RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF IMAGE AND STATUS CRITERIA IN TWO ADOLESCENT GROUPS

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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEER PRESSURE AND STATUS CONTROL IN THE ADOLESCENT SECTOR

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ABSTRACT

FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE THE ERROR IN STATUS CONTENT IN THE ADOLESCENT YOUTH

by

Lynne Thorpe

By means of interviews and a questionnaire, data were collected from two Michigan high school senior classes. The data included the respondent's perception of his status in his peer group and his actual ranking by that group. The findings confirmed the hypothesis that there would be a positive relationship between the perceived status ranking and the actual status ranking.

Upon the information gathered through interviews a list of 25 status criteria important to these two groups was established. On the questionnaire the student was to rate his self in each criterion and then state how important each criterion was to him. The findings confirmed this study's second hypothesis, namely, that one will select as important to his status criteria in which he has a positive self-concept and conversely select as unimportant to his status criteria in which he has a negative self-concept.

Hypotheses

> There are few topics so fascinating both to the research investigator and the research subject as the self-image. It is distinctively characteristic of the human animal that he is able to stand outside himself and to describe, judge, and evaluate the person he is. He is at once the observer and the observed, the judge and the judged, the evaluator and the evaluated. Since the self is probably the most important thing in the world to him, the question of what he is like and how he feels about himself engross him deeply. This is especially true during the adolescent stage of development.[1]

This study was undertaken to test two general hypotheses as they apply to adolescent self-image. Specifically the hypotheses are: (1) that there will be a direct positive relationship between one's perception of how he is rated by others and the actual evaluation of him by his peers. (2) that one will select as important to him status criteria, from a given list of such criteria, in which he has a positive self-concept and conversely select as unimportant to him those status criteria in which he has a negative self-concept. These hypotheses are based on the theory that to maintain and enhance one's self-esteem, one will select a system of self-values which correspond to the self-concept. Information gathered from two Michigan high school senior classes was analyzed and the hypotheses confirmed.

Background And Review of the Literature

The Social Self

Self-concept has been defined in many ways with perhaps

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[1] Rosenberg, Morris, Society and the Adolescent Self-Image (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. vii.

the most common definition being "that it is the referent of the pronoun 'I'."[2] Self-image is an attitude toward an object (the self) and can be studied in the same way as other attitudes. An attitude is characterized by its content, direction, intensity, importance, salience, consistency, stability, and clarity.

> We suggest that the structure of the self-image is largely revealed by the classification of individuals in terms of these universal dimensions. Thus, if we can learn <u>what</u> the individual sees when he looks at himself (his social statuses, roles, physical characteristics, skills, traits, and other facets of content); whether he has a favorable or unfavorable opinion of himself (direction); how strongly he feels about his self-attitude (intensity); how important the self is, relative to other objects (importance); whether he spends a great deal of time thinking of what he is like - whether he is constantly conscious of what he is saying or doing - or whether he is more involved in tasks or other objects (salience); whether the elements of his self-picture are consistent or contradictory (consistency); whether he has a self attitude which varies or shifts from day to day or moment to moment, or whether, on the contrary, he has a firm, stable, rock-like self-attitude (stability); and whether he has a firm, definite picture of what he is like or a vague, hazy, blurred picture (clarity) - if we can characterize the individual's self-picture in terms of each of these dimensions, then we would have a good, if still incomplete, description of the structure of the self-image.[3]

Psychologists, psychiatrists and sociologists are all interested in the self-image and sociologists studying the "self" and self-concept invariably turn to the writings of George Herbert

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[2]Helper, Malcolm M., "Learning Theory and the Self-Concept," <u>Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology</u>, 51, (1955), 184-194, p. 184.

[3]Rosenberg, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 7.

Mead and Charles H. Cooley. Cooley observes that we do not see ourselves as others see us but as we imagine they see us. He talks about the "looking glass self," meaning the image of one's self as one sees it reflected in the attitudes of his associates toward him. The idea of self encompasses what one believes is his appearance to others, what one believes is the others judgment of that appearance and a feeling about the self, i.e. pride or mortification. Both Cooley and Mead take an interactionist view of the self, emphasizing the influence of the responses of others in shaping one's self-definition. An individual's opinion of the self is influenced by what he imagines others think of him; at the same time, however, he is likely to attribute to others the opinions he holds of himself. These are circular processes and mutually reinforcing. Whether one accurately or inaccurately interprets his effect on others, these are still the assumptions upon which he operates. People act on the basis of their assumptions of what they are like and these actions have consequences for their lives in society.[4] Richard Brandt[5] contends that self-estimates cannot be separated from the estimate of others; that these are two aspects of the same perceptual process. The self concept develops in a social matrix; both by how the individual sees himself in relation

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[4] W. I. Thomas theorized that if people define a situation as real it becomes real in its consequences.

[5] Brandt, Richard B., "The Accuracy of the Self-Estimate: A Measure of Self-Concept Reality," Genetic Psychology Monographs, (58) 1958, 55-99.

to others and by how he perceives others see him. Carl J. Couch[6] used the twenty question "Who Am I" test developed by Manford Kuhn to confirm his hypothesis that in given social situations a person acts on his estimate or guess of others attitudes toward him rather than on their actual attitude toward him.

Self-attitude is unique in that the person holding the attitude and the object toward whom the attitude is held are within the same skin. Mead, in calling the self "reflexive" meant that which can be both subject and object. Action toward the self is an integral part of an action because one always takes the self into account when acting toward others. Mead distinguishes between the "I" as the functioning, spontaneous part of the self and the "me" as the part which reflects, judges and evaluates the person. He believes that the ability to acquire a self is also the ability to be an object to oneself, that is, the ability to regard one's own behavior objectively and to respond to it as one responds to other objects. This can be done only in social relationships through taking the role of others and viewing oneself through their eyes.

One is not born with an organized self; rather one organizes all experiences into that of a self when one reaches a certain level of sophistication. The self develops through experience in two stages, 1) the organization of attitudes of others toward himself and toward each other in a specific social act in which he is a participant, and 2) the organization of the social attitude of his

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[6]Couch, Carl J., "Self-Attitudes and Degree of Agreement with Immediate Others," American Journal of Sociology, 63 (Mar 1958), 491-496.

social group as a whole. The first is evidenced by a child's spontaneous play, his play at being something like a teacher, fireman, etc.; the second comes later and is evidenced in the more organized games of children. We first learn to take the role of a single individual and experience his attitude toward us, then as we enter more complex group relationships, we organize our concept of self by simultaneously taking the roles of all members of the group. A study of sociempathy undertaken by Ausubel, Schiff and Gasser[7] concludes that sociempathy is a developmental function, primitive at first, with the absence of any complex group structure of the young (under 8 years old) being related to sociempathic immaturity and with a growth curve that increases with age. They use the term sociempathy to mean the form of social perception which refers to the individual's perception of the sociometric status of others as well as his own in the group in which he is a member.

The child learns to assume multiple positions vis-a-vis himself and organizes these into a system. It is this system of attitudes that Mead terms the "generalized other." When he talks about how the self may take on the role of the generalized other Mead refers to the individual's conception of the organized social process of which he is a part. This organized social process consists of a number of roles with the individual identifying his

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[7]Ausubel, David P., Schiff, Herbert M., Gasser, Edward B., "A Preliminary Study of Developmental Trends in Sociempathy: Accuracy of Perception of Own and Other Sociometric Status," Child Development, 23, (1952), 111-128.

role and doing his part to insure that the organized process continues. The attitude of the generalized other is the attitude of the members of the community and it is the generalized other which gives the individual his unity of self. By this process of internalizing the generalized other one acquires personality and functions as a member of society. "It is the social process itself that is responsible for the appearance of the self; it is not there as a self apart from this type of experience."[8] To Mead, self control is just a reflection of social control; the generalized other is society's representative in the individual.

Mead recognizes as normal the different relationships of the individual with different people and accounts for this as different parts of the self responding to different social situations; however, he stresses that basically there is organization as a whole, a unified self. Normally, most persons' dispositions are in harmony with the expectations of the group to which they belong, since the self is constructed from one's association with society. No self, however, conforms exactly to the social code since each person is subject to different combinations of social influences. This results in each individual having a unique personality. Every normal person behaves with reference to his self-conception; if he perceives himself as attractive, popular, and influential his behavior will reflect this self-concept by his being confident and dominant.

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[8] Strauss, Anselm (ed.), George Herbert Mead on Social Psychology (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 207.

Virtually all kinds of attitudes are intertwined with the attitude toward the self, even a person espousing "selflessness" does so by making it a dominant value and an important part of the self-image.

Conception of self is the key element in the process by which the group controls a person. One cannot act toward another without reference to his self-concept; and one cannot have a conception of self without corroborative defining responses from others. Informal social control is often responsible for forcing the revision of the self-concept. If a person offends the expectations of the group, it may respond with statements of disapproval, avoidance, or just frowns. Depending upon the strength of the influence, and the degree of unpleasantness, the person will change his behavior. Cooley saw the self and society as being harmonious but Sigmund Freud did not. Freud said that the id and ego (approximately, desire and reason) are different from and hostile to the superego (approximately, social conscience). He talked about the struggle between the individual and society. He saw man motivated by sex and aggressive instincts but more often than not overruled by the superego.

The self image is both subjective and objective. The subjective element is largely responsible for determining one's thoughts, feelings and behavior and for reflecting one's impulses and inspirations; the objective element reflects the information provided by his social experiences. A child is born into a family, lives in a neighborhood, belongs to a social class, and identifies with national and religious groups. "These social groupings impose on a child a characteristic style of life, set of values, and system

of beliefs and ideals which covertly, imperceptibly, unintentionally, but no less powerfully, provide the basis for self-judgment. With a different background the child would be different and would see himself differently."[9]

Many scholars have theorized that people with a favorable self-attitude have a favorable attitude toward others. According to Erich Fromm, one of the central aims of one's life theory is the individual's attitude toward humanity and human nature. "He will trust and respect himself as a member of the human race if he trusts and respects human nature, and conversely, he will have a fundamental contempt for himself if he hates and despises others."[10] Freud propounded the opposite viewpoint; the more love that is turned to the outside world the less love that is felt for oneself, and, conversely, the less love that is turned to the outside world the more that is left for oneself. C. R. Rogers states that "...the person who accepts himself will, because of this self-acceptance, have better interpersonal relations with others."[11] Fey,[12] in studying this relationship, finds that although individuals with high self-acceptance scores have high acceptance of others, and

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[9]Rosenberg, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. vii.

[10]Fromm, Erich, <u>Man For Himself</u> (New York, Rinehart, 1947), p. 128.

[11]Rogers, C. R., <u>Client-Centered Therapy</u> (Boston, Houghton-Mifflin, 1951), p. 520.

[12]Fey, William, "Acceptance by Others and Its Relation to Acceptance of Self and Others - A Reevaluation," <u>Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology</u>, 50, (1955), 274-276.

tend to feel accepted by others, actually they are neither more or less accepted by others than those with low self-acceptance scores. However, people who think relatively much higher of themselves than of others tend to feel accepted by others, but really they are much less accepted by them.

Aspirations are positively related to the image one perceives others hold of him.[13] Setting goals too high can be frustrating but those with fairly accurate self concepts tend to set realistic attainable goals for themselves. The findings of Katovsky, Preston and Crandall[14] are that children's educational aspirations reflect the aspirations which parents hold for them and that there is a positive relationship between the parent's self-evaluation and the parent's evaluation of and aspirations for their children. Ruth Strang[15] isolates four dimensions of the self. 1) Basic self-concept - the person's perception of his status and abilities. This is his concept

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[13] See Chapman, D. and Volkman, J., "A Social Determinant of the Level of Aspiration," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 34 (1939), 225-238; Waisanen, Fred, "Self-Attitudes and Performance Estimates," Sociological Quarterly, July, 1962; Harvey, O. J., "An Experimental Approach to the Study of Status Relations in Informal Groups," American Sociological Review, 18, 357-367; Anderson, J.E., "The Relation of Attitude to Adjustment," Education, 210-218; and Harriott, Robert E., "Some Social Determinants of Educational Aspirations," Harvard Education Review, 33 (1963), 157-177.

[14] Katovsky, Walter, Preston, Anne, and Crandall, Vaughn J., "Parental Attitudes Toward Their Personal Achievements and Towards the Achievement Behaviors of Their Children," Journal of Genetic Psychology, March, 1964, 67-82.

[15] Strang, Ruth, The Adolescent Views Himself, (New York, Toronto, London, McGraw Hill Book Company, 1957).

of the kind of person he thinks he is as influenced by his physical self, his personal appearance, his abilities, his disposition, his values, his beliefs and his aspirations. 2) Transitory perception of self - one's self perception, held at a particular moment and often lacking in perspective and influenced by the mood of the moment or by some recent experience. This is particularly important with adolescents, because its transitory nature is not recognized by them as such. 3) Social self - the self as one thinks others see it. Although it may not be what others really perceive the individual to be, it affects his behavior. His feeling of security or insecurity about himself, his sense of worthiness or unworthiness influences his impressions of the way he thinks others feel about him. 4) Ideal self - the self he would like to be. This may or may not be realistic, depending on the level of his aspiration in relation to his abilities and the opportunities for self-realization.

Rosenberg agrees with Mead that the individual must take the role of others and see himself as they see him but Rosenberg does not think that Mead goes far enough, since he does not show the influence of society on self-attitudes. How a group is entered in the broad society affects the value system of the group and consequently its members.[16] Different social groups differ in norms

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[16] This phenomenon was studied by Lewin who describes self-hatred among Jews and by Hardinger and Overbey who describe Negro psychopathology as characterized by socially induced feelings of inferiority. See Lewin, Kurt, Resolving Social Conflicts (New York, Harper, 1948), chapter 12; and Hardinger, Abraham and Overbey, Lionel, The Mark of Oppression: A Psychosocial Study of the American Negro (New York, Norton, 1951).

[illegible] [illegible], [illegible], [illegible] [illegible], [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] ment [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] social [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible], [illegible], [illegible].

[illegible][17] [illegible] social [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible] [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] [illegible]. [illegible], [illegible], [illegible] [illegible] social class [illegible] [illegible]. However, [illegible] research[18] indicates that children from the higher social classes [illegible] than those from the lower classes, but the difference was greater for boys than for girls. It seems [illegible] differences partly [illegible] differences in child-rearing practices. Kohn and Carroll's study[19] of child-rearing practices [illegible] middle-class

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[17] [illegible], [illegible] and [illegible], [illegible], "Social Class [illegible] and [illegible] Adjustment," [illegible], 35 ([illegible]), pp. [illegible].

[18] [illegible], op. cit., p. [illegible].

[19] Kohn, Melvin L. and Carroll, Eleanor E., "Social Class and the Allocation of Parental Responsibilities," Sociometry, 23 (1960), pp. 372-392.

children are more likely than working-class children to have supportive fathers. However, middle-class fathers are more likely than working class fathers to be more supportive of their sons but only, slightly, if at all, more supportive of their daughters. The significance of this is corroborated by Coleman[20] who finds that the closer the relationship with the father, the higher the self-esteem.

The close relationship between parental interest and the child's self-esteem can again be seen in Rosenberg's conclusion that Jewish children have a somewhat higher self-esteem than Protestant and Catholic children. One would have expected the Protestant children's self-esteem to be highest, then that of the Catholic children and finally that of the Jewish children, if the prestige of the religious group is associated with adolescent self-attitudes. But in studying signs of parental indifference Rosenberg found the least indifference among Jews and concluded that it is this parental interest and not religion which is related to the child's self-esteem. He concludes, "whether one belongs to the upper-upper middle class, lower-middle class, or even lower social classes; whether one is Protestant, Catholic or Jew; whether one is male or female; whether one lives in a large city, a medium sized community or a small town - whichever of these conditions obtain, the result is essentially the same; if the parents manifest indifference to the child, that child is less likely to have a high level of self-

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[20]Coleman, James S., The Adolescent Society (New York, Free Press of Glencoe, 1961).

regard."[21] In an article,[22] Rosenberg further emphasizes that although a great or moderate amount of parental interest is not associated with substantial differences in self-esteem, extreme indifference on the part of the parents is clearly related to low self-esteem. The evidence also indicates that indifference is more closely related to low self-esteem than to the punitive reactions of parents.

Some of Rosenberg's other conclusions on variables affecting the self image are that if a child is raised in a dissonant religious or cultural content (different from the majority) his self-esteem will be lower; the self-esteem of children is affected if they are from divorced homes or homes disrupted by the death of a parent, and that birth order does not affect self-esteem but the existence or non-existence of siblings does affect it. ("Only" children, particularly males, had higher self-esteem.)

Although the criteria for self-values of boys and girls are similar, there are expectedly some differences. Rosenberg found among adolescents that both sexes valued intelligence, being social, being well-liked, dependability, and reliability. Girls were more concerned with being well-liked and stressed the importance of interpersonal harmony and success values (likeable, friendly, pleasant), tender virtues (kindness, consideration, sympathy), and moral values (honesty, ethics). Boys stressed motor values and physical courage

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[21] Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 144.

[22] Rosenberg, Morris, "Parental Interest and Children's Self-Conceptions," Sociometry, 26, 1, (1963), 35-49.

(good fighter, work with the hands), interpersonal control and dominance (get others to do things, freedom from naivete). Rosenberg concludes, that within each sex, social class affects the selection of values; i.e. higher class boys value being a good student and intelligence more than lower class boys.

The changes being undergone in the sex roles and the disequilibrium of the relationship between the sexes, an important factor in self-image, was studied by McKee and Sheriffs.[23] In a previous study,[24] the same authors asked respondents to indicate on a check list of adjectives the traits which were true of men, in general, and those that were true of women, in general. The results showed the male stereotype containing more favorable characteristics, male respondents emphasized favorable male characteristics while female respondents emphasized unfavorable female characteristics. The women's self-description emphasized their unfavorable characteristics more than did the men's self-description. In still another study, McKee and Sheriffs[25] felt they established

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[23] McKee, John P., and Sheriffs, Alex, "Men and Women's Beliefs, Ideals and Self Concepts," American Journal of Sociology, 64, (1959), 356-363.

[24] McKee, John P. and Sheriffs, Alex, "Qualitative Aspects of Beliefs About Men and Women," Journal of Personality, (1957), xxv, 451-464.

[25] McKee, John P. and Sheriffs, Alex, "The Differential Evaluation of Males and Females," Journal of Personality, 25, (1956), 356-371.

beyond a reasonable doubt that college men and women regard males more highly than they regard females. This fact is reflected in the self-conception since the self-evaluation will very likely reflect the differences in the esteem with which the sexes are held. George A. Talland[26] corroborates this conclusion with his findings that in errors of self-assessment, men and women are at opposite poles; men tend to overestimate their status, women tend to underestimate it.

The fact that boys, particularly of the middle class, have more difficulty than girls in assuming their sex role because fathers do not spend much time at home and the boy has no male to emulate, was the substance of an article by Talcott Parsons.[27] Mirra Komarovsky[28] claims, on the other hand, that girls suffer from uncertainty and insecurity because of the inconsistencies in the expectations of the female role and until the adult woman's sex role is redefined in terms of modern society, the adolescent woman will be faced with intrinsic contradictions.

Adolescent Self Concept

The word "adolescence" is derived from the Latin verb adolescere, meaning "to grow" or "to grow to maturity". Adolescence, then, is the transitional period between childhood and adulthood,

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[26] Talland, George A., "Sex Differences in Self-Assessment," Journal of Social Psychology, 48, (1958), p. 25-35.

[27] Parsons, Talcott, "Age and Sex in the Social Structure of the United States," American Sociological Review, 7, (1942), p. 604-610.

[28] Komarovsky, Mirra, "Cultural Contradictions and the Sex Roles," American Journal of Sociology, 52, (1946), pp. 184-189.

marked by shifting backward and forward from old to new behavior and from old to new attitudes. Some writers, including, Jessie Bernard[29] feel that the trend is to consider younger and younger children as adolescents. Adolescent culture seems to be extending down and influencing youngsters at a much earlier age than it has previously. The inconsistency and instability of adolescence is due to 1) the rapid and uneven physical and mental development; 2) lack of knowledge and experience (the adolescent does not yet fully understand the demands of society; 3) conflicting demands on him (sometimes he is treated as a child, sometimes as an adult; his duties, responsibilities, rights and privileges are not clearly defined); and 4) the discontinuities of training (the status of a child is different from that of an adult). A fundamental reason for regarding adolescence as a "problem" age is that adolescents are judged by adult rather than adolescent standards, with the generational conflict being in the cultural and social milieu of our society. The more complex civilization becomes, with its corresponding increase in specialization and number of roles, the greater the problems of adjustment. All societies, no matter how primitive, must deal with the phenomenon of adolescence. Some societies may not give formal recognition to adolescence in their structure, but informal recognition is assumed by the behavior of the adolescents themselves.

As the child gets older he moves away from the family to the

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[29] Bernard, Jessie, "Teen Age Culture: An Overview," The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, (1944), pp. 1-12.

peer group because the family no longer offers a wide enough range of role participation. How well the adolescent adjusts to the peer group depends to a large extent upon his ability to perceive his own status in the group, as well as the status of the other group members. Friedenberg thinks that "our cultural insistence on generalized patterns of response which ignore the significance of subtle but vital human differences..."[30] impedes adolescent growth. This is serious because it is in the peer groups that youngsters learn to feel about themselves and others. The task of adolescence is self-definition. "Adolescence is the period during which a young person learns who he is, and what he really feels. It is the time during which he differentiates himself from his culture, though on culture's terms."[31] A successful adolescence adds a profound sense of self. Gottlieb and Ramsey[32] note that the agonies of the adolescent are based on his pre-occupation with his self-identity and his ambivalent attitude toward becoming an adult; the security inherent in the parent-child relationship is not easily given up by the adolescent. Most of the adolescent's experience has been in the home or in a biased peer group. This affects directly the crucial problem of self-esteem for the adolescent, because there is too little diversity of experience to base it on and too little unbiased experience to allow for object-

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[30] Friedenberg, Edgar Z., The Vanishing Adolescent, (New York, Dell Publishing Company, 1964), p. 65.

[31] Ibid., p. 39.

[32] Gottlieb, David and Ramsey, Charles, The American Adolescent (Homewood, Illinois, Dorsey Press, Inc., 1964).

irity. Adolescents are very concerned about society's appraisal of them and their worth and therefore are very vulnerable to the feelings and judgments of others. Their placing tremendous value upon competence in themselves and others is explained by Friedenberg, who says that "A respect for competence in one self and others is crucial in adolescence, for it is crucial to self-definition. In a world as empirical as ours, a youngster who does not know what he is good at will not be sure what he is good for; he must know what he can do in order to know who he is."[33]

The adolescent's self-concept is the basis of his thinking, behavior and motivation. That self-concept helps determine how he perceives friends, family, future vocation, in fact, life itself. The changes in one's self-attitude are related to one's expectancies of others and their expectancies of him. The discrepancy between an individual's perception of self and the more objective evaluation of him by others often is due to some aspects of the self-concept which may be hidden from the person himself. His evaluations may be unreliable because they are based on distorted values or on certain aspects of himself he doesn't wish to recognize.

By the time of adolescence the self-image is essentially completed but is susceptible to many changes, as the individual's roles change and as he is presented with new social pressures and standards. R. W. White[34] notes that the independence which adolescents

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[33] Friedenberg, op. cit., p. 40.

[34] White, R. W., "The Personality of Joseph Hidd II, Psychological Appraisal at 18 and a Half Years," Character and Personality, 11, (1942), pp. 309-338.

demand make them face many situations alone without adult guidance. If they are not adequately prepared to meet these new situations and fail, their self-concept can be seriously damaged. The advantages of having a stable self-image are discussed by Brownfain.[35] Those with stable self-concepts have higher levels of self-esteem, they are free from feelings of inferiority and nervousness, they are better liked by the group, they see themselves as they believe others see them, they have more friends and are more active socially, they show less evidence of compensatory behavior of a defensive sort, such as withdrawal or shyness, and they make better adjustments than do those who have unstable concepts of self.

Adolescence is often described as a unique period of development characterized by "storm and stress" and by a "youth culture." Gottlieb and Ramsey,[36] for example, describe youth culture as a small private society with its own system of doing things and having its own rituals, fashions, languages and values. Lloyd Allan Cook,[37] concludes that there is stratification in teen-age culture just as in the broad society. Each class' values, norms and modes of living are reflected in that teen-age culture.

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[35] Brownfain, J. J., "Stability of the Self-Conception as a Dimension of Personality," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, 47 (1952).

[36] Gottlieb and Ramsey, op. cit., p. 28.

[37] Cook, Lloyd Allan, "An Experimental Sociographic Study of a Stratified 10th Grade Class," American Sociological Review, 10 (1945), pp. 250-261.

Jessie Bernard[38] places the responsibility for the existence of this teen-age culture on our affluence and the resulting ability to keep our children in school longer. But Coleman says:

> Industrial society has spawned a peculiar phenomenon...: adolescent subcultures, with values and activities quite distinct from those of the adult society - subculture where members have most of their important associations within, and few with adult society. Industrialization, and the rapidity of change itself, has taken out of the hands of the parent the task of training his child, made the parent's skills obsolescent, and put him out of touch with the times - unable to understand, much less inculcate the standards of a social order which has changed since he was young. By extending the period of training necessary for a child and by encompassing nearly the whole population, industrial society has made of high schools a social system of adolescents. It includes in the U. S., almost all adolescents and more and more of the activities of the adolescent himself. They have been given ... many of the instruments which can make them a functioning community; cars, freedom in dating, continual contact with the opposite sex, money and entertainment, like music and movies, designed especially for them.[39]

All of these seem to cut the child off from the real society, and to direct him toward his own age group. There is formed a small society which has only a few connections with the adult society and it is within this small society that the important interaction occurs. Reinforcing the segregation of adolescents from adult society is the separate and important commercial market that caters exclusively to teen-agers. One of the major problems is that goals are set by adults and rejected by teen-agers. Citing, for example, that in

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[38] Jessie Bernard, op. cit.

[39] Coleman, James, "The Adolescent Subculture and Academic Achievement," American Journal of Sociology, 65 (1960), pp. 337-347, p. 337.

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Conversely, there is the tendency to exclude from the action system that which threatens one's self-evaluation. In examining the relationship between self-esteem and self-value, Rosenberg found, without exception, "people who felt they excelled at a quality were more likely to value it and those who valued it were more likely to believe they excelled at it."[42] Newcomb[43] explains that many of our attitudes have the function of defending our self-image (ego defense mechanism). It is, naturally, not always possible to manipulate one's self-values to such psychological convenience, because there are too many status and social group pressures involved. As values shift, with age and maturity, acceptable traits shift also. Changes in social attitude and social behavior therefore, usually accompany changes in self-concept.

Method

The information used to test the two hypotheses in this study was gathered by William A. Faunce and Noel S. Moore. Findings from part of the study are reported by Noel S. Moore in his doctoral dissertation[44] entitled "Status Criteria and Status Variables in Adolescent Group." One study group was the entire senior class of a Mid-Michigan high school. It is the only secondary school, in

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[42] Rosenberg, op. cit., p. 250.

[43] Newcomb, Theodore M., Turner, Ralph H., Converse, Philip, Social Psychology, (New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965).

[44] It was submitted to Wayne State University in 1967.

a third class school district.[45] The other study group was the entire senior class of a small parochial school in a Michigan city with a population of 100,000. Over half the students in this school are Negroes; they also have a lower socio-economic status than the students in the first school.

The data were gathered in two steps. The first was a personal interview with each member of the senior class. Each respondent was given a deck of cards, with each card representing a member of the class with his name and an identifying number on it. (The respondent's card was removed from the deck.) The interview was then begun with the interviewer reading the following:

> This study is concerned with the things that affect a person's status in a high school senior class. The word status is sometimes used to mean how a person compares with others on things that a particular group of people regard as important. The words high or low prestige, respect or disrespect, and high or low standing mean about the same thing as high or low status in this sense.
>
> Everybody does not have the same ideas about what gives a person high or low status. For example, a doctor might have low status among other doctors because of the way in which he runs his practice, but might have high status in the community because of his friendliness or because he pays his bills promptly or because he does a lot for the community. A politician may be highly respected by some people because of his honesty and still be looked down on by others if he did not have a college education. A student might have low standing among his fellow students, high prestige in his church group and be regarded as having about average status from the point of view of his teachers.
>
> The people whose ideas about status we are concerned

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[45] Third class school districts represent those where school census of persons aged 5 through 20 is between 2,400 and 3,000.

> [illegible]

After explaining what was on each card, the interviewer asked:

> [illegible]

When the cards were divided into two piles of above and below average, the participant was asked to subdivide the cards into the above and below average for each group. He was then asked to take from the highest status group those with even higher status than the others in the group and then the lowest status group those he thought had even lower status than the others in that group. When arranged, there were six groups ranging from highest through high, above average, below average, low and lowest. Upon completion of the sorting each card was recorded by number and then each interviewee was asked to explain why he thought each pupil was placed in a particular group.

Following the interview, the responses for status placement were analyzed and the main 25 status criteria determined.[46] (The

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[46] See Appendix A for a complete list of the 25 criteria.

criteria determining this analysis were not unique in comparison since most have been noted and discussed in the literature on adolescence.) These criteria were then included as part of a questionnaire which was administered to the entire class at one sitting. In the questionnaire, the students were asked to rate themselves on these 09 status criteria along a six point scale.

1. Among the highest in this class
2. High in this class
3. Slightly above average in this class
4. Slightly below average in this class
5. Low in this class
6. Among the lowest in this class

After rating himself on these status criteria he was asked to indicate how important each criterion was to him. He did this along a four point scale.

1. Very important to me
2. Somewhat important to me
3. Not very important to me
4. Not important to me

The information on self rating and importance of the status criteria plus the answer to the question, "In which of the piles do you think most members of the senior class would put your card?", which was posed during the interview, was the basis for this analysis and the subsequent testing of the two hypotheses.

Findings

The score given by the student in answer to the question

as to where he thinks most members of the senior class would put his card is designated as the perceived status rating score. A mean status rating score was derived by dividing the sum of the status levels assigned to an individual by the number of status raters. (The results were rounded to whole numbers.) These two scores were used to test the first hypothesis: that there is a direct positive relationship between the perceived status rating and the actual (mean) status rating assigned to him by his fellow students. For purposes of analysis on the perceived status rating, high refers to answers "1" and "2"; medium to answers "3" and "4"; and low to answers "5" and "6". On the mean status rating, because there was no one in category "6", high refers to answers "1" and "2"; medium to "3"; and low to answers "4" and "5". The percentage relate to the relationship of the mean status rating to the perceived status rating. The data for both schools were combined and the results were as follows:

Table 1. Relationship between the mean status rating score and the perceived status rating score

Mean Status Rating	Perceived Status Rating: High		Perceived Status Rating: Medium		Perceived Status Rating: Low	
High	18%	(31)*	22%	(2)	0%	(0)
Medium	34%	(58)	42%	(14)	41%	(7)
Low	48%	(82)	36%	(24)	59%	(10)

*Numbers in parenthesis refer to the actual number of cases.

The figures also clearly the positive relationship between the real status rating and the perceived status rating, with the three cells high-high, middle - middle, and low-low having the largest in both absolute number and percentages. The figures indicate that those with a high status have the most accurate perception of their own rating in the eyes of their fellow students. There are undoubtedly many psychological explanations for this but a major one may be that those with middle or low self images are unsure of themselves and thus are also unsure of others.

To study the relationship between the importance of each status criterion and the student's self rating on that criterion (Hypothesis 2), the population was separated for each of the 25 status criteria into those who thought it important and those who thought it less important. As might expect, it was useful to separate their answers into two groups, that all "A" (very important) and "B" (somewhat important) answers would be in one group and all "C" (not very important) and "D" (not important) answers in another. This, however, was not feasible since most of the answers fell into the "A" and "B" categories. (The author notes this as one of the weaknesses of the study and suggests that another means of testing the importance of the status criteria to the individual would be an improvement in the study design.) Therefore, in this analysis, important represents an "A" answer and less important represents all the others.

After separating the students into the two groups of those who thought each criterion was important or less important, each

[illegible] "[illegible]" and "[illegible]" [illegible] high self-esteem and "[illegible]", "[illegible]", "[illegible]", and "[illegible]" [illegible] average or low self-esteem. The information gathered from the [illegible] subjects was analyzed and the number and percentage of those with high self-esteem and those with average or low self-esteem who thought that [illegible] and those who thought it [illegible] were calculated for each attribute. These data are reported in Tables 3 through 22 in Appendix I. A summary, in which all the data for the 25 attributes are combined, is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Relationship of the mean importance of the status attributes to the mean self-esteem on the status attributes

	Important	Less Important
High self-esteem	70.3% (25.88)*	34.3% (18.54)
Average or low self-esteem	29.7% (14.0)	65.7% (25.54)

*The mean number of cases.

Two survey attributes the relationship was in the hypothesized direction; in 20 of the 25 status attributes studied the figures show conclusively that a majority of those who think an item is important have a high self-image on that item; in three cases - health, good manners and sense of humor - the relationship was not so strong. On health (Table 25, Appendix I), those who thought it important were

equally divided on self-rating but of those who thought it less important, 71% had average or low self-rating. On good manners (Table 26, Appendix D) and sense of humor (Table 27, Appendix D), those who thought it important had a high self-rating but, among those who thought it less important the proportion of those with high self-rating was also slightly higher than those with average or low self-rating. A further analysis of the findings relating, for example, what is meant by good manners or how one measures what a sense of humor is, or the value system of the community in regard to wealth, may help to elucidate particular reasons for the relationship of importance and self-rating being less strong on these items.

There was no attempt to use tests of statistical significance because the entire population of both schools was studied. Findings, therefore, apply just to the two schools in question. The data generally support the hypotheses, however, and thus they are considered verified.

In addition to the overall finding of this study that there is a positive relationship between an individual's rating of importance of a status criterion and his self-rating on that criterion; the reader's attention is called to certain specific criteria and their significant position in the value pattern. Some criteria for self-evaluation [illegible] of [illegible] implications, the findings of this research may suggest areas for further probing for possible further study. Some examples are:

[illegible] - Our society places high value on physical appearance and learning to accept one's physical features is part of growing up. The importance of every variation in the appearance [illegible] is emphasized. Dissatisfaction with appearance has been found to be at its height in mid-adolescence (high school age). Every adolescent is aware that physical appearance affects social acceptance, and accordingly the more [illegible] and endows the individual to be accepted, the more [illegible] the psychological effects of his appearance. There was no attempt in this study to differentiate between the sexes, although the literature notes differences between boys and girls on the question of appearance. It would be interesting and perhaps enlightening to analyze the data [illegible] and see if there are any significant differences [illegible] on the relationship between the importance of appearance and the self-image.

[illegible] - This is another area in which there has been shown a difference between the sexes and a further study using sex as a variable might prove helpful. Through use of a sentence completion questionnaire, Gelman[47] found that girls are more concerned about popularity with the opposite sex than boys.

[illegible] - The four-factor criteria on confidently and acceptance takes this status anticipation one of the most complicated of these studies. In explaining this phenomenon

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[47]Gelman, op. cit., p. 109.

Coleman notes:

> The leading crowd of a school, and thus the group which that group sets, is more than usually a reflection of the student body, with extra middle-class students thrown in. The leading crowd tends to accentuate those very background characteristics already dominant, whether they be upper - or lower class. A boy or girl in such a setting, then, finds it governed by an elite whose background and life, in the extreme, those of the dominant population group.[48]

The attributes listed by adolescents as being important for getting into the leading crowd were very similar for both sexes. Both listed personality, good reputation, good grades, good looks, having money, coming from the right neighborhood and good clothes; the boys added being a good athlete and having a car; the girls added, being friendly and being neat and neatly dressed.[49] Coleman also found indications that girls see being in the leading crowd as being most important in achieving popularity. Being accepted by the top crowd then, encompasses a number of the status criteria items studied and how one rates himself on being accepted by the top crowd would necessarily be affected by his self-rating on the other items. Although there was no attempt in this analysis to correlate the appropriate items, if it were done, it would possibly uncover some meaningful relationships.

<u>Being a leader</u> - Closely related to being accepted by the top crowd is seeing oneself as a leader. In analyzing the characteristics of the school leaders, Coleman asked whether parent or peer disapproval would be harder to take and found that the elites of the

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[48] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 109.

[49] <u>Ibid</u>., p. 49.

school, compared to the student body as a whole, are slightly more concerned about their fellow adolescents than their parents. Thus the school leader is oriented toward the adolescent culture. The implications of this are important because "...it means that these students who are highly regarded by others are themselves committed to the adolescent group, thus intensifying whatever inward forces the group already has."[50] The association between leadership and self-esteem is evident. Assertiveness and popularity are important in being chosen a leader and persons with low self-esteem have neither.

Being a good student - The importance of getting good grades and being a good student is much more emphasized than the single satisfaction of doing a job well or a means of getting into college. Coleman and Cole et al.[51] report the paradoxical fact that high status students were often inclined to go to college than the student body as a whole, yet they placed less value on academic achievement than did their lower status peers. The authors explain this by saying that to teen-agers, college means social life, freedom from parents, new friends, etc. but being an outstanding student does not. To teen-agers scholastic achievement is associated with conformity and childhood. Adolescents view college and scholastic achievement

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[50] Ibid., p. 4.

[51] Coleman, Edward J. and Coleman, Jerome, "High School Social Status, College Plans and Interest in Academic Achievement - A Panel Analysis," American Sociological Review, 29, 6 (Dec. 1964), pp. 905-911.

as two distinct things; college program adult status; scholastic [illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] to adults. The fact that athletics is rated more important than getting good grades by adolescents is a reflection of [illegible] culture. Coleman states,

> ...the boy who is seen as the best scholar does not think of himself as a brilliant student nearly as much as the best athlete [illegible] himself [illegible]. The culture has failed to encourage such a self-image [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]. The boy scholar, however, is far more likely to want to be remembered as a scholar than is the girl scholar, who is apparently repelled by the culturally negative imagery.[57]

Once again, further analysis of the data in this study didn't [illegible] between [illegible] light [illegible] enlightening.

Athletics - The importance of athletics in our high schools cannot be denied. It is, therefore, self-evident that seeing oneself as an athlete would influence to a large extent one's self-esteem, one's being chosen by the top crowd, one's being a leader, one's popularity with the opposite sex, etc.

These two examples should illustrate clearly that although it is necessary, for study purposes, to isolate particular status criteria, it must continually be kept in mind that these criteria are very much interrelated.

Summary and Conclusions

By means of a questionnaire and a [illegible], data were collected from a Michigan high school senior class. The data included the respondent's perception of his status in his peer group

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[57] Coleman, op. cit., p. 249.

[illegible]

The study also established 25 statements [illegible] which the student may be [illegible] and then state how important each [illegible] to him. The data gave evidence to a positive [illegible] between [illegible] and [illegible] of the second hypothesis that those with high self-esteem [illegible] consider it important and those with lower self-esteem consider it less important.

APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

QUALITIES THAT ATTRACT STUDENTS

Appearance

Dress

Being a Real Student

Participation in School Activities

School Spirit

Popularity

Maturity (Life Experiences, Acting Your Age)

Ability to Make Friends

Behavior in Class

Being Involved in School Activities (Sports, Clubs, etc.)

Cleanliness and Neatness

Being at Ease with the Opposite Sex

Honesty and Sincerity

Respect for Teachers

Being an Athlete

Being Nice

Moral Standards

Being Willing to Stand by Own Convictions

Being Accepted by All People

School Leadership

Intelligence

Being accepted by society

Health

Good manners

Sense of humor

Table 3. Relationship between the importance of appearance and self rating on appearance

	Important	Less Important
High self rating	[illegible]% (29)*	29% (27)
Average or Low self rating	71% (66)	71% (66)

*The number in parenthesis represents the actual number of cases.

Table 4. Relationship between the importance of dress and self rating on dress

	Important	Less Important
High self rating	55% (32)	29% (14)
Average or Low self rating	45% (26)	71% (34)

Table 5. Relationship between the importance of being a good student and self-rating on being a good student

	Important	Less Important
High Self-rating	[illegible] (90)	[illegible] (97)
Average or Low Self-rating	[illegible] (4)	[illegible] (59)

Table 6. Relationship between the importance of participation in school activities and self-rating on participation in school activities

	Important	Less Important
High Self-rating	[illegible] (88)	[illegible] (79)
Average or Low Self-rating	[illegible] (2)	[illegible] (59)

Table 7. [illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible] (26)	[illegible] (27)
[illegible]	[illegible] (2)	[illegible] (15)

Table 8. [illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible] (26)	[illegible] (27)
Average or Poor [illegible]	[illegible] (16)	[illegible] (15)

Table 9. [illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible] (17)	[illegible] (70)
[illegible]	[illegible] (83)	[illegible] (30)

Table 10. [illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible] (48)	[illegible] (71)
[illegible]	[illegible] (52)	[illegible] (29)

Table 11. Relationship between the importance of behavior in class and self rating on behavior in class

	Important	Less Important
High Self Rating	[illegible]% (28)	[illegible]% (22)
Average or Low Self Rating	[illegible]% (14)	[illegible]% (7)

Table 12. Relationship between the importance of being involved in school activities given to all persons (parents, etc.) and self rating on being involved in school activities given to all persons

	Important	Less Important
High Self Rating	[illegible]% (22)	[illegible]% (21)
Average or Low Self Rating	[illegible]% (1)	[illegible]% (5)

Table 13. Relationship between the importance of cleanliness and neatness and self rating on cleanliness and neatness

	Important	Less Important
High Self Rating	15% (42)	22% (71)
Average or Low Self Rating	35% (96)	41% (137)

Table 14. Relationship between the importance of being at ease with the opposite sex and self rating on being at ease with the opposite sex

	Important	Less Important
High Self Rating	79% (47)	46% (13)
Average or Low Self Rating	20% (20)	54% (21)

Table 15. Relationship between the importance of honesty and sincerity and self rating on honesty and sincerity

	Important	Less Important
High Self Rating	70% (59)	30% (70)
Average or Low Self Rating	30% (40)	70% (87)

Table 16. Relationship between the importance of respect for teachers and self rating on respect for teachers

	Important	Less Important
High Self Rating	85% (95)	40% (88)
Average or Low Self Rating	15% (5)	60% (88)

[illegible] 17. [illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible] (8)	[illegible] (0)
[illegible]	[illegible] (77)	[illegible] (15)

[illegible] 18. [illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible] (55)	[illegible] (0)
[illegible]	[illegible] (35)	[illegible] (10)

[illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

[illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Table [illegible]. [illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Table [illegible]. [illegible]

	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

Table 23. Relationship between the importance of intelligence and self-rating on intelligence.

	Important	Less Important
High self-rating	61% (27)	8% (4)
Average or less self-rating	39% (17)	92% (50)

Table 24. Relationship between the importance of being accepted by the top group and self-rating on being accepted by the top group.

	Important	Less Important
High self-rating	56 2/3% (25)	8% (4)
Average or less self-rating	43 1/3% (19)	92% (50)

Table 25. Relationship between the importance of wealth and self rating on wealth

	Important	Less Important
High Self Rating	58% (7)	23% (22)
Average or Low Self Rating	50% (6)	77% (72)

Table 26. Relationship between the importance of good manners and self rating on good manners

	Important	Less Important
High Self Rating	73% (43)	53% (25)
Average or Low Self Rating	27% (16)	47% (22)

Table 27. Relationship between the importance of sense of humor and self-ranking on sense of humor

	Important	Less Important
High self-ranking	[illegible] (40)	59% (27)
Average or low self-ranking	[illegible] (9)	[illegible] (22)

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