate groups are largely benign organizations working to further agendas such as the idea of racial purity. However, hate group activity is destructive for many reasons including the perpetuation of prejudice, stereotyping, and discrimination against individuals based simply on group membership. More ominously, hate group activity has a ripple effect in society and opens the door to increased societal violence committed by both hate group members and non-members against individuals within specific target groups. According to Levin and McDevitt, large numbers of individuals—particularly teenagers and young adults—are highly influenced by and identify with hate groups regardless whether they are bona fide members of these groups. Thus, hate group activity, when left unchecked, has historically been responsible for widespread terror and innumerable deaths. When such hate has been incorporated into broader governmental policy, the end result has been both war and genocide. Unfortunately, as Levitas (2002) points out in his study of the Posse Comitatus and related white supremacist organizations, a belief in the banality of hate groups has enabled the potential for violence to go unchecked by law enforcement both within local communities and by the F.B.I.

The attacks on New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington D.C. of September 11th, 2001 brought the issue of international terrorism into the forefront of U.S. consciousness. Domestic terrorism, however, remains largely unrecognized. What is important to note is that domestic terrorism within the United States has been largely perpetrated by individuals associated with organized hate groups (Levitas, 2002). There are several reasons why the connection between domestic terrorism and hate groups has remained unidentified. However, one important contributing factor is the tendency of the media to classify this type of violence as the result of a "lone wolf." For example, Timothy McVeigh and Terry McNichols' connection to right-wing militia and Christian Identity ideologies was largely downplayed. Second, the groups at the receiving end of such domestic terrorism have often been marginalized. Thus, the lynching of African-Americans in the latter 19th and early 20th centuries simply was not identified as a form of domestic terrorism as it did not impact the majority population. Additionally, hate groups have evolved, joined forces,

divided, and otherwise mutated obscuring the continuity of hate organizations within the United States over time. Thus, to the casual observer, when a hate group disappears from the collective radar screen, the threat of violence associated with that group has been perceived to be diminished when in reality it has simply taken on a new identity.

Knowing the dangers and problems associated with hate groups, leads one to question why any reasonably sane person would join a hate group. The shear number of individuals who belong to hate groups belies the possibility that it is some form of mass psychopathology. In the film, *Hate groups USA* (Chughtai,1998) an interviewee makes the statement that he joined a white supremacist group while in prison simply because on his birthday, he received a card from every member of the group. He notes that he did not join the group because of a shared value of hate but rather as a means to end his felt isolation. This example highlights the complexity involved in understanding why individuals join a hate group.

It should be noted that this paper analyzes the creation, structure, and functioning of a hate group from a psychosocial perspective. While ethnographic research and historical data will be used to highlight some of the points included, a thorough discussion of such research, as well as a historical overview, is outside the scope of this paper.

STEPS INVOLVED IN CREATING A HATE GROUP

If we want to combat hate, it is imperative that we examine the psychological reasons that bring individuals to a hate group's doorstep, the mechanisms involved in getting them through the door, and the processes involved in organizing these individuals into a group committed to enmity. It is important to note that this discussion is not designed to be a "how to" book for the creation of a hate group. Rather, through an identification of the various factors designed to promote hate, we can work to counter such hate and endeavor to build communities that value diversity and the promotion of peaceful coexistence.

Leadership

At the core of any hate group exists a leader or leadership group. Without such leaders, it might be argued that a hate group would cease to exist. In other words, if one removes the head of the snake, the body will naturally die. Unfortunately, while leaders are necessary for the coordinated expression of hate, the survival of a hate group may depend less on the specific, idiosyncratic leader than on the presence of simply someone in a leadership position who has learned basic group dynamics.

Researchers have long been interested in the characteristics of individuals that make them effective leaders. However, study results have suggested that there is no one individual trait that seems to stand out. Indeed, only modest correlations have been found between leadership success and the following variables (in no particular order): charisma, a desire for power and dominance, self-confidence, self-direction, morality (and on the flip side immorality), and intelligence (Bass & Stogdill, 1990; Chemers & Ayman, 1993; Hollander, 1985; Simonton, 1984). In fact, some research has suggested that some of the characteristics most predictive of leadership success have very little to do with personality. For example, Simonton (1987) collected information on the characteristics of all the U.S. presidents to determine what dimensions were most predictive of effectiveness in office (as rated by historians). The results suggested that three variables were good predictors of success: height, family size, and the number of published books prior to taking office. In short, past research has suggested that personality characteristics appear to be poor predictors of leadership (e.g., Levine & Moreland, 1998).

More important, however, is the leader-follower gestalt that serves to strengthen the complementary system between the needs of the individual and the needs of the group. According to Staub (1989), leadership "is a transactional process, a relationship between group and leader" (p. 23). In other words, effective leadership styles may vary depending on culture and particular contextual needs. The most effective leaders are in tune to the needs and abilities of their followers and as such can maximize their manipulation of the group towards organizational success. For example, in response to backlash against the Klan and various neo-Nazi groups, many hate group leaders have changed their image so as to blend into mainstream culture (Levin & McDevitt, 2002). Thus, today one is more likely to see a hate group leader wearing a suit than a sheet.

Chemers (2002) offers an integrative theory of leadership efficacy based on such a gestalt and includes three primary factors: effective image management, relationship development, and resource deployment. Although labeled somewhat differently, Kets De Vries and Florent-Treacy (2002) identify empirically similar leadership factors in organizations characterized by high levels of commitment. These include the ability to generate a high degree of loyalty, the ability to tap into the needs, wants, and motivations (e.g. attachment, affiliation, personal efficacy) of organizational members, and the ability to match these basic human processes with the needs of the organization.

Based on these theories and research, the most effective hate group leaders will engage in the following behaviors. First, any leader of a hate group must work to build their credibility within the group and reinforce the confidence of their followers regarding their leadership abilities. Effective image management will increase the ability of the leader to influence group member's

behaviors as their followers will view the leader as trustworthy and competent. Second, hate group leaders need to understand the needs and abilities of their group. With this knowledge, they can most effectively manipulate the needs and wants of the group as well as best utilize the abilities of the group. In a sense, the hate group leader becomes a coach making members feel needed, valued, and efficacious as well as building a high level of loyalty to both the leader and the group. Finally, a hate group leader should be adaptive. As situations and contexts change, the most effective leaders can shift gears to get the maximum effort towards organizational success out of individuals and members of the group. Each of these characteristics can be applied to White Aryan Resistance (WAR) leader Tom Metzger. Metzger's leadership has taken him from California's Grand Dragon of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan to a House of Representative's Democratic nomination and finally as the leader of WAR. Through WAR he hosts a cable TV show, publishes a newsletter, and maintains an Internet web site. His leadership efforts have resulted in such influence and loyalty that skinhead followers have killed minority group members based allegedly on his coaching (Langer, 2003).

Given organizations can exist on a continuum from destructive to constructive, it is only natural to wonder why a leader would develop and individuals join an organization built on a foundation of hate. In essence, hate is easy. According to Staub (1989), destructive groups are easily organized as they reflect existing cultural frameworks of antagonism, institutional forms of bias, and cultural acceptance of violence. On a general level, individuals primarily join groups in response to very universal human needs, wants, and means of coping. Hate and destructive groups, in mirroring society, often provide simple answers to complex problems and thus require little cognitive or emotional work on the part of individuals towards an understanding of their life situation. Such simplicity is often very attractive to individuals in times of crisis or need.

Crisis can be very destabilizing for individuals and results in threats to the individual such as loss of group pride, an escalation of fear, frustration of needs and wants, and confusion regarding personal identity. In addition, crisis leads to an increase in prejudice (Staub, 1989). The classic research of Miller & Bugelski (1948) demonstrated that adolescents in a summer camp, deprived of an evening at the movies, displayed a sharp increase in prejudice directed toward groups with whom they had no contact. Following the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001, a time experience by most in the United States as crisis, prejudice and hate crimes spiked. For example, anti-Arab hate crimes increased (American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, 2002), attacks on Asian-Americans particularly immigrants also jumped to over 250 reported incidents in just a three month period of time ("A Nation Challenged," 2002), and Anti-Semitism spiked from 12% to 17% (Anti-Defamation League, 2002a).

Additionally, all of the major intrastate genocides of the 20th century fell on the heels of massive economic and political crises (Totten, Parsons, & Charney, 1997; Staub, 1989). Crisis can also draw individuals to a wide variety of organizations such as religious groups, political groups, cults, as well as hate groups. Blee (2002) in her research notes a large number of "conversion by near death stories" where individuals began to identify with racist groups and ideologies only after intense personal crises that often did not involve racial concerns (p. 39). Unfortunately, groups with destructive agendas and ideologies built on hate may provide the shortest route to an individual's sense of perceived stability through mechanisms such as scapegoating, just-world-thinking, ingroup-outgroup polarization, hedonic balancing, and other processes to be discussed below. Leaders are in the unique position to manipulate and control the information received by members as well as control the social psychological environment of the group.

Good Recruits

Hate groups not only need leaders but they need recruits. The reasons behind individual's decisions to join groups grounded in enmity are complex but rooted in an interaction of potential personality and situational factors. Research on personality characteristics related to prejudice burgeoned following WWII and the Holocaust and focused on the ideas of authoritarianism and the development of a prejudiced personality. Adorno and his colleagues (1950) hypothesized that authoritarian personalities were cultivated in children raised in authoritarian households characterized by strict and punitive disciplinary practices and rigid belief systems. Unable to rebel against such authoritarian patterns, children raised in such households were hypothesized to be more likely to project their unacceptable impulses, anger, and frustrations on others as well as maintain rigidity in their personal belief systems. As such, authoritarian personalities are thought to be prone to the development of prejudicial ways of thinking and a personality structure rooted in prejudice. Allport (1979) extended these ideas in his classic book, *The Nature of Prejudice*. It should be noted that research and support for the hypothesis of an authoritarian or prejudiced personality structure has declined due methodological and conceptual problems (Fiske, 1998; Monteith, Zuwerink, & Devine, 1994).

Research concerning personality traits of individuals has more recently focused on three primary concepts: need for cognition, need for structure, and need for cognitive closure. According to the research, individuals vary on their need or desire for cognitive activity with some finding such activity pleasurable and others finding it aversive. When outcomes are highly important and

information about the other person is clearly needed, individuals with all levels of need for cognition will seek out information. When outcomes are unimportant, both groups will rely heavily on shortcuts or heuristics in making decisions. Stereotypes are one form of heuristic. However, when the outcome is of moderate importance, a difference between groups appears with those low in need for cognition continue to rely on heuristics (Cacioppo, Petty, Feinstein, Blair, & Jarvis, 1996). Individuals also vary on the need for structure (need for stable, clear information about the world vs. comfortable with changing, ambiguous knowledge of the world) and the need for closure (strong need for answers on any topic vs. acceptance of confusion and uncertainty). These are similar in the sense that they both concern the ability of individuals to tolerate ambiguity either in knowledge or in relation to having an answer, respectively. Individuals who are low in need for cognition but high in either need for structure or closure appear to be those most likely to develop stereotypes (Nelson, 2002).

Langone (1996) has also identified a list of common factors that make individuals vulnerable to the recruitment of destructive groups such as cults. These factors include, "a high level of stress or dissatisfaction, lack of self-confidence, unassertiveness, gullibility, desire to belong to a group, low tolerance for ambiguity, naïve idealism, cultural disillusionment, and frustrated spiritual searching" (Langone, 1996). Hate groups function similarly to cults in regards to recruitment and most importantly can provide a sense of belonging, identity, self-worth, safety, and direction for those experiencing crisis or vulnerability in their lives. For example, as mentioned previously, an interviewee in the film *Hate Groups USA* (Chughtai, 1998) joined a white supremacist group while in prison not because of his racist beliefs but rather because they made him feel like he was important by remembering his birthday. In addition, Blee (2002) reports that for the women in her sample, hate group membership often resulted from the "proffered images of community, identity, hope, and purpose" (p. 29). Descriptions of potentially ideal recruits include characteristics typically found in teen-agers, young adults, and people experiencing crisis. Thus, according to Levin and McDevitt (2002), "marginal teenagers" can often find a place of belonging , acceptance, and "family" through identification and/or affiliation with organized hate groups. Consequently, these vulnerable populations are the primary focal point of online and community efforts to recruit members. Hate groups have little need to aggressively recruit individuals for whom hate is a way of life or individuals who are committed to ideas of diversity and tolerance. Rather they recruit those that are most vulnerable and then indoctrinate in the processes of hate.

Methods of recruitment are often aimed at psychological needs. Thus, a lonely individual may be invited simply to a picnic drawing on their need for affiliation or a teen may be introduced to racist music or video games drawing

on typical adolescent needs for entertainment and excitement. According to Blee (2002), most of the women in her research began to identify with a racist agenda only upon developing a social connection to members of the group. Thus, the development of a racist ideology was a consequence and not a cause of membership in a hate group. Levin and McDevitt (2002) discuss the "power of a tune to persuade" as well as the excitatory lure of the hate group for adolescents. Resistance Records offers a variety of racist rock music compact disks as well the video game, "Ethnic Cleansing: The Game" (Anti-Defamation League, 2002b). The description for the video available on the web site states that: "The Race War has begun...Not one of their numbers shall be spared." The goal of the game is to kill as many "subhumans" as possible including Jews, Latinos, and Blacks.

Social Psychological Techniques

While personality factors may play a role in prejudice and more importantly provide reasons for joining a hate group, it is important to remember that other psychological factors play a major contributory role in the success of a hate group. In other words, while an individual may be predisposed to the draw of extreme prejudice due to personality or individual vulnerability, it is other social psychological mechanisms that lead an individual to not only join but also become a contributing member of a hate group.

Social cognitive processes. Researchers have long argued that all humans have a propensity for prejudice. For example, in his seminal book entitled The Nature of Prejudice, Gordon Allport (1979) stated that man's tendency to prejudge "lies in his normal and natural tendency to form generalizations, concepts, categories, whose content represents an oversimplification of his world of experience" (p. 27). Indeed, more recent researchers have also posited that we tend to use shortcuts or heuristics when processing information about the world (Nibett & Ross, 1980). Accordingly, when exposed to an unknown individual, it is useful to utilize the representativeness heuristic—the tendency to categorize individuals on the basis of their resemblance to the stereotypical member of a particular group. One of the reasons that hate is so easy to manipulate is due to the fact it is built on a foundation of normal social psychological processes.

In addition to our tendency to categorize people as a function of their salient characteristics, researchers have also found that we tend to divide the world into us and them—ingroups and outgroups (Tajfel, 1982). However, this distinction between us and them is far from trivial. According to Tajfel and Turner's (1979) Social Identity Theory, it is advantageous for us to belong to groups that are held in high esteem so that we are seen in a positive light.

Consequently, people try to sustain their positive social identity by assuring themselves that their ingroup is highly valued and distinct from other groups—a phenomena referred to as the ingroup bias. For example, mythologies created by white supremacist organizations such as Aryan identity or Christian Patriots are designed to glorify those "chosen" as distinct from the "other" parasitic and degenerate "races" (Goodrick-Clark, 2003). The ingroup bias, coupled with the outgroup homogeneity effect, the tendency to view outgroup members as similar and one's ingroup as diverse, add to the chasm that separates us and them. Ironically, Blee (2002) at several points in her writings, points out the diversity that exists within organized hate groups. Thus, countering the outgroup bias and homogeneity effect most readers will have in relation to hate group members.

Individuals and/or groups may also go so far as to seek out information that confirms the superiority of their group over a specific outgroup—a phenomenon referred to as the confirmation bias (Swann & Read, 1981). Blee (2002) discusses at length the ability of organized hate groups to teach individuals to filter their life experiences through the lens of racist principles. In addition, our tendency to form illusory correlations between unrelated phenomena further exacerbates the situation by providing seemingly credible evidence to support the beliefs of the individual and/or group (Ward & Jenkins, 1965). Once these beliefs are formed, group members are extremely reluctant to modify them. This phenomenon, referred to as belief perseverance, can account for the tenacity with which hate groups hold on to their beliefs—regardless how illogical their beliefs (Ross, Lepper, & Hubbard, 1975). The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, a forged anti-Semitic document, continues to resurface and be used as evidence of a Jewish world dominance conspiracy thus "confirming" some of the base tenets of anti-Semitism.

Another bias that we use when processing information is the fundamental attribution error—the tendency for individuals to attribute behavior to internal, dispositional causes, ignoring situational explanations (Ross, 1977). Thus, individuals are more likely to believe that African-Americans make up a disproportion number of individuals in prison because they are inherently "bad", "inferior", or "evil" as opposed to examining situational causes such as poverty, institutionalized racism, etc. The tendency for individuals to make the fundamental attribution error, coupled with their desire to believe in a just world (Lerner, 1980), leads people to blame the victim for whatever unfortunate event has befallen them. For example, there are those that argue that the Jews brought the Holocaust upon themselves and others who attribute the 9/11 tragedy and the explosion of the space shuttle Columbia to God's anger at the state of America for its tolerance of homosexuality.

Given Allport's (1979) assertion that stereotyping and prejudice represent the "normality of prejudgment," it may be tempting to conclude that

hate groups are an understandable and indeed inevitable strategy for dealing with a diverse world. However, while the process of dividing the world into us and them may be automatic (Fiske, 1998), the behavioral manifestation of this process does not necessarily have to end in prejudice and discrimination. Research has demonstrated that negative consequences of the ingroup bias tend to occur when people couple an extremely positive view of themselves with a very negative view of outgroups (Brewer, 1979). Consequently, individuals who are balanced in their impressions of their own ingroup and respective outgroups are less prone to the negative ramifications of the ingroup bias. Hate group leaders however can work to counter such understanding and instead fuel outgroup-directed prejudice, discrimination, and violence. Propaganda can be designed to increase the "otherness" of the object of hate. Racist cartoons, literature, symbols, and images are an essential part of the hate group culture (Blee, 2002). This process, combined with a prohibition against intergroup contact, limits any potential for future contact and understanding.

Lifton (1989) argues that one of the features of highly destructive groups is totalism which extends beyond an "us-them" dichotomy to an "us against them" philosophy. This belief system, taken to the extreme in hate and other destructive groups, pushes individuals to separate from all others not associated with the group. This isolation of group members from those not associated with the group leads to Lifton's second feature of highly destructive groups—environmental control. Through environmental control, leaders can manipulate the majority of what is seen, heard, or experienced by the group and the "purity" of information to which the group is exposed. For example, many ultra rightwing and white supremacist groups establish isolated camps in which the group becomes the sole source of identity and life activity. Mike Ryan, Rick Stice, and others associated with the Posse Comitatus as well as Christian Identity, only came to public attention after two decaying group member's bodies were found on an isolated farm in rural Nebraska (Levitas, 2002).

Social influence variables. The nature of group dynamics within a hate group can further entrench individual hatred and greatly increase the likelihood of violence. For example, the organizational structure of a hate group, which can often be quasi-military, necessitate conformity to the group ideal. In addition, there are often very severe penalties for not conforming, ranging from ostracism and verbal aggression to physical violence (Levin, 1989). Thus, group members may initially feel pressure to engage in hatred and violence, knowing only too well the ramifications of not conforming. Later, after engaging in such acts, cognitive dissonance—the internal pressure to achieve consistency between our thoughts and actions—necessitates that members either internalize a rationale for their hatred of the outgroup or leave the hate group (Festinger, 1957). The former option is much easier and thus much more likely to occur.

The pressure to internalize the group's ideology becomes even more salient upon the introduction of an authority figure. Milgram's (1965; 1974) obedience studies demonstrated the powerful effect an authority figure can have on our behavior. In these studies, participants were given the opportunity to deliver a series of electric shock to a protesting victim (a confederate who never actually received the shocks). Participants were initially asked to give relatively low levels of shock (15 mV) to the victim. However, as the experiment wore on, participants were asked to give increasingly higher levels of shock to the victim. Thus, by utilizing the foot-in-the-door technique, the participants ended up giving much higher levels of shock than they normally would have delivered. In fact, the majority of participants obeyed (delivered 450mV to the confederate) in the traditional Milgram experiment. The presence of a strong authority figure, coupled with the foot-in-the-door technique, is a technique that has been utilized by leaders to facilitate hatred and violence (Haritos-Fatouros, 1988).

Hate groups will often have new members engage in relatively innocuous activities such as simply setting up a literature table at a group event before moving on to greater levels of commitment. Such activities are met with acceptance, approval, and reward. Eventually, the adage of "in for a penny, in for a pound" applies as recruits are subjected to increasing levels of commitment, a push for conformity, and are driven to obey the leaders. In an attempt to avoid cognitive dissonance, recruits become increasing committed to the hate groups ideology and activities, increasingly identified solely as a group member, and increasingly loyal to those in positions of authority. Blee (2002) identifies three levels of commitment that develops over time to racist groups: contact with the group, identification as a racist, and finally commitment to a racist activism.

Hate groups, not unlike other groups, tend to foster a sense of anonymity or deindividuation among members (Festinger, Pepitone, Newcomb, 1952). Unfortunately, by stripping individuals of their identities through increased anonymity, deindividuation causes people to become less self-aware, feel less responsible for their actions, and be more likely to engage in violence if placed in a provocative situation (Prentice-Dunn & Rogers, 1989). Consequently, tendencies towards hatred and violence are enhanced within hate groups that foster a sense of deindividuation.

As previously mentioned, hate groups often adopt a quasi-military structure that not only fosters deindividuation, but also compartmentalization of function and diffusion of responsibility among its members. Uniforms and clearly identifiable proscribed rules for behavior facilitate the processes of deindividuation, conformity, diffusion of responsibility, and ultimately violence if such behavior was dictated by those in positions of power. Whereas a local businessperson might never dream of killing someone as part of their daily life,

they might easily engage in a lynching while wearing a robe and participating as a member of the group.

Another factor that can increase the degree of enmity among hate group members is group polarization. Research has demonstrated that group discussion tends to enhance the initial leanings of groups that are composed of like-minded individuals (e.g., Moscovici & Zavalloni, 1969; Myers, & Arenson, 1972). The same can be said of prejudiced individuals, who adopt much more negative views regarding outgroup members following group discussions (Myers & Bishop, 1970). In addition, very cohesive groups tend to suppress realistic appraisals of the situation in order to maintain group harmony. The result is groupthink in which groups tend to agree with the leader and ignore possible alternative viewpoints (Janis, 1982). Thus, the potential exists within a very cohesive group for a leader to advocate a policy of extreme hate and even violence without being met by significant resistance from group members. In fact, group polarization may occur, resulting in even increasingly extreme viewpoints.

According to Levin and McDevitt (2002), the majority of hate crimes are committed by pairs or groups as opposed to lone attackers due to the increased anonymity, groupthink, diffusion of responsibility, and group justification. Levin and McDevitt further note that these attacks are often more "thrill" motivated than grounded in well entrenched antipathy and if perpetrators are caught early they may be deterred from further destructiveness. Such a distinction highlights the impact of social psychological influences on hate-directed behavior. Unfortunately, individuals enmeshed within a hate group are unlikely to be discouraged from further violent actions against target groups and are in fact likely to be rewarded for such efforts.

Social relationship variables. There are many different approaches one could take to understand the genesis of stereotyping, prejudice, and discrimination. For example, one could try to explain hate groups from a cognitive, social learning, or motivational perspective. However, the best explanation would likely result from utilizing each of these approaches to help explain hate groups.

The cognitive perspective essentially approaches prejudice from an information processing perspective. As discussed in the earlier social cognition section, this approach takes the perspective that one cannot possibly treat everyone as an individual and thus shortcuts or heuristics must be utilized. Hate groups rely heavily on these heuristics as they do not want individuals to think to deeply about the "other."

The social learning perspective can readily be applied to understanding hate groups. According to Allport (1979), children become prejudiced adults by either adopting the attitudes of their parents and/or peer group or because they

were raised in an environment that allowed for hatred to develop. Several studies have found a similar connection between exposure to prejudice as a child and later prejudiced attitudes as an adult (e.g., Fishbein, 2002). Blee (2002) provides case analyses of women raised within racist families as well as the role of women in raising racist children. Clearly, the goal is to thoroughly socialize children into a racist identity and promote racist activism early by assigning children small tasks associated with such activism (e.g. folding pamphlets). The relationship between childhood exposure to prejudice and adult attitudes is also disturbing in light of the recruiting efforts made by hate groups over the Internet. For example, Stormfront and other hate groups have web site exclusively designed for children that include stories, coloring books, comics, games, and home schooling materials all with a racist message (Lauder, 2001).

There are several proposed theories that can be categorized as motivational approaches to prejudice. For example, realistic conflict theory suggests that competition between groups for scarce resources results in prejudice (Esses, Jackson, Armstrong, 1998). Realistic conflict theory has primarily been applied to situations in which groups compete for land, employment, and other factors that impact the economic potential of an individual or group. Hate groups often target groups that are perceived to be in direct competition with them for jobs, land etc. For example, the National Alliance, a white supremacist group, presents the growth of the "non-White" population in the United States as a threat to the "White" population. William Pierce, author of the Turner Diaries and founder of the National Alliance, writes extensively about the dangers to the "white race" posed by the "immigration problem" and affirmative action as a path to "genocide against our people." According Blee (2002), Goodrick-Clark (2003), Levin (1989), McDevitt (2002), and others, the creation of a conspiracy theory is foundational for most organized hate groups.

One of the means by which we assess our status in society is comparing ourselves to others. However, in comparing ourselves to those around us we may find that we are not achieving the same degree of success as our chosen comparison group. Consequently we may experience relative deprivation (Davis, 1959). Given that relative deprivation tends to lead to frustration, hate group members may elect to vent this frustration via displaced aggression or scapegoating. For example, Hovland and Sears (1940) reported that the number of southern African-Americans lynched in the late 19th and early 20th century varied as a function of the price of cotton. When cotton prices were good, lynchings were down, whereas the opposite pattern held true when cotton prices were low. The researchers cited displaced aggression as the main culprit in this analysis. Groups that have a limited ability to defend themselves, such as women, children, and ethnic and religious minorities are often attractive targets.

According to Ferber (1998), young white males are likely to join white supremacist groups because of the perceived futility of the American Dream. For example, Benjamin Smith, Matthew Williams, and James Tyler Williams all had ties to the white supremacist group, the World Church of the Creator. Smith went on a three-day shooting spree aimed at Blacks, Jews, and Asians and killing two and the Williams brothers killed a gay couple and fire bombed three synagogues in California.

Dehumanization. While it may be appropriate to categorize this social psychological phenomenon under one of the broad categories listed above, we have decided to separate this technique from the rest due to the fact that dehumanization is a necessary component in hate and violence. To facilitate movement along a path of escalating enmity and potential violence, hate group leaders promote increasing levels of dehumanization. The process of dehumanization begins with increased promotion of stereotypes and negative images of the outgroup. This is often a necessary tool to reduce the cognitive dissonance that may occur when individuals behave negatively toward other human beings (Berscheid, Boye, & Walster (Hatfield), 1968). Propaganda is a vital tool used by the ingroup elite to stigmatize and dehumanize the outgroup, as well as to present the outgroup as an imminent threat to the well-being or existence of the ingroup. The outgroup may be presented as being in partnership with the devil, as a seductive evil seeking to steal one's children, or as insects. For example, white supremacist web sites often contain images of Blacks, Jews, Hispanics, and others portrayed as demons, predatory animals, and vermin. These messages lead members down a path towards violence that includes increasing levels of devaluation and dehumanization of the "other." According to Blee (2002) such a culture of violence is normative for organized hate groups. Even the children in these groups are engulfed in a culture of hate propaganda ranging from refrigerator posted pictures of lynchings and comic book depictions of Jews and Blacks as vermin to evenings of fun topped off by cross burnings.

The process of dehumanization and the path of violence could not be taken without the underlying processes of moral disengagement and moral exclusion. Over time, ingroups begin to view the outgroup as excluded from the ingroup's normal moral boundaries and disengage morally (Bandura, 1998; Opotow, 1990). In other words, certain moral principles that may be applied to one's own group do not pertain to those outside of the group. For example, it is unfortunate but acceptable to kill an enemy during war when the soldier is identified as a member of the threatening outgroup. Historically in relation to hate, this has been carried to the extreme with genocide. For example, during the Holocaust, as Jews were forced into ghettos and sent to concentration and death camps in unknown locations, many non-Jews began to disengage morally from Jews. Jews began to be perceived as not only "other" but excluded from the

normal moral realm. In fact, Nazi propaganda argued for such disengagement and exclusion on the grounds that Jewish blood represented a threat to the body and survival of Germany.

Additional Strategies for Running a Successful Hate Group

The aforementioned analysis examined the techniques that are most effective for building a successful hate group. These strategies ranged from strong leadership qualities and methods of recruitment to the use of propaganda. However, there are four other effective techniques for hate group maintenance that need to be included in this discussion.

The Internet is an amazing tool that has opened the doorway for global communication and commerce. Additionally, it has been a bonanza for the proliferation of hate (Barkham, 1999; Lauder, 2001). Don Black, a former grand dragon of the Ku Klux Klan and founder of Stormfront, stated, "It's been a tremendous boon for us. That's why I dedicate most of my time to this. I feel like I've accomplished more on the Web than in my 25 years of political activism. Whereas before, we could reach people only with pamphlets or holding rallies with no more than a few hundred people, now we can reach potentially millions" (Lauder, 2001). These web sites not only facilitate recruitment but also organizing, the spread of propaganda and other hate based materials, community building, and networking between hate organizations.

The pairing of religion and hate is an extremely destructive combination. Religious validation of hate and social inequity only serves to fuel enmity. One of the most effective ways to maintain such hate and social inequities is to cite Scripture. The Christian Identity and Christian Patriot movements pair religion and enmity to form the bases of their destructive ideological beliefs (Goodrick-Clark, 2003). Furthermore, previously discussed social cognition factors, such as the ingroup bias and social identity theory, dictate that other religious groups are held as inferior—promoting the formation of intra-religious hatred. For example, research has found that church members are more prejudiced than nonmembers (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992; Batson, Schoenrade, & Ventis, 1993). However, it is important to note that although mere church membership is related to prejudice, there does not appear to be a relationship between prejudice and individuals who have a true understanding of scripture (Batson & Ventis, 1982). Fred Phelps and the Westboro Baptist Church exemplify the pairing of hate and religion into a specific calling with their focus of enmity being on gays and lesbians.

Finally, hate groups work to create a culture. Such a culture can include specific uniforms, doctrine, language, etc. that further serve to isolate and create cohesion within the group. Uniforms are typically worn to not only facilitate

deindividuation but a sense of identity and belonging. The Posse Comitatus under the leadership of Henry Lamont "Mike" Beach also distributed badges, magnetic care sheriff's decals, and special charters to increase group identification (Levitas, 2002). Note however that the use of uniforms can backfire when such uniforms become the focus of community derision. According to Levitas, this phenomenon occurred in relation to the use of white sheet and hood with Klan groups and has led to a reduction in their numbers. Lifton (1989) argues that it is necessary for destructive groups to create language unique to the group. The development of jargon associated solely with the group facilitates group membership and identification, conformity, and isolationism. Phrases such as "88" and "ZOG" may be meaningless to the general population but are charged with meaning for those associated with the Christian Identity or Patriot movements (Tolerance.Org, 2002). These groups also assert that Christians are actually Jews and those who are not Christians but call themselves Jews are actually Khazars (Levitas, 2002). Additionally, the use of euphemistic language can aid in escalation of violence and moral exclusion. For example, it was much easier to state that individuals were working towards the "Final Solution to the Jewish problem" than to state that they were murdering millions of human beings. The development of a unique group culture fosters previously mentioned social psychological factors such as obedience to authority, conformity, deindividuation, and moral exclusion.

PREVENTION

Hate groups are unlikely to disappear from the landscape either in the United States or abroad in the near future. This does not mean, however, that individuals should simply ignore hate groups and hope that they go away. Historically, turning away from the face of hate has served as tacit approval for the existence of hate. Thus, it is imperative that intervention and prevention be discussed. Obviously, an extensive discussion of responses and strategies in relation to hate group is beyond the scope of this paper. For information concerning various activities and steps to combat hate groups in one's community, there are resources available through organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

However, in relation to the concepts discussed in this paper, there are several steps that communities can take to combat enmity in the form of hate groups. First, as discussed previously, groups can be focused around either destructive or constructive agendas. Thus, groups aimed at the development of positive values and goals can be designed to meet some of the same psychological needs for belonging, value, status, etc. as hate groups. Often such options are not available or are not promoted in a way that makes these groups

attractive to those who otherwise may feel disenfranchised. These groups and efforts are particularly important for youth, young adults, and during times of social, political, or economic crisis.

Political lobbying in relation to hate groups also needs to be organized. This is imperative for three primary reasons. First, for the programs and community activities discussed above to happen, resources need to be committed for funding and staffing. Monies need to be especially allocated towards program recruitment. Unless individuals make it through the front door, they are unlikely to develop long term associations and involvement with organizations designed with productive agendas. In other words, one needs to get that "foot in the door" with initial new members. Just as individuals can begin and move down a path of hate, violence, and destruction, research has demonstrated that individuals can just as easily move down a path of benevolence (Staub, 1989). Special effort needs to be directed towards connecting these organizations to and through the Internet. As noted previously, hate groups recruit on high school and university campuses as well as through the Internet, and thus, so should organizations designed towards more constructive values including those emphasizing diversity.

Greater focus on education is also imperative both in our schools and our communities. Ten percent of all hate crimes in the United States occur in schools and universities (Southern Poverty Law Center, 2000). Additionally, as noted previously, children who develop prejudicial attitudes and biases are more likely to become adults with these same belief systems. Thus, schools and universities are natural environments for education about hate, tolerance, and diversity. Programs such as "A World of Difference" are a good place to begin for schools unfamiliar with diversity education (Anti-Defamation League, 2002c). Additionally, as part of education, our youth need to be "inoculated" against potential recruitment. For example, researchers have successfully inoculated children against peer pressure to smoke (McAlister, Perry, Killen, Slinkard, Macoby, 1980) and engage in drug use (Ellickson & Bell, 1990). Finally, it is important that not just positive self-esteem be developed in children and youth but self-esteem grounded in actual accomplishments and demonstrated abilities. Baumeister (1997) argues that when threatened, false self-esteem is a source of potential violence as often evidenced in gangs and other destructive groups.

Furthermore, hate groups have operated in many areas around the United States with relative impunity as some governmental officials have turned a blind eye to hate group activities (Levitas, 2002). Local elected officials and law enforcement officials are not exempt from holding belief systems grounded in hate. However, communities can put political pressure on these individuals to hold them to broader community values of tolerance and acceptance of diversity.

As hate groups become identified as a source of shame as opposed to power and prestige, they fade from the community landscape (Levitas, 2002; Southern Poverty Law Center, 2000). Finally, concern for hate group activity is often diminished as officials are unaware of the interrelationships between hate group organizations and their leaders. Unfortunately, this lack of awareness has led to instances in which law enforcement officials were caught unprepared for the risk and reality of violence (Levitas, 2002). Thus, local and national need to be lobbied for increased tracking of hate group activity to assess risk for violence.

Additionally, we must address some of the underlying problems in society that lead many individuals to groups grounded in enmity. Issues such as poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, housing, etc. may all seem tangential to the issue of hate. However, individuals who feel they have left behind in the pursuit of the American Dream or feel otherwise disenfranchised are ripe recruits for hate based organizations. During the farm crisis of the late 1970s, many farmers and others in farm regions of the United States joined the Posse Comitatus and other hate groups as they felt no others were concerned or provided solutions to their life difficulties (Levitas, 2002).

Finally, it is important to bear in mind that modern prejudice and racism is prevalent in everyday society and does not simply exist within the hate group. The cabbie that refuses to stop to pick up an young Latino, the police officer who polls over a vehicle simply because the occupants are Black, or the employer who promotes the male applicant over the more qualified female applicant are all examples of the effects of modern day prejudice and discrimination in everyday life. If hate is to be truly tackled in the United States as well as around the globe, the issue of everyday prejudice and hate as well as organized enmity must be addressed.

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ENDNOTES

[1] Matthew Shepard, a young gay man, was murdered in October of 1998 in Laramie, Wyoming because of his sexual orientation. He was tied to a fence, beaten, and left for dead. He subsequently died in a Fort Collins, Colorado, hospital from his injuries.

[2] James Byrd, Jr., an African American was murdered in June of 1998 in Jaspar County, Texas, by white supremacists. He was chained to the back of a truck, dragged for several miles, and thus dismembered resulting in his death.

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