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A Study Relating Erikson's Concept
of Identity Confusion to Effectiveness
of Psychosocial Functioning

by

Daniel F. Pare
B.A., University of Ottawa, 1969

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the
Department of Psychology in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts at the University
of Windsor

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present investigation was to study the relationship of Erikson's concept of identity confusion to psychosocial adjustment in late adolescence.

Two groups of 10 subjects were selected to represent different points on a continuum of psychosocial adaptation. Qualitative data was secured by means of a recorded semi-structured interview and rated on the basis of four rating categories developed by the researcher as derivatives of the four features of identity confusion as described by Erikson.

Results supported the hypothesis for one of the four dimensions investigated; Choice of Negative Identity. Suggestions for procedural improvements in future research were presented.

PREFACE

This study originated as a result of numerous discussions between my supervisor and myself in the area of identity confusion. It is from this inspiration and the pursuance of these discussions that this study results.

There are many who deserve gratitude for their contributions to this paper. I wish to express my particular indebtedness to the members of my Committee, Dr. C. Holland and Dr. H. D. Woodyard, to the Director of Crossroads Center, Mr. G. Bullied and to the principal of Centennial High School, Mr. B. Brown.

My sincerest thanks to my Director, Dr. M. Kaplan, through whose guidance and patient encouragement this study was realized.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Within recent years, increasing attention has been given to the theoretical formulation of "healthy" personality development. The concept of ego identity which has been evolved by E. H. Erikson has been directly involved in such concern. The description of his theory may be found in several writings (Erikson, 1946, 1950a, 1950b, 1956); the most recent comprehensive presentation appears in a monograph entitled, *Identity and the Life Cycle* (Erikson, 1959). In essence, Erikson has extended classic psychoanalytic theory systematically to include, sociological and cultural factors in the development of personality.

For Erikson, personality development occurs in eight successive stages which are the product of physiological growth, more highly differentiated individual capacities, and an expanding interpersonal or social radius. Each step in the expansion of the social radius makes increasing demands upon the individual and should contribute to his subsequent psychosocial effectiveness. Yet because of the inability to cope adequately with earlier stages, as he enters successive stages his ego may become more vulnerable. The radical changes in perspective necessary for coping with each successive step, coupled with the new challenges and conflicts of the period, represent a psychosocial crisis. The healthy adult personality is predicated upon the successful resolution of eight specific crises which are labelled as follows:

1. Infancy, 2. Early Childhood, 3. Play Age, 4. School Age, 5. Adolescence, 6. Early Adult, 7. Adulthood, 8. Mature Age.

Erikson relates the psychosocial crises and resolutions of earlier life to subsequent personality development and function by postulating specific derivatives which are deduced from the criteria of relative health or ill-health for each of the periods. These derivatives, in the form of attitudes or behavior patterns of the individual, become integrated to make up the adult personality. Adolescence, which is the focus of the fifth crisis, is seen as a highly crucial period in psychosocial development. The manifestation of psychosocial health which accompanies satisfactory solution of the adolescent crisis is the development of a sound ego identity; the manifestation of ill-health for this period is ego confusion. Positive resolution of the ego identity crisis is considered necessary for the individual to make a satisfactory adjustment as an adult in his society.

Erikson (1950) defines ego identity as follows:

"the growing and developing youths, faced with the physiological revolution within them, are now primarily concerned with attempts at consolidating their social roles. They are sometimes markedly often curiously, preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared to what they feel they are and with the question of how to connect the earlier cultivated roles and skills with the ideal prototypes of the day . . . The integration now taking place in the form of ego identity is more than the sum of the childhood identifications. It is the inner capital

accrued from all those experiences of each successive stage when successful identifications led to a successful alignment of the individual's basic drives with his endowment and his opportunities . . . The sense of ego identity is the accrued confidence that one's ability to maintain inner sameness and contiguity (one's ego in the psychological sense) is matched by the sameness and continuity of one's meaning to others".

Erikson described the problem of ego identity, with specific emphasis on the acute identity confusion of late adolescence. The main features of this confusion as defined by Erikson are: (a) the problem of intimacy, which is a fear that tentative engagements might turn into interpersonal fusions amounting to a loss of identity, with a loss of all capacity for mutuality; (b) the diffusion of time perspective, which means that the young person may feel simultaneously very young, baby like, yet very old, along with a mild depression, a kind of despair, a wish of the ego to let itself die; (c) the diffusion in industry, which refers to a sense of inability to concentrate, or a self destructive preoccupation with some one-sided activity, often accompanied by an excessive awareness, as well as an abhorrence of rivalry or competitiveness; (d) the choice of negative identity, which points to all those identifications and roles which at critical stages of development had been presented by the parents as most undesirable, dangerous, and yet most real.

The adolescent may resolve this crisis either by achievement of ego identity, based on a sense of personal continuity with the past and

future, or by continuity in an identity confused state, in which commitments to both past and future are vague or nonexistent. The achievement of ego identity requires the individual to relinquish his claims to infantile sources of gratification and to renounce lingering infantile fantasies of omnipotence. In short, he must choose among alternatives and make a subsequent commitment to the alternative chosen.

Research Background

In spite of the increasing frequency with which Erikson's work is mentioned in the literature, little systematic research on his theoretical formulations has been published. Bronson (1959), isolated four characteristics from Erikson's clinical descriptions for measurement. These characteristics were: (1) sense of continuity with past; (2) degree of internal tension or anxiety; (3) certainty of self conceptions; and, (4) temporal stability of self concept. Measurement of the first two qualities selected for study were based on interview material and rated by experts. An adaptation of the semantic differential technique was used to measure the other two qualities characteristic of identity confusion. The measure of constancy over time was determined by the difference between two "characteristic self" ratings spaced by a four week interval. The data supported the general hypothesis; S's low on identity confusion, as indicated by scores on all four measures, impressed interview raters as having a stable sense of self rooted in previous history, and as being relatively free from anxiety. On semantic differential measures they were relatively certain about dominant personal characteristics, and showed temporal stability in their

feelings about self. The opposite characteristics would describe Ss high on identity diffusion.

Gruen (1960), hypothesized that a person with strong ego identity will show this accrued stability of an integrated role pattern by rejecting evaluations of himself by others, if these evaluations do not coincide with his own crystallized notions about himself. Similarly, a person still casting about for his various identities and roles and values, who show signs of ego diffusion will be more prone to accept other's evaluation of himself, even if they may have no demonstrated relationships with any of this fleeting self-images.

Employing a real-ideal Q-sort discrepancy score as an indication of ego identity status, Gruen demonstrated that low ego identity was indeed related to uncritical acceptance of a fake personality sketch presented to Ss as a realistic appraisal. The author suggests that the results also have implications for a better understanding of the uncertainty behavior of adolescents and young adults.

A study that systematically studied the relationship of Erikson's concept of ego identity to psychosocial effectiveness as actually demonstrated in daily living was carried out by Rasmussen (1964). He compared two groups of navy recruits, one composed of individuals making a highly adequate psychosocial adjustment and the second containing persons demonstrating minimally adequate adjustment. Highly significant differences were obtained on an ego identity scale. This scale consisted of 72 statements or items reflecting each of the first six psychosocial crisis stages as set forth by Erikson. These results lend support both to the value of Erikson's theory of personality and his

position that an adequate ego identity is necessary for a person to cope effectively with his social and cultural environment.

While the above studies have investigated self-ratings on characteristics that should follow if ego identity has been achieved, they have not dealt explicitly with the psychosocial criteria for determining degree of ego identity, nor with direct behavioral consequences of ego identity. Marcia (1966) attempted to assess ego identity by using measures and criteria congruent with Erikson's formulation of the identity crisis as a psychosocial task. Marcia used an interview to determine an individual's specific identity status. An incomplete-sentences blank served as a measure of identity achievement. Criteria for inclusion in one of four identity statuses were evidence of "crisis" and "commitment" in the areas of occupation and ideology. Performance on a stressful concept-attainment task, patterns of goal setting, authoritarianism and vulnerability to self-esteem change were dependent variables. Ss higher on ego identity scores performed best on the concept-attainment task; those in the status characterized by adherence to parental wishes set goals unrealistically high and subscribed significantly more to authoritarian values. Failure of the self-esteem condition to discriminate among the statuses was attributed to unreliability in self-esteem measurement.

Marcia (1937), was able to establish additional validation evidence for the four ego identity statuses. To determine identity statuses, Ss were exposed to a self-esteem manipulation condition and administered both the Welsh Anxiety Scale and an authoritarianism measure. Ss low in ego identity changed more in self-esteem and more

in a direction consistent with manipulated information than Ss high in ego identity. There was also some evidence for differential change between the two low ego identity statuses on obvious vs. disguised measures of self-esteem. Welsh Anxiety Scale scores did not indicate a continuum of general maladjustment for the statuses.

Purpose of Present Research

Previous research efforts have shown some general support for Erikson's theory. However, these studies have been limited to a global view of this theory and have not made an effort to delineate the theory into its specific behavioral dimensions. Similarly, the operational measures of identity diffusion which have been employed, such as the self-rating devices and real-ideal Q-sorts, have been relatively weak. It appears that a more meaningful study would attempt to examine the different dimensions of integration by employing a more consistent behavioral measure. This researcher therefore proposes to develop a multi-dimensional system of measuring identity diffusion and to extend the criteria of adjustment to include behavioral consequences of assumed psycho-social adaptation.

Though previous studies have attempted to determine the degree of ego identity achievement and direct behavioral consequences, there has been no report to this writer's knowledge, testing the relationship of identity confusion to actual psychosocial adjustment in late adolescence. This study will attempt to demonstrate such a relationship.

This study will also endeavor to show the possibility of generating specific operational derivatives from Erikson's clinical writings. Beginning with the author's theoretical formulations of the concept of

identity confusion this investigator will attempt to derive operational terms which can be employed descriptively in the analysis of the adolescent crisis period.

The present investigation is based upon Erikson's proposal that a successfully developed ego identity is necessary for a person to cope effectively with his social environment; ego confusion predisposes failure in psychosocial adjustment. In view of this statement it is hypothesized that; individuals who demonstrate differences in their ability to effect an adequate psychosocial adjustment will also show differences in ego identity. Individuals manifesting minimally adequate psychosocial adjustment should reflect low ego identity (identity confusion), on a measure of ego identity, while individuals manifesting adequate psychosocial adjustment should reflect high ego identity (identity achievement). This study then, will attempt to examine the relationship of Erikson's concept of identity confusion to psychosocial effectiveness as actually demonstrated in daily living.

CHAPTER II

METHOD

The present study purports to investigate the relationship of Erikson's concept of identity confusion to effectiveness of psychosocial functioning by examining measures of ego integration obtained from two groups of adolescents who are clustered at different points along a continuum of psychosocial adjustment. A sample of unselected high school students will constitute the more psychosocially adjusted group with applicants to a residential drug treatment center representing the more psychosocially maladjusted population. Measures of ego integration will be elicited by means of a semi-structured, open-ended, recorded interview and systematically quantified by means of a rating technique developed by this investigator.

Development of Instrument

The development of the measurement instrument employed in this study was based on behavioral dimensions derived from Erikson's theory. This author postulated four traits of identity confusion: Intimacy, Industry, Time and Negative Identity. Beginning with this basic formulation, further behavioral concomitants were derived as shown in Table 1. This Table illustrates the progressive development from Erikson's basic theoretical formulations, through derived traits and behavioral terms, to final extrapolations to interview material.

The questions employed to elicit data in the open-ended interview

Table 1
Derivation of Dimensions of Erikson's
Theory of Ego Integration and
Extrapolation to Interview Behavior

A - The Problem of Intimacy			
Theory	Derived Traits	Behavioral Terms	Extrapolation to Interview Material
Fear that tentative engagements might turn into interpersonal fusions amounting to a loss of identity	Fusion with another becomes identity loss	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - caution in commitment - stereotyped and formalized interpersonal relations - seek intimacy with most improbable partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at a loss in explaining or rationality in choice of acquaintances - or his reasons for ending relationships - evidence of "loner" attitude
Intimacy with one set of people or ideas would not be really intimate without an efficient repudiation of another set	Weakness or excess in repudiation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - fluctuate easily in their choice of ideologies and reference groups - uncertain about their own "point of view" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - polarized classifications - evidence of consistency of stated values - evidence of short range, shifting relationships - lack of clarity about descriptions of others

Feeling that only
by merging with a
"leader" can they be
saved, the leader being
an adult who is able
to offer himself
as an object for
experimental surrender

Merging with a
leader

- seek out leader or
guide who they can
trust
- need to be dominated
or at least directed
by him
- want to be follower
rather than leader,
disciple rather than
guide

- "halo" description
of people in
leader roles
- self description
of being a
follower
- self description
of having a role in
a "guru's cortege"

B - Diffusion in Time Perspective

Theory	Derived Traits	Behavioral Terms	Extrapolation to Interview Material
A sense of great urgency and yet also a loss of consideration for time as a dimension of living	The young person may feel simultaneously very young, baby like, yet very old	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - protests of missed greatness - protests of a premature and fatal loss of useful potentials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of connection between goal and means of accomplishing it - evidence of external forces or fate controlling
A decided disbelief in the possibility that time may bring change, and yet also a violent fear that it might	A mild depression, a kind of despair, a wish of the ego to let itself die	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - general slowing up - hard for him to get to bed and hard to get up - complaints, such as "I don't know", "I give up" and "I quit" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - refers mostly to here and now - despair, giving up - lack of orientation to fixed goal in a time perspective

C - Diffusion in Industry

Theory	Derived Traits	Behavioral Terms	Extrapolation to Interview Material
Upset in sense of workmanship	Inability to Concentrate on required or suggested tasks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - disbelief in their own ability to develop new motives for change - disbelief in ability to conceptualize motive as improvements in self-image 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of selective choice of specific goals - relute possibility of planning anti-learning
Upset in sense of workmanship	Preoccupation with some one sided activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - behavior manifestation of this "choice" activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - discrepancy between current activity and aspirations - lack of concern with how to get this unrealistic goal

<p>The attitude toward work in these individuals reverses gears toward Oedipal competitiveness and sibling rivalry</p>	<p>Excessive awareness of as well as an abhorrence of competitiveness</p>	<p>- should be manifest in choice of habitual adaptation</p>	<p>- abhorrence of competition</p>
<p>Regression, an attempt to resolve a diffusion of early introjects and to rebuild shaky childhood identifications</p>	<p>Loss of capacity for work, exercise and sociability</p>	<p>- should be manifest in choice of habitual adaptation</p>	<p>- poor working habits history</p>

D - Choice of Negative Identity

Extrapolation to
Interview Material

Behavioral Terms

Derived Traits

Theory

A scornful and
snobish hostility
toward roles
offered as proper and
desirable in one's
family or immediate
community

Choice of an identity
based on all those
identifications and
roles, which at
critical stages of
development, had been
presented as most un-
desirable, or dangerous
and yet also most real

- manifest in actual
choice of roles
- manifest in
hypothesized choice
of most desirable
role

- self-description
in culturally
deviant terms
- choice of heroes
who are culturally
deviant
- desired goal roles
are culturally
deviant

A desperate attempt
at regaining some
mastery in a
situation in which
the available positive
identity elements
cancel each other
out

Rather be no body or
somebody totally bad,
than be not-quite some-
body

- desired self-
description in
polar terms (Less
likely to be
"just plain Joe")

were developed by this researcher in view of evoking qualitative material relevant to Erikson's formulations of the adolescent crisis period. A fundamental pool of questions concerning self-perception, interpersonal relations and occupational interests was first prepared. Table 1 shows the evolutionary process through which these questions were derived. Pilot interviews were then conducted, where prospective questions were employed. Those questions which did not elicit treatable data, as determined through ratings by this researcher, were eliminated. Others were revised and finally selected for each rating category. The final 12 questions selected, and the category of identity confusion for which they were chosen, are shown in Appendix B. The system of rating categories was devised by this researcher to represent Erikson's formulations of the clinical picture of identity confusion. Table 1 shows the systematic process employed in arriving at these categories. In developing the rating categories an effort was made to insure that each reflected Erikson's derivatives in a concrete or literal manner. In this way it was hoped to base the rating categories as close as possible on Erikson's theoretical formulations rather than on the investigator's ideosyncratic interpretations of his writings. As such, the four rating categories employed in this study are based on Erikson's four main features of identity confusion: the problem of intimacy, the diffusion of time perspective, the diffusion of industry, and the choice of negative identity. Beginning with this sketch of the syndrome of disturbance in late adolescents, derived traits were abstracted from Erikson's theoretical formulations and operational statements developed, consisting mostly of derivatives of

Erikson's own postulations and partly of this researcher's reformulations of Erikson's statements. The four rating categories employed in this study are shown in Appendix D.

Subjects

Ss were 20 single, male adolescents in the 17 to 20 age group. Since this age group represents the end of the adolescent period it can be expected to reflect appreciable variation in the degree of identity confusion. This total population consisted of two groups of 10 Ss each, representing diverse clusters on the continuum of psychosocial adjustment. High school Ss were selected as representative of psychosocially more adjusted individuals. The more psychosocially maladjusted Ss were selected through Crossroads Farm, a residential treatment facility for drug addicted youths in Windsor, Ontario area. This latter group consisted of young individuals who have not developed adaptive skills that would enable them to form a working adjustment in society. The Ss were selected from a waiting list of individuals who attend the Crossroads Drop-in-Center while awaiting acceptance into the Crossroads Farm project. Selection was on the basis of availability of the Ss to participate in the study. Only male Ss were used in each group, in order to facilitate group comparisons.

Procedure

Qualitative data was secured by means of a tape-recorded, semi-structured, open-ended interview. This interview consisted of the 12 questions, listed in Appendix B, to which the respondent was encouraged to reply at some length. Instructions given to Ss during interviews

are shown in Appendix A.

The recorded interview data was transposed in transcript form before analysis and prepared for rating in the following manner. Each response was prefaced by the original interview question and limited in length to one typed page. Any identifying data was omitted on these pages. Response length was equated between groups for each question by limiting the length of the final interviews of the high school group during transposition from tape recording to transcript form. A table indicating mean response length for each question, in typescript form, for both groups is shown in Appendix H.

Two raters were trained to rate interview data in each category. Each pair of raters independently analyzed the responses of both groups of Ss to three questions. Ratings were carried out one question at a time, with the 20 responses (10 per group) randomly arranged.

Raters trained to Category A rated responses to questions 1, 2, and 3. Raters trained to Category B rated responses to questions 4, 5, and 6. Raters trained to Category C rated responses to questions 7, 8, and 9. Raters trained to Category D rated responses to questions 10, 11, and 12.

Rater training procedure consisted of having both raters rate a series of examples constructed by this researcher to be representative of the data to be analyzed. Raters were asked to compare sample ratings and discuss discrepant results. They were then trained to the criterion of perfect agreement on sample ratings. Raters were instructed to score each segment as to whether they considered it to reflect or illustrate an instance of the rating criteria. A "segment" was defined as an

"independent thought", a "detached statement"; "any word or group of words which has an independent meaning". Instructions given to raters are shown in Appendix C .

CHAPTER III

RESULTS

A prior requirement of the statistical testing of the stated hypothesis in this study is the establishment of the reliability of the rating technique employed. Adequate inter-rater reliability would establish the rating procedure employed as producing results that could be used as tests of the hypothesis. Inter-rater correlations were calculated for each pair of raters. These correlations are presented in Table 2. Adequate levels of reliability are ascertained for pairs who rated Category B (Diffusion of Time Perspective); Category C (Diffusion in Industry); and Category D (Choice of Negative Identity), ($r = .94, .88, \text{ and } .87$ respectively). Ratings of Category A (The Problem of Intimacy) did not achieve an acceptable level of reliability ($r = .54$).

On the basis of these findings we can now proceed with an analysis of the dimensions for which adequate rater reliability has been established. Differences between groups, for the dimensions studies, were investigated by means of individual t tests. These results are reported in Table 3. The test for Category A is reported although this is to be disregarded since reliability was not adequate. As shown in Table 3, the groups are not significantly differentiated except in Category D.

Since the hypothesis was confirmed in only one of the three dimensions tested for significant group differences, and these results are

Table 2

Inter-rater Reliability by Dimensions of Ego Integration

Dimensions	r
A - Intimacy	.54
B - Diffusion in Time Perspective	.94
C - Diffusion in Industry	.88
D - Choice of Negative Identity	.87

Table 3
Individual \underline{t} Tests¹ Between Groups
for Each Rating Category

Category	t
A - The Problem of Intimacy	-1.28
B - Diffusion in Time Perspective	.429
C - Diffusion in Industry	.166
D - Choice of Negative Identity	2.37*

*p .025

¹ All significant levels for \underline{t} tests are based on one-tailed tests

challenging to the theoretical framework under investigation, additional measures were undertaken to yield data that might elaborate on the adequacy of the interview procedure and rating methods as employed. First, in order to examine our method of eliciting data more closely, reliability scores were established for each of the interview questions used. Table 4 shows the reliability levels thus obtained. Of the 12 questions investigated, questions 1, 2, 3, 7, and 12 failed to achieve an acceptable level of reliability ($r = .73, .45, .42, .59$ and $.79$ respectively). In addition, the discriminatory power of each question was investigated by means of individual t tests in order to gain some qualitative perspective on how the questions served to elicit data. Differences between groups for each question are reported in Table 5. Only question number 7 of Category C (Diffusion in Industry) significantly discriminated between groups ($p .025$). It should be noted that this question is significant in a direction opposite to the stated hypothesis. As will be noted below, the questions have been placed in rank order in terms of reliability scores (Appendix E), and in terms of absolute value of t scores (Appendix F) to examine more closely the issues of how the interview may have served to elicit data testing the hypothesis. This data will be discussed in the next section in order to place our results in a proper context for interpretation.

Table 4
Inter-Rater Reliability for
Questions Used in Interview

Category		Question		
A - The Problem of Intimacy	#1	#2	#3	
	.73	.45	.42	
B - Diffusion in Time Perspective	#4	#5	#6	
	.84	.91	.96	
C - Diffusion in Industry	#7	#8	#9	
	.59	.94	.89	
D - Choice of Negative Identity	#10	#11	#12	
	.81	.88	.79	

Table 5
Individual t Tests Between Groups
for Each Question of Each Category

Category	Question		
A - The Problem of Intimacy	#1 -.941	#2 -.777	#3 -.586
B - Diffusion in Time Perspective	#4 1.109	#5 1.444	#6 .161
C - Diffusion in Industry	#7 -2.507*	#8 .630	#9 .406
D - Choice of Negative Identity	#10 1.621	#11 1.681	#12 1.608
*p .025			

CHAPTER IV

DISCUSSION

Since the hypothesis was confirmed in only one of the three dimensions tested for significant group differences, it is essential that we evaluate the possible origin of these findings and assess their potential implications.

The negative findings are subject to several possible explanations, that can be examined in terms of supplementary analyses of the data. The findings may obviously reflect an inadequacy of the theory. A second point to be considered is that the group samples may not have represented the populations that were assumed a priori. Finally, a consideration to be examined that may have considerable relevance to future research efforts, the instrument used as an operational measure of identity confusion in this study may not have been a valid method of eliciting data to measure differences in this psychosocial crisis stage.

In considering the appropriateness of our subject samples, we note that the two groups of Ss chosen for this study were considered to be representative of differing points on a continuum of psychosocial adjustment. This concept of social and psychological adaptation was defined, for the purpose of this study, on operational grounds, as demonstrated adequacy or inadequacy of functioning in the cultural milieu. Yet, though an attempt was made to choose distinctive groups representing discretely differing position on this continuum, this assumption is called into question. Although not based on quantified data, some of

the students interviewed impressed this experimenter as demonstrating little more psychosocial maturity than the individuals interviewed at the Crossroads Centre. Their responses suggested that they were concerned with the same issues and involved in similar activities as the Crossroads population. They did not convey the impression of being more occupationally responsible and their enrolment in high school frequently appeared to be more determined by parental imposition than personal commitment.

A similar question can be raised regarding the Crossroads population. Though individuals in this group did manifest a quite obvious inability to adjust to the psychosocial demands of their cultural milieu, in the interview data they frequently expressed awareness of their situation as well as a satisfactory grasp of the psychosocial moratorium they were engaged in. They spoke of their involvement in the Crossroads project as a "stop-over", a necessary but temporary experience for them.

It is suggested then that the two populations chosen to represent discretely different points on a continuum of psychosocial adjustment, were not as clearly distinguished as first assumed. First, the fact that subjects were located in one group versus the other by their presence at the Centre versus at a school is questioned as a basis of establishing psychosocial adjustment. Second, in the contemporary culture, various elements contribute to the subject's ability to produce "data" that may reflect knowledge about identity issues rather than reflections of personal status. It is evident that such variables would have an impact on the results of this study. Increased similarity in the kinds of data elicited from both groups, though possibly

existing only at a superficial level, would greatly reduce the likelihood of group discrimination on the basis of the measuring instrument employed in this study.

The questions employed in the interview were developed by this experimenter to elicit qualitative material relevant to Erikson's formulations of the adolescent period (See Appendix B). Although efforts were made to describe the questions to tap attitudes predicted by Erikson's theories, it is possible that these questions were inadequate to perform as designated. Specifically, as used in an open ended interview, it appears that the questions tended to evoke rather generalized comments from the Ss, rather than personally relevant data. Responses tended to be short, matter-of-fact, and not personally involving enough. For example, in response to question number 4 (Are you the same person you were two years ago?), many Ss stated that they had changed very much, but did not go on to elaborate as to how these changes had come about, or how they might manifest themselves. Though the content of the questions may have been adequate in tapping the appropriate areas, their structure may not have been sufficiently considered. Under interview conditions, it is felt that more facilitative questions should have been developed with perhaps a generally less impersonal flavor. The interview might also have been extended, with supplementary interrogations requiring additional data, examples, and elaborations of responses.

In order to examine these issues more closely the power of individual questions employed in the interview, a table has been prepared showing the rank order of questions on the basis of the magnitude

of individual t tests between groups. This table is shown in Appendix F .

An arbitrary division can be established for this table, separating it into two groups of six questions, on the basis of high and low discriminatory power. This refers to the power of the questions to discriminate between groups on the basis of the rating criteria. Questions number 1, 2, 3, 6, 8 and 9 represent the low discriminatory group, with t 's ranging from .941 to .161. On examination, it is noted that these questions tend to be more general and less personal, directed less towards the individual's own experience than to his opinions and his social consciousness. It is felt that these qualities permitted S s to revert to stereotype social precepts, using these formulas as defenses against having to make more personal (and possibly more uncomfortable) contributions. S s rarely went beyond this rather surface level of responsivity for these questions, their answers being anecdotal at best. For example, responses to question number 8 (How do you feel when you have to put in an effort to get some things you want?) tended to elicit a rather similar response across both groups. Most S s reiterated the well founded social precept that the harder you work to obtain something, the more you will enjoy it. Similarly, for question number 9 (How do you feel about the kind of work or career that your family would like to see you get into?) most S s replied that their families were not very rigid on this point and only wanted them to be happy, regardless of their occupation. As for question number 8, S s rarely went on to elaborate or to add personal data to this obviously convenient reply.

In contradistinction to this pattern we have the six questions

showing relatively high discriminatory power; number 7, 11, 10, 12, 15, 5 and 4. These questions tended to refer directly to the individual's own experiences and his feelings about personal data. It was quite difficult for the individual to employ reference points outside his own experience in answering these questions. Questions number 10 (Describe yourself as you see yourself right now. What kind of person do you think you are?) and number 11 (Describe the kind of person you would most like to be like?) illustrate this point quite well. Ss were bound to make personal comments and consequently reveal the intrinsic characteristics which were being measured.

A similar analysis can be made by referring to the rank ordering of questions on the basis of magnitude of coefficients of reliability, as shown in Appendix E . This table can also be arbitrarily divided into two groups of questions, those reflecting high reliability and those reflecting relatively low reliability. This latter group would include questions number 1, 7, 2, and 3. It should be noted there that questions number 1, 2, and 3 were among those included in the low discriminatory group mentioned above.

Before proposing an explanation for the observed discrepancy between these questions it may be valuable to examine the correspondence between this rank ordering of questions on the basis of magnitude of reliability and the rank ordering of questions on the basis of magnitude of mean ratings, that is, the number of scoreable elements produced by each question. A relationship between these two tables might be expected since a greater number of ratings might suggest the greater probability of inter-rater agreement. Yet, reference to these tables shows

virtually no correspondence. Except for the extremes, questions number 6 and 3, there seems to be little relationship between mean number of ratings per question and index of inter-rater agreement. Correspondence between raters would therefore seem free of such qualitative considerations. The element that appears important then in our analysis of the interview is one of qualitative rather than quantitative aspects. These qualitative aspects being that the less discriminating and less reliable questions tended to elicit stereotyped responses, consisting of anecdotal, serial type data which subsequently resulted in difficulty in applying rating criteria. Since responses tended to be rather matter-of-fact in content, raters would have difficulty recognizing instances of the rating criteria and consequently be more prone to make errors. These questions then, tended to elicit data that neutralized differences between groups. On the other hand, questions that were more directly personal served to elicit data that was (a) relatively more reliably dealt with by the raters and (b) was relatively more differentiating between groups.

To recapitulate, we have found that a significant number of questions employed in the interview procedure of this study, demonstrated very low inter-rater reliability and quite low inter-group discriminatory power. These questions then may not have been productive of materials relevant to Erikson's formulations of the main features of identity confusion and consequently not relevant to the purpose of this study.

In view of the above comments and as a more global consideration of the outcome of this research it must be said that though this study in itself is not a conclusive test of Erikson's theory it does contribute

information which leads towards a more discriminatory understanding of how the author's theoretical postulations may be translated into testable forms. Specifically, it is felt that an argument has been made here for the feasibility of the methodological approach in this research. In view of this, suggestions for procedural improvements in future research can be considered and recommended.

The first issue concerns the subjects employed in this study. As mentioned above it would seem that the two groups chosen to represent different points along a continuum of psychosocial adaptation may not have been as distinct as first assumed. It is suggested therefore that more stringent criteria be considered in the operational definition of psychosocial adaptation. Rather than mere availability through an available population (school) or presence at a Drop-in-Centre, factors such as recognition in the community or demonstrated achievement or failure in community standards could serve as criteria in choosing subjects. Criteria such as police records or reports from social agencies could be employed to select individuals to represent the psychosocially maladjusted group.

Another relevant issue concerns the ability of the questions employed in the interview to elicit adequately personalized information. This point is of crucial concern for this study as a good number of the questions were found to elicit rather stereotype, matter-of-fact responses. It is suggested that in future research some consideration be given to the possibility of developing more projective questions. That is, these questions should be phrased in such a way as to evoke relatively more intense personal data. Questions could be less directive and more open

to the subject's own interpretations. In addition, the interview may be carried out to encourage the respondents to extend their remarks beyond the stimulus questions and to elaborate with personally relevant data.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present study was designed to investigate the relationship of Erikson's concept of identity confusion to actual psychosocial adjustment in late adolescence. In view of Erikson's proposal that a successfully developed ego identity is necessary for a person to cope effectively with his social environment it was hypothesized that individuals who demonstrate differences in their ability to effect an adequate psychosocial adjustment will also show differences in ego identity. Self concepts and attitudinal concepts were derived from Erikson's writings and translated into a rating method to be applied to interview samples. Thus four categories of behavior were used with appropriate criterion for rating protocols. Subjects were 10 high school students, selected as representative of psychosocially more adjusted individuals, and 10 individuals selected through Crossroads Farm, representing a relatively less psychosocially adjusted group. Qualitative data was secured by means of a recorded interview and rated by two raters trained to rate the interview data in terms of four rating categories.

An analysis of scores derived from this method supported the hypothesis for one of the four dimensions investigated; Choice of Negative Identity. Additional measures were undertaken to yield data that might elaborate on the adequacy of the interview procedure and rating methods as employed in this study. A number of questions employed in the interview procedure demonstrated quite low inter-rater reliability and quite low inter-group

discriminatory power. These analyses suggested that it is evident from these results that further research is needed to evaluate more precisely Erikson's concept of identity confusion.

APPENDIX A

Interview Instructions

Instructions

This is a study of the attitudes and feelings of individuals in your age group. I am going to ask you some questions about yourself. Some of them are quite personal but please answer as honestly as you can. I know they aren't easy to answer but try and do your best. My goal is to learn about people's feelings on certain things.

I'll be asking you questions but the way in which you answer is entirely up to you. I'll be encouraging you but won't necessarily be able to answer all your questions. There is no time limit and I would appreciate it if you could tell me when you have finished answering a question. The interview should take about 30 minutes.

Do you have any questions about the interview or about how this material is going to be used?

APPENDIX B

Questions Employed in
Semi-structured Interview

Category A - The Problem of Intimacy

- 1 Tell me what your relationships with other people are like. How do you get along with other people?
- 2 Can you give me an example of a friendship which comes to your mind?
- 3 What does a close relationship with another person mean to you?

Category B - Diffusion in Time Perspective

- 4 Are you the same person you were two years ago?
- 5 What will you be doing in a year from now?
- 6 What do you think the future holds in store for you?

Category C - Diffusion in Industry

- 7 What are your favorite activities, the things you like doing the most, and why do you like doing these things?
- 8 How do you feel when you have to put in an effort to get some things you want?
- 9 How do you feel about the kind of work or career that your family would like to see you get into?

Category D - Choice of Negative Identity

- 10 Describe yourself as you see yourself right now. What kind of person do you think you are?
- 11 Describe the kind of person you would most like to be like.

12 Could you tell me about some of the people you look up to, or individuals you admire?

Questions were always administered in the following random order:
10-7-11-12-1-2-3-8-4-5-6-9.

APPENDIX C

Rater Instructions

You are asked to scan the following material and, on the basis of the rating criteria presented below, indicate the total number of rated statements per page. Please indicate the total number of rated statements in the lower left hand corner of each page. If no ratings have been made please indicate 0. The data you are going to rate consists of 60 responses to three questions (20 responses per question). Each response is prefaced by the question. The numbers and letters are identification codes and are to be ignored. You may underline the rated statement if you wish but this is not necessary.

You are to rate all segments of the answer which you consider to reflect or illustrate an instance of the rating criteria. A segment is to be defined as an "independent thought", a "detached statement". It need not be a complete sentence and can consist of a single word. In other words, any word or group of words which has independent meaning. If necessary you may rate the entire response as one illustration of the rating criteria. Do not rate repeated thoughts. All rated segments must represent independent statements. Finally, do not be concerned with statements which seem to reflect the opposite of the rating criteria. Even though the general content of the response seems to contradict the criteria it is important that you consider all the rateable statements.

APPENDIX D

Rating Categories

Category A - The Problem of Intimacy

Rating Criteria:

Caution in interpersonal commitments:

- superficial, stereotyped, and formalized interpersonal relationships
- friendships tend to be based more on situational factors than on choice
- "will only go so far and give so much", attitude

Lack of clarity in description of relationships:

- difficulty in explaining or rationalizing choice of close friends
- tends to describe friends in a general rather than a specific or personalized way

Category B - Diffusion in Time Perspective

Rating Criteria:

A loss of consideration for time as a dimension of living:

- feelings of being simultaneously very young, yet very old
- protests of missed greatness and of a premature and fatal loss of useful potentials
- uncertainty about the relationship between past and current notions of self

Sees future as vague and unknown:

- unsure of what to expect in future and fear that time may bring change
- attempts to slow things down, would rather remain static

Category C - Diffusion in Industry

Rating Criteria:

Lack of desire to get involved:

- resistance to getting involved
- tends to give up easily
- tendency towards occupational choices or activities which require little concentration

Excessive awareness of competitiveness:

- tends to choose activities or occupations where little competition is required
- tends to choose few activities and to be excessive in chosen ones

Category D - Choice of Negative Identity

Rating Criteria:

Tendency to describe self in culturally deviant terms:

- tendency to choose an identity based on identifications and roles which are considered socially undesirable or dangerous

Tendency to seek intimacy with improbable partners:

- tendency to choose friends or heroes whose behavior is considered to be culturally deviant
-

APPENDIX E

Rank Order of Questions Employed
in Semi-structured Interview, on the
Basis of Magnitude of Coefficient
of Inter-rater Reliability

Rank	Question Number	r
1	6	.96
2	8	.94
3	5	.91
4	9	.89
5	11	.88
6	4	.84
7	10	.81
8	12	.79
9	1	.73
10	7	.59
11	2	.45
12	3	.42

APPENDIX F

Rank Order of Questions Employed in
Semi-structured Interview, on the Basis of
Magnitude of Individual t Tests
Between Groups

Rank	Question Number	t
1	7	-2.507
2	11	1.681
3	10	1.621
4	12	1.608
5	5	1.444
6	4	1.109
7	1	- .941
8	2	- .777
9	8	.630
10	3	.586
11	9	.406
12	6	.161

APPENDIX G

Rank Order of Questions Employed
in Semi-structured Interview, on the
Basis of Magnitude of Mean
Number of Ratings

Rank	Question Number	Mean No. Ratings
1	6	3.48
2	5	3.08
3	4	2.48
4	1	1.58
5	2	1.35
6	7	1.30
7	9	1.18
8	8	1.13
9	10	.95
10	12	.53
11	3	.53
12	11	.45

APPENDIX H
Mean Number of Words Per
Question for Groups as Typescripted
on Sheets to be Rated

Question	Group A	Group B
1	66	66
2	76	75
3	33	33
4	52	51
5	43	42
6	42	43
7	53	53
8	53	52
9	73	72
10	30	30
11	42	42
12	50	50

APPENDIX I

Mean Ratings for Each S

for Each Question of all Categories

S #	Category A					
	Question #1		Question #2		Question #3	
	Grp. A	Grp. B	Grp. A	Grp. B	Grp. A	Grp. B
1	3.5	1	2	2.5	0	0
2	1	2.5	.5	1	0	.5
3	1.5	1.5	1	1	0	0
4	1	3	2.5	1.5	0	.5
5	1.5	3.5	1	2	0	1.5
6	1	2	0	1	0	1
7	0	1.5	1.5	.5	1	0
8	1	.5	1.5	2.5	1	1
9	2	0	.5	.5	1.5	.5
10	1	2.5	1.5	2.5	1	1

 Category B

S #	Question #4		Question #5		Question #6	
	Grp. A	Grp. B	Grp. A	Grp. B	Grp. A	Grp. B
1	2	.5	2	1.5	5	4.5
2	5	1.5	4.5	3	8.5	2.5
3	2	4.5	1	4.5	2	4.5
4	1	.5	3	1.5	2.5	4.5
5	4.5	.5	8	0	1.5	4.5
6	5	3.5	5	.5	4.5	.5
7	2	3	3.5	2.5	3	0
8	3.5	3	2	.5	4	6
9	3	1.5	5.5	8	4	4
10	.5	2.5	3.5	1.5	5	3

Category C						
S #	Question #7		Question #8		Question #9	
	Grp. A	Grp. B	Grp. A	Grp. B	Grp. A	Grp. B
1	1.5	.5	0	0	0	.5
2	.5	1.5	1.5	0	2.5	.5
3	.5	1	0	2	0	2
4	0	3	2.5	0	.5	0
5	1	2.5	0	1.5	0	.5
6	1	1	4	0	1.5	2.5
7	1.5	1.5	0	0	.5	0
8	1	3.5	0	2	4	3.5
9	9	1	.5	3.5	.5	0
10	1.5	2	5	0	3.5	1

Category D						
S #	Question #10		Question #11		Question #12	
	Grp. A	Grp. B	Grp. A	Grp. B	Grp. A	Grp. B
1	.5	.5	1	.5	1.5	0
2	0	1	0	0	.5	0
3	1	1.5	.5	0	.5	1
4	.5	0	1.5	0	0	.5
5	3.5	1	1.5	0	1	0
6	2	.5	1	0	.5	0
7	2.5	0	.5	0	2.5	0
8	2.5	0	0	0	0	0
9	.5	1	.5	1.5	1.5	1
10	0	.5	0	.5	0	0

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