A COMPARISON OF THE SELF-CONCEPTS
OF NEGROES AND JEWS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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Denton, Texas
January, 1970
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In one of his writings on social character, Fromm states, "Different societies or classes within a society have a specific social character and on its basis different ideas develop and become powerful (9, pp. 277-299).

The historical background conditions influencing the development of the Jews and Negroes are beyond the scope of this work and are therefore mentioned only incidentally.

Two aspects of these two groups are under consideration: (1) How well or poorly do Jews and Negroes function in contemporary American society? (2) What sort of family life is characteristic of Jews and Negroes? These two aspects are considered important in connection with self-concepts, for the first is at least in part a manifestation of the self-concept, and family life is considered important as the major factor in the development of the self-concept. The self-concept and its development are treated more fully in a later part of this paper.

A recent issue of Time magazine in a cover article about Jews and Negroes stated: "On the scale of achievement in the United States, the Jews rank as the most successful minority, the blacks as the least" (2, p. 55).
Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to compare self-concepts of Negroes and Jews. The self-concept is defined as the distance between "real" and "ideal" scores taken on an "Adjective Q-Set for Use by Non-Professional Sorters (Form III)" (3).

Negro-Jewish Social Characteristics

In general, the Jewish population is characterized as a capable, productive group interested in intellectual pursuits, financial solvency, upward social mobility, general self-sufficiency, and stable family life.

Freud brought up the intellectual aspect of Jewry when he said that although he had no religious inclination, he felt his irresistible attraction to Jewry and Jews was in part due to the fact that, "Because I was a Jew I found myself free from many prejudices which restricted others in the use of their intellect . . ." (7, p. 230).

A partial explanation for this intellectual aspect of the Jews is in the following:

The Jews, who for centuries had lived in more or less hostile environments, have learned that it is not only possible to manipulate their environment to insure survival but even to prosper in it. Jewish tradition stresses the possibility of the individual rationally mastering his world. Man is not helpless against the forces of nature or of his fellow man; God will provide, but only if man does his share (18, p. 144).
This Jewish belief of mastery of the environment through rational means is perhaps the underlying basis for the self-sufficiency, financial solvency and general self-help of the Jewish community for which it is possible to find considerable mention:

In the last several decades, the Jewish community has not presented the American community-at-large with significant social problems. By its extensive network of social welfare agencies and inspired by a tradition of self-help, the Jewish community has effectively assumed the role of good citizen, both self-sufficient and responsible to its non-Jewish neighbours. This has been made possible by the American Jew's widely observed (though insufficiently documented) upward mobility, and by internal cohesive forces (some of them now apparently declining), reducing deviancy, such as alcoholism or divorce. The relative state of affluence, together with the cohesive forces noted, have provided the American Jew with a level of social functioning clearly greater than that of most other population groups, and surely beyond the usual boundaries that define areas of acute social concern (13, pp. 175-191).

Further evidence of the fast upward mobility of the Jews is seen in that today many own businesses in the ghettos but no longer reside there (8, p. 556).

... there has never been much question of Jewish motivation and capacity for achievement in terms of social mobility in America ... In any case, the Jewish group, despite having had to contend with serious discrimination, has had an extraordinary success story. From lowly origins in the overwhelming proportion of cases, it has, in general, risen very high in the American social scale in about two-thirds of a century (15, p. 726).

The family life of the Jew is characteristically stable. A study on motivation and achievement among Jews states:
Studies of family interaction and information and inferences about intermarriage, divorce, and various kinds of deviant behavior associated with disorganized family life suggest that American Jews may have greater family stability and solidarity than members of other ethnic groups (12, p. 233).

In a research study reviewing the literature on the subject of family closeness with the Jews, the conclusion was:

On the basis of the data used in this paper, it may be stated that the American Jewish family is closely knit. It is more closely knit than non-Jewish families with which it has been compared (1, p. 167).

In another study on marriage and the family within the Jewish community it was found:

The distinctive characteristics that emerge from a comparison of Jewish with other families in the United States are the greater stability among Jewish families, the lower rates of divorce and separation, and their later age at marriage. These data lend support to the hypothesis that the Jewish value emphasizing greater family solidarity and cohesion is expressed and translated into behavior (10, p. 106).

Upon investigation of Negroes in the United States, we find quite a contrasting story. A comprehensive study sponsored by the United States government dealing with the Negro economically, sociologically, and psychologically was undertaken in March, 1965, under the direction of Daniel Patrick Moynihan, then Assistant Secretary of Labor, with two staff members. In general, the Moynihan Report built the following arguments:
The deterioration of the Negro family is demonstrated by these facts (a) nearly a quarter of urban Negro marriages are dissolved; (b) nearly one quarter of Negro births are now illegitimate; (c) as a consequence, almost one fourth of Negro families are headed by females, and (d) this breakdown of the Negro family has led to a startling increase in welfare dependency . . . (16, p. 5).

Moynihan then borrowed a term from psychologist Kenneth Clark and spoke of the "tangle of pathology" and what happened to the family. The pathology begins with the fact that the Negro family is matriarchal. Here is what Moynihan found the "tangle of pathology" to be, as summarized by another author:

This tangle of pathology involves the matriarchy of the Negro family (by which he meant the tendency for women to fare better interpersonally and economically than men and thereby to dominate family life), the failure of youth (by which he referred to the fact that Negro children do not learn as much in school as white children and that they leave school earlier), higher rates of delinquency and crime among Negroes, the fact that Negroes disproportionately fail the Armed Forces qualification test (and that this suggests their poor competitive position in the job market as well), and alienation of Negro men which results in their withdrawal from stable family-oriented society in higher rates of drug addiction, in despair of achieving a stable life (16, p. 5).

Moynihan, then, saw a vicious cycle operating. Negro men have no stable place in the economic system; as a result, they cannot be strong husbands and fathers. Therefore Negro families break up, and women must assume the task of rearing children without male assistance; often the women must assume the task of bringing in income also. Since the children do not grow up in a stable home and so learn that they cannot look forward to a stable life, they are not able to accomplish in school, leave school early, and therefore are in a very poor position to qualify for jobs that will produce a decent family income; and the cycle starts again (16, p. 5).
Erik H. Erikson writes that the Negro's:

... positive identity has been undermined systematically — first under the unspeakable system of slavery in North America and then by the system of enslavement perpetuated in the rural South and the urban North ... (7, pp. 236-237).

The problem of matriarchy and its debilitating effect on the Negro male in particular is treated in several works (7, p. 244; 22, p. 690). It is usually seen as the result of conditions under which Negroes had to live during slavery. In contemporary society it is seen as the basis for the unstable Negro family life which exists.

It seems that the apparent differences between these two groups would spur on research but a review of the literature does not find this to be the case. Studies abound on Negro-White comparisons, but it was not possible to show any dealing with the two minority groups, Jews and Negroes, with the exception of one piece of research conducted by Breen on Jewish and Negro schizophrenics in which differences were found in the type of schizophrenic reaction, age of initial admission to the mental hospital, and length of hospital stay. He states:

... schizophrenic symptoms can be seen in part as exaggerations of the normal coping styles of the culture in which the schizophrenic was raised. The present work supports this "life style" hypothesis by showing that the dissimilar symptoms of Negro and Jewish male schizophrenics can be predicted from what generally is known about contemporary, American Negro and Jewish culture (4, pp. 1614-1615).
The Self and Its Measurement

One text implies that the "self" concept is thought of by personality theorists in usually one of the two following ways:

Either the self is seen as a group of psychological processes which serves as a determinant of behavior or else it is conceived of as a cluster of attitudes and feelings the individual has about himself (11, p. 545).

Adler, Allport, Angyal, Cattell, Freud, Goldstein, Jung, Murphy, Murray, and Sullivan all make use of the self in some prominent way in their personality theories. Rogers, however, makes the self the base and essence of his theory of personality (11).

It is difficult to verbalize exactly what makes up the self. Rogers has said, "A portion of the total perceptual field gradually becomes differentiated as the self (17, p. 497).

Another author describes the self somewhat more plainly:

... the individual's assumptions about reality, value, and possibility provide him with a sense of self-identity--of who and what he is. They also give him a self-ideal--a picture of what he could and should be (5, p. 63).

This same author then continues, "... a marked discrepancy between his "real" and "ideal" self can lead to serious inner conflict ..." (5, p. 63). This discrepancy is the essence of what the Q-technique attempts to
measure and will be handled more fully further on in this
discussion.

It seems reasonable that what an individual thinks of
himself will largely determine his overt behavior. Rogers
has told us that although there are some exceptions, in
general, "Most of the ways of behaving which are adopted
by the organism are those which are consistent with the
concept of self" (17, p. 507).

Stephenson, the originator of the Q-technique says
much the same, "... the individual cannot behave entirely
independently of the way he thinks of himself ... "
(20, p. 244).

After establishment of some idea of what the self is
comes the question of its measurement. In view of the two
preceding statements by Rogers and Stephenson, it seems a
natural conclusion that observation of the individual reveals
a great deal about the way he thinks of himself. But sim-
ple observation of behavior does not meet the requirements
for the empirical study of man psychologically. However,
observation of behavior does tell us a great deal about
the self-concept, for Rogers says:

Behavior is a reaction to the field as perceived. It would therefore appear that
in so far as possible, the internal frame of
reference of the person himself, and seeing
the world of experience as nearly as possible
through his eyes (17, p. 494).

In attempting to gain a picture of someone's view of
himself we could use an introspective approach such as a projective technique, the Rorschach Ink Blots or the Thematic Apperception Test - gathering projections of his self-notions, or we can simply ask an individual about the way he views himself. The Q-technique has to do with the latter idea.

Besides the Q-technique, it is possible to use adjective rating scales, adjective check lists, self-rating scales to allow the person to give a view of himself.

Rogers has used the Q-sort to measure progress in psychotherapy. He traces the changing relationship between a patient's perceived self and ideal self during the course of therapy.

One may question the wisdom of using the Q-technique on a group basis in a problem of social research. Mowrer says, "... Q-technique is a research tool which may prove useful not only in clinical but also in social psychology" (14, p. 325).

The originator of the Q-technique, Stephenson, devotes an entire chapter in his book to the "Application to Social Psychology" (20).

The Q-technique is not without its critics. One author says:

The widespread use of Qsorts makes it important that certain difficulties in item selection be emphasized. In this author's opinion, these difficulties are such as to suggest the discontinuance of the use of this technique for research purposes, unless corrective measures are devised (21, p. 62).
Rogers, too, although well-known for using the Q-technique, points out there is plenty of room for research on the instrument (17, p. 140-141).

An example of using the Q-technique in a social research setting is the work of Turner and Vanderlippe (23). The technique was used on Oberlin College students to see if there was agreement between adjustment to college life and congruence between real and ideal sortings with the Q-sort. The research found that, in this instance, the two did agree.

Basic Assumptions and Hypothesis

In view of the widely differing functioning of the Jews and Negroes in this culture, it is assumed that the psychological make-up of the two groups differs widely.

In regard to the importance of family life in the early developmental years of an individual, it is assumed that Negroes and Jews will differ markedly in psychological make-up due to the differences in their types of family life.

In view of the two preceding assumptions, the following hypothesis was investigated: Jews have significantly higher self-concepts than do Negroes.

The .05 level of confidence was accepted as being statistically significant for purposes of this study.
Description of the Instrument

The Q-sort form used in this research is composed of a list of seventy adjectives describing personality traits. It was devised by Block and associates. This adjective Q-set was constructed in an attempt to correct some of the inadequacies of Q-sets currently in use. Block said:

... for various reasons, many of the Q-sort procedures employed in the past with lay subjects may be judged deficient. The Q-items used often have expressed too specialized an orientation or have been highly redundant; use of a large number of items and of categories has tended to make the procedure too demanding of the subject; and undesirable response sets have sometimes been permitted. Reasoning from this analysis, it seems worthwhile, then to bring forward still another Q-set for research in this domain (3, p. 122).
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

METHOD

In general, the method of conducting this study was to administer an "Adjective Q-set" twice to each subject. The results of each of these examinations were then correlated with each other to investigate the relationship between them. Statistics were obtained to see if a significant difference existed between Negro and Jewish scores.

Subjects

Subjects consisted of twenty Negroes and twenty Jews enrolled at El Centro Junior College, Dallas, Texas. They were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five and randomly chosen from American History courses, a required subject for all students. Each of the two groups was nearly equally divided between males and females.

Procedure for Collecting Data

Each subject was given two copies of the "Adjective Q-Set for Use by Non-Professional Sorters (Form III)." Half of the Negroes were asked to take the test as they thought they really were first and then how they would ideally like to be. The other half took the test in opposite order. The same was done with the Jews, in an attempt to cancel bore-
dom, mental set, or fatigue factors.

Although there are multiple factors involved in the unique developments of these strikingly different groups, Negroes and Jews, only the self-concept was considered in this work.

Statistical Treatment

The discrepancy between real and ideal on each item for each individual was found. Each item discrepancy score was then squared and summed for the individual. A Pearson Product-Moment correlation was found for each subject. This $r$ was then converted to a Fisher $z$ score. A $t$ test was then obtained to see if a significant difference existed between the two groups.
CHAPTER III

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

As indicated in Chapter I, this research was undertaken to see if there was a significant difference between the self-concepts of Jews and Negroes.

Based on the assumption that Jews function better in society and have better family life, as found in the survey of the literature, the following hypothesis was posited: Jews have significantly higher self-concepts than do Negroes.

As presented in Table I, no significant difference was found between the Jews and Negroes.

TABLE I

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND t SCORE FOR NEGROES AND JEWS

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<th></th>
<th>X</th>
<th>σ</th>
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<td>0.61630</td>
<td>1.587</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>0.49645</td>
<td>7.034</td>
<td>1.2335 *</td>
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</table>

*not significant at the .05 level
Discussion

The hypothesis that Jews have significantly better self-concepts than Negroes must be rejected in this case. Although a survey of the literature presented a strong argument in support of the hypothesis, the findings here do not substantiate it.

Since no other research was found comparing Jewish-Negro personality structures, it is impossible to view this study as in agreement or disagreement with previous research.

This research was strongly based on that cited earlier by Turner and Vanderlippe (5), where adjustment to college life was based on outside activities, organizations, grades, and appeared to be comfortably relating to the college setting. After the students performed the real and ideal Q-sortings, a significant relationship was found between what appeared to be adjustment on campus and the closeness between the students' real and ideal sortings. The present research used financial, educational, professional, and social criterion for arriving at the hypothesis that Jews have better self-concepts than Negroes. The Turner and Vanderlippe study did not deal with the family life of the students, so the two studies cannot be compared in that respect.

Many questions can be asked about the present study: (1) Were the subjects representative of their particular
minority group? (2) Were the subjects equal in their ability to read and comprehend the seventy adjectives? (3) Since there were no validity checks, did everyone do an honest job with the instrument? (4) Is there more to self-concept than the distance between a person's perception of what he thinks he is and what he would like to be? (5) If a person is striving, will he always appear to be less well-adjusted than the individual who is not asking for much out of life?

First, how likely is it that the Jews and Negroes found in a junior college setting are representative of their groups? Perhaps the atypical Jew and atypical Negro were used in this research, as no socio-economic checks were made on the subjects.

Second, with no reading checks conducted, it is impossible to know how effectively each person really could deal with the seventy adjectives. Further, it is impossible to know if these words would differ in semantic meaning, depending on the minority group.

Third, there is no way of knowing if the person was being defensive about the test.

Fourth, recent writings and research has been pointing out that there might be more to the self-concept than a simple relationship between real and ideal views of the self. Block suggested that the relationship is probably more complex:
We would hypothesize that the relationship of expressed self-satisfaction to adjustment is a curvilinear one which at different points on the curve varies in its psychological import. It is granted that to admit extreme dissatisfaction with one's self is indicative of maladjustment. But are individuals expressing extreme self-satisfaction to be considered as representative of an optimal level of personality integration when this self-satisfaction is based upon repressive mechanisms?

... such a person may be said to be "overly-integrated," a condition sufficient enough for a stable and benign environment where pressures on the individual never become too great, but one which is incapable of manifesting the adaptive flexibility and resiliency of a less rigid personality structure (2, p. 254).

Block conducted research which showed that "individuals describing themselves as being very close to their ego-ideals tend to deny and suppress threatening features of themselves and cannot be considered mature and healthy" (2, p. 254).

Block has pointed out that Rogers, with Butler and Haigh have found "a high relationship between self and ideal self descriptions in individuals recognized by other means as defensive and repressing" (4).

Horney (3) described the maladjusted individual in the following terms: "What he wants is so little, only that people should be kind to him, should give him advice, should appreciate that he is a poor, harmless, lonely soul..." Adler(1), however, saw the maladjusted as one who has unrealistic, unobtainable goals which make him feel inferior and anxious because he is unable to reach them. In the polarity of these two views we perhaps see
the curvilinear relationship which Block suggests exists. The optimally adjusted individual is the one between these two extremes. An individual who wants more of himself than what he presently is and yet does not expect fictitiously high goals to be met.
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CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary and Conclusions

In this study, the hypothesis that Jews have significantly better self-concepts than Negroes was rejected. The hypothesis was built from background writings which showed the Jew to function more effectively than the Negro in this culture and to have a much more stable family life.

An adjective Q-sort was used in which subjects of both minority groups rated themselves as they thought they really were and how they would like to be. Discrepancy scores were calculated and revealed no significant difference between the two groups.

Weaknesses in the study were discussed, but more importantly, possible fallacies in viewing the self-concept in such a simple view were dealt with. More recent thoughts on self-concepts and the relationship between real-ideal congruence along with some research in the area was presented.

Suggestions for Further Research

As indicated in the first chapter, there has been no research reported studying the personality dynamic differences between Jews and Negroes.
In view of the current social unrest and rapidly-changing status of minority groups in this country, such research seems necessary.

Further research based on Q-sorting in regard to self-concept measurement should involve exploring the curvilinear relationship which perhaps exists.

Also, research should be conducted comparing self-concept information obtained from Q-sorting and information gathered from other self-concept scales for these two minority groups. These then should be judged against other criteria dealing with well-adjusted and poorly-adjusted individuals. In this way it will perhaps be possible to make an empirical judgment on how good an instrument the Q-sort really is in assessing self-concepts.

In further research using Q-sortings, particularly with adjective Q-sets, reading checks should be made before individuals become subjects. Besides reading competency, semantic differences due to cultural differences should be explored.

Socio-economic checks should be made for it may be difficult to find representative individuals of each minority group in the same setting.
APPENDIX A

AN ADJECTIVE Q-SET FOR USE BY NON-PROFESSIONAL SORTERS (FORM III)
SPECIFIED 7-POINT DISTRIBUTION (N=70):
10 ADJECTIVES IN EACH CATEGORY

1. absent-minded
2. affected
3. ambitious
4. assertive, dominant
5. bossy
6. calm
7. cautious
8. competitive
9. confident
10. considerate
11. cooperative
12. cruel, mean
13. defensive
14. dependent
15. disorderly
16. dissatisfied
17. dramatic
18. dull
19. easily embarrassed
20. easily hurt
21. energetic
22. fair-minded, objective
23. feminine
24. frank
25. friendly
26. guileful
27. helpless
28. hostile
29. idealistic
30. imaginative
31. impulsive
32. intelligent
33. versatile
34. introspective
35. jealous

36. lazy
37. likable
38. perservering
39. personally charming
40. reasonable
41. rebellious
42. resentful
43. reserved, dignified
44. restless
45. sarcastic
46. poised
47. self-controlled
48. self-indulgent
49. selfish
50. self-pitying
51. sense of humor
52. sentimental
53. shrewd, clever
54. sincere
55. sophisticated
56. stubborn
57. suspicious
58. sympathetic
59. timid, submissive
60. touchy, irritable
61. tactless
62. unconventional
63. undecided, confused
64. unhappy
65. uninterested, indifferent
66. unworthy, inadequate
67. warm
68. withdrawn, introverted
69. worried and anxious
70. wise

You have been asked to describe yourself as you see yourself. You are to use the adjectives listed above. Please read the instructions through several times since it is important that the procedure be followed in all its detail.
Look through the list of adjectives and notice that a good many of them are descriptive of you, to a greater or lesser degree. Others of the adjectives are quite undescriptive of you and are even the opposite of the way you see yourself. Your task is to indicate the various degrees with which each adjective describes you.

As a first step, look through the list and then pick out the ten adjectives or phrases you feel are most characteristic or descriptive of you. Put the number 7 in front of these words. Now, look through the list again and pick out the ten words which you feel are quite characteristic of you (excluding from consideration those words you have already given the number 7 to). Write the number 6 in front of these words. Now of those words that remain, pick out the ten adjectives that you feel are fairly descriptive of you and place the number 5 in front of them.

Now work from the opposite end toward the middle. Of those words not yet numbered, pick out the ten adjectives that are most uncharacteristic of you and give them the number 1. Pick out the ten adjectives that you feel are quite uncharacteristic of you and give them the number 2. Now choose the ten adjectives fairly uncharacteristic of you and give them the number 3.

As a check, count the words that still have no numbers. If the total is ten then you have followed the procedure properly. If the total is different then a mistake has been made somewhere and you had better check to see if you have ten words numbered 7, ten 6's, ten 5's, ten 3's, ten 2's, ten 1's.

When you have checked to see if you are correct, place the number 4 in front of the ten words remaining without numbers and your task is finished.

A few warning words. You may have difficulty in placing the required number of adjectives into each of the categories. For example, where ten words are required for a category, you may find that you have too many or too few. In either event, finish with the required number of words, either by eliminating those that can most sensibly be moved out or by moving in those words that are most relevant. You may feel that some of your word placements are forced. Your task is admittedly an awkward one but try and work through it anyway. There is a research method in our madness.

In closing we should like to emphasize again that the worth of this research is completely dependent upon how well and conscientiously the various people participating in it carry through their tasks. Numbering the adjectives as described above is perhaps tedious. When honestly done, the results can be quite self-revealing.
APPENDIX B

TABLE II

RECORD OF DATA COLLECTED FOR JEWISH GROUP

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