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Self concept was studied in three groups of adolescents--desegregated Negroes, segregated Negroes, and whites. A proportional sample consisted of ninth grade students in a rural county in Delaware which by 1965 was desegregated through the eighth grade. A composite score was used of the eight Self-Social Symbol Tasks: esteem, dependency, individuation, centrality, complexity, grouping, identification, and power. Identification appears to be the factor yielding the most significant differences among the three groups. Segregated Negroes tend to identify most with significant others, whereas whites identify least. In general, this pattern was also revealed in the analysis of variance of the mother, father, teacher, and friend items of the identification tasks. It is speculated that the segregated Negroes' identification with significant others reflects a need for social approval. Statistical data are presented in three tables. (NH)

SELF-OTHER RELATIONSHIPS OF SEGREGATED AND DESEGREGATED NINTH GRADERS

(Paper presented for Symposium: Self-Other Orientations of Negro and White Students, Annual Meeting, American Educational Research Association, Conrad Hilton Hotel, Chicago, Illinois, February 8, 1968)

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The Negro student in the past decade has endured a great deal. Not only has he had to face such blatant threats and physical force as pocket-book swinging mothers in Louisiana and jeering toughs throughout the rest of the country, he has had to put up with a much more sophisticated and subtle protagonist, the social scientist who has probed, poked, dissected, analyzed, and labelled him. His plight brings to mind the character in the now-famous Jules Feiffer cartoon who laments,

> I used to think I was poor. Then they told me I wasn't poor, I was needy. Then they told me it was self defeating to think of myself as needy, I was deprived. Then they told me deprived was a bad image, I was underprivileged. Then they told me underprivileged was overused, I was disadvantaged. I still don't have a dime. But I have a great vocabulary.

This paper is presented, therefore, with considerable ambivalence, since it did necessitate some discomfort for a number of Negro ninth graders, as well as several hundred white students, without any payoff for these subjects. But, nonetheless, the paper will be presented for, as Bernard Shaw noted, "it is difficult if not impossible for most people to think otherwise than in the fashion of their own period."

The focus of this paper concerns the self-social constructs of three groups of adolescents -- desegregated Negroes, segregated Negroes, and whites. It would have been more elegant, of course, if we could have labelled the white students as we did the Negroes, but we were unable to do so. The best we could come up with was segregated-desegregated whites, and that only confused everyone. Before looking at any findings, a brief look at the concepts of segregation and self-concept in general and the unique background of our problem in particular might provide a sharper focus.

The interaction between self concept and school functioning has generally been recognized. In Coleman's (1966) words,

> If a child's self-concept is low, if he feels he cannot succeed, then this will affect the effort he puts into the task and thus, his chance of success. It is true, of course, that his self-concept is affected by his success in school and it is thus hard to discover the effect of self-concept upon achievement. But as a factor in its own right, it is an important outcome of education (p. 281).

On the basis of responses to three verbal questionnaire items, Coleman concluded that there were no differences in self-concept between Negroes and whites, but there were differences between these two groups and other minority groups. He also found that, of all the variables measured in his survey, attitudinal variables which, of course, include self-concept showed the "strongest relation to achievement."

Irwin Katz (1964) in his discussion of the effects of desegregation did not deal with self-concept directly, but much of the cited evidence and his theoretical formulations have implications of considerable import for the student of self-concept. Katz develops the potent argument that the effects of desegregation on the performance of Negroes involves the interaction of a number of complex variables that need to be better understood. Nancy Hoyt St. John (1966) has summarized the complexity dilemma neatly. In her words,

> . . . both racial balance and "racial atmosphere" have important effects on school children. Without racial balance, a favorable racial atmosphere may be impossible: but once racial balance is attained, two forces may work at cross-purposes for the Negro child. . . On the one hand a more favorable social milieu may tend to raise the aspirations and achievement of Negro children. But on the other hand, they may be placed in an unfavorable competitive position that more than offsets such advantage. If so, only under school conditions that minimize interracial competition will racial balance benefit pupils (p. 294).

One prerequisite for the investigation of complex phenomena such as self-concept and segregation is the necessity for instruments

more sophisticated than the blunt tools that have been used heretofore. The importance of better instrumentation has very recently been underscored in a study by Greenwald and Oppenheim (1968). These investigators found that previous evidence that showed a greater number of misidentifications by Negro children, who had to choose between black and white dolls, does not replicate when an "in-between (mulatto) doll" is added. In other words, the apparent racial differences between Negro and white children in this instance appear to be an artifact of the measures or designs employed to elicit racial misidentification.

One of the common limitations of many studies of the self-concept has been the use of global or verbal measures. The analytical nonverbal approach to the self-concept of the Self-Social Symbols Tasks has much to recommend it for the identification of important differences between segregated and desegregated students. The use of these tasks, thus, is one of the ways the present study diverges from former ones. Another way can be found in the nature of the groups compared. A brief description of Kent County, Delaware and its history of segregation-desegregation is appropriate at this juncture.

Kent County, located in the geographical center of Delaware, is a predominantly rural county with corn, truck crops, soy beans, and potatoes being major agricultural activities. Canning and other food processing industries are also strong. According to the latest federal census, the population of Kent County contained 55,647 white and 10,004 non-whites, 9570 of whom were Negroes. The social and cultural barriers between Negroes and whites in the county are similar to those which exist in other rural and small-city areas of border states.

The immediate consequence of the 1954 Supreme Court decision on school segregation in Kent County was the unfortunate Milford incident (United States Commission on Civil Rights, 1961). The result was that the desegregation came slowly. After 1959 and prior to 1965, school desegregation in Kent County followed the "freedom of choice" principle. In other words, Negro children in the county were "free" to attend their local white school or a segregated Negro school. In 1965 schools in the county were completely desegregated through eighth grade, and plans were made to phase out the county's comprehensive Negro high school by June, 1966. It was in conjunction with the phasing out of this high school that we collected various data, some of which form the basis of this paper.

We concentrated on the ninth graders as our target populations since most of these students could be followed in school for three more years if it became desireable to do so. We were particularly curious to study the Negro students who were attending their local high school (four high schools in four different communities). We wanted to compare these students with their white school peers and their Negro peers in the segregated school. It should be noted here that it was much more difficult in terms of time and distance for the Negro students to attend the Negro high school.

In late May and early June, 1966, we began hurriedly to collect data. The time of the year was not the most ideal as far as the schools were concerned, but we managed to gather most of what we sought. All told, we tested about 625 whites, 200 segregated Negroes, and 65 desegregated Negroes. The number of boys and girls within each group was about the same. The mean chronological age of all students was about 15.6 years with a standard deviation of .8. There were no

significant differences among the three groups with respect to these statistics.

For the analysis reported in this paper, we did not use the data for several of the white and segregated Negro students. Random samples of these two groups were selected from these two groups so that there would be proportionality among the three samples (Cooley and Lohnes, 1962). The proportions are 9:3:1 for the respective numbers of white, segregated Negro, and desegregated Negro samples. Also within each sample, there is an equal number of boys and girls.

At this point it is necessary to underscore the lack of controls for a number of variables which are confounded in the data. A quick preliminary analysis revealed social class differences among the samples that may be relevant. The segregated Negro sample indicated that their parents have occupations of lower status and less education than the desegregated Negroes and whites. There are also differences in various cognitive abilities. We did not use standard intelligence tests, but instead administered a number of instruments derived from Guilford's model of intellect. With one exception (word fluency) the segregated Negro sample showed the lowest performance on these tests. Another possible factor influencing test data is the fact that the white and segregated Negro samples were tested by an examiner of their own race, while the desegregated Negroes were not. Hence, we must caution against overinterpretation of the findings of this study.

Since the Self-Social Symbols Tasks have been previously described in detail, it is only necessary here to point out that we diverged somewhat in scoring the power and the identification tasks. Instead of treating the items separately, as is the usual practice, we used

the total score for each set of tasks. We did look at the separate items as well, but the data reported in the tables reflect power and identification with respect to significant others rather than a significant other.

In Table I the reliability coefficients are presented for the eight tasks. These coefficients indicate adequate reliability for the types of group comparisons we made. Interestingly enough, the tasks seem to be most reliable with the segregated Negro sample; the median coefficient is about .94. The median coefficients for the desegregated Negroes and whites are about the same; the respective medians are .90 and .89. The median coefficients for boys and girls are the same, .90. Also while there are slight variations, the tasks tend to show the same degree of reliability across student type and sex. In other words, centrality is the least reliable of the tasks for all groups; power is next in unreliability, etc. Whatever it is that the tasks are eliciting, they are doing so to about the same degree of consistency for all groups--not an unimportant quality in studies like the present one.

A 3 x 2 (student type by sex) analysis of variance was carried out for each of the tasks. In Table II are the various cell means, and in Table III are the F ratios and other relevant data of the statistical analysis. Several observations are immediately obvious. There are no significant sex or interaction effects. Also there are no significant differences among student types for three of the variables: individuation, complexity, and grouping.

Of the remaining five tasks, centrality and dependency reveal differences which are of borderline significance and suggest the need for further investigation. It is important to bear in mind the low reliability of centrality. At any rate, the data suggest that

desegregated Negroes might see themselves as more central figures. They tend to perceive themselves as a more stable point of reference in comparison with others as a point of reference.

The differences in dependency at first glance suggest that desegregated Negroes and whites are more dependent than segregated Negroes, and they may well be. Henderson (1967), however, has pointed out that there is considerable evidence that the dependency measure reflects socialization (versus isolation). Such an interpretation in the present example would be consistent with the data cited by Henderson.

Tables II and III also reveal that the students who perceive themselves as most powerful in relation to others are the desegregated Negroes. The F ratio for power is significant at the 2 per cent level, and there are virtually no differences between the segregated Negroes and whites. It is entirely reasonable that Negroes who see themselves as powerful are the ones who choose to attend school where they are in the minority. The item analysis for power revealed that the desegregated Negro students had the greatest power orientation toward father, teacher, and friend. The differences on one of the two items in each instance were significant.

The data for esteem appear to be paradoxical. Why do desegregated Negroes, especially the boys, show the lowest self-esteem, while the segregated Negroes show the highest? The studies of Katz (1964) and St. John (1966) are particularly relevant in this instance. Katz stresses the point that desegregated Negro students "have feelings of intellectual inferiority which arise from an awareness of actual differences in racial achievement, or from irrational acceptance of the white groups' stereotype of Negroes." The implication of the data

for esteem is that, unless provision is made in a school's policy to encourage Negro students, the self-esteem of these students will be threatened more by a desegregated than a segregated school.

Identification is the self-social construct that yielded the most significant differences. The data of our study show that segregated Negroes tend to identify most (lower scores mean closer identification) with significant others. The white students identified least. The analysis of variance for each of the eight items (two each for mother, father, teacher and friend) generally followed the total score, but also revealed some exceptions that are worthy of discussion. While both mother items yielded mean scores congruent with the total scores, only one was significant ($p < .01$). On neither of the father items was there a significant difference by student type, but there were significant sex difference on both items ($p < .01$, $p = .05$), with boys showing closer identification with father.

On the two items for identification with teacher, each had highly significant differences by student type ($p < .001$, $p < .001$) consistent with the total score, but these items also revealed significant sex differences ($p < .05$, $p < .01$). In each instance, girls placed themselves closer to the teacher. Apparently, boys will be boys in school regardless of whatever else they are.

The two items for identification with friend presented the most confusing picture of all. There were significant differences by student type, but thereafter the picture is not at all clear. There is a strong suggestion of interaction effects ($p = .02$, $p = .10$); white girls identified most with friends, and segregated Negro girls, least. At this point, it is appropriate to stress the danger of trying to make too much out of data based on single test items which are notorius

for their unreliability.

When the data for the identification tasks are taken in toto, one possible explanation as to why segregated Negroes tend to place themselves closest to significant other individuals, might be made in terms of Atkinson's (1966) concept of need affiliation. The identification tasks may reflect need for social approval. The fact that the segregated Negro students tended to show the least socialization (versus isolation), as measured by the dependency tasks, is consistent with this explanation. But all this is sheer speculation.

One final note--taken in their entirety, the results of this study have important implications for many areas of the United States which are currently "solving" the problem of de facto segregation by "open enrollment" or "freedom of choice" plans. In other words, plans by which Negro students in ghetto areas may transfer to schools where the racial imbalance is less extreme. One consequence of such plans might be those students with the most positive self-concepts will leave the ghetto school and those with negative self-concepts will remain. The result indeed would be another example of the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer.

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TABLE I

Split-half Reliability Coefficients* of Self-Social Symbol Tasks for Students Identified as Desegregated Negroes, Segregated Negroes, and Whites.

[illegible]	Desegregated Negroes		Segregated Negroes		Whites	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Esteem	.81	.88	.97	.95	.90	.89
Dependency	.94	.89	.93	.93	.89	.90
Individuation	.90	.95	.96	.94	.89	.90
Centrality	.44	.60	.75	.72	.65	.66
Complexity	.91	.90	.97	.95	.92	.84
Grouping	.88	.93	.94	.95	.87	.89
Identification	.91	.94	.95	.90	.90	.91
Power	.56	.68	.87	.80	.61	.77

* All coefficients have been stepped up by the Spearman-Brown formula.

TABLE II

Mean Scores by Sex on the Self-Social Symbols Tasks for Students Identified as Desegregated Negroes, Segregated Negroes, and Whites.

Task	Desegregated Negroes		Segregated Negroes		Whites	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
N =	23	23	69	69	207	207
Esteem	19.9	24.0	23.8	25.3	22.3	22.6
Dependency	3.8	4.0	3.7	3.4	4.0	4.1
Individuation	6.7	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.3	7.4
Centrality	3.0	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.8	2.8
Complexity	22.7	22.9	22.7	21.4	22.6	22.8
Grouping	15.6	16.3	16.8	15.9	15.5	15.5
Identification	22.5	20.7	17.3	19.8	23.8	23.2
Power	17.9	17.9	16.4	16.2	16.2	16.3

TABLE III

Tests of Significance for Data in Table II.

Esteem	Student type:	F = 4.24	df = 2/592	p = .015
Dependency	Student type:	F = 2.33	df = 2/592	p = .10
Individuation	No significant differences			
Centrality	Student type:	F = 2.12	df = 2/592	p = .12
Complexity	No significant differences			
Grouping	No significant differences			
Identification	Student type:	F = 8.61	df = 2/592	p = .001
Power	Student type:	F = 4.11	df = 2/592	p = .02