

## VITA

Name: Donald W. Ball.

Place of Birth: San Francisco, California.

Date of Birth: May 23, 1934.

Higher Education: City College of San Francisco, September, 1954, through June, 1956; University of California at Santa Barbara, June, 1956, through June, 1959, and June through August, 1960; B. A. in History, 1960; University of Oregon, September, 1960, through August, 1961, M. S. in Political Science, 1962. Also University of California at Berkeley, San Francisco State College, and Humboldt State College.

Areas of Special Interest: Political Behavior, Politics, Administrative and Organizational Theory.

Assistantships and Fellowships: Graduate Assistant, University of Oregon, January through June, 1961; Research Assistant, June through August, 1961; Falk Fellow, University of Oregon, 1961-1962 academic year (declined due to return to California); Research Assistant, University of California at Los Angeles, 1962-1963 academic year.

**SOCIO-EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL VARIABLES  
AFFECTING THE PERCEPTION OF POLITICAL  
REFERENTS BY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS**

by

**DONALD W. BALL**

**UNIVERSITY OF OREGON LIBRARY  
EUGENE, OREGON**

**A THESIS**

**Presented to the Department of Political Science  
and the Graduate School of the University of Oregon  
in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Science**

**June 1962**

APPROVED

~~U. S. DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY~~  
(Adviser for the Thesis)

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author wishes to express his thanks to the members of the Department of Political Science of the University of Oregon for the assistance which they have so often given so generously. Particular thanks go to Robert Mendelsohn who participated in the original project from which the following material was drawn, and who gave graciously of his time as well as the data, even at times when geographic distances posed great hinderances to communications.

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT . . . . .</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES. . . . .</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>Chapter</b>	
<b>I. INTRODUCTION. . . . .</b>	<b>1</b>
Youth and Politics	
Socialization	
The Problem	
The Setting	
The Variables	
<b>II. ANALYSIS. . . . .</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>III. SUMMARY . . . . .</b>	<b>66</b>
The Referents	
Authority and Affection	
The Role-Groups	
The Perceptions of the Successful	
Political Party Preferences	
General Summary	
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY. . . . .</b>	<b>87</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1.	Redefinition and Distribution of Social Class Membership . . . . .	20
2.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by the Total Population . . . . .	25
3.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Student's Sex. . . . .	28
4.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Student's Grade-Level. . . . .	31
5.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Self-Identified Social Class . . . . .	34
6.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Student's Sex and Self-Identified Social Class. . . . .	38
7.	Distribution of Students by Grade-Level and Social Class. . . . .	39
8.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Student's Grade-Level and Self-Identified Social Class . . . . .	41
9.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Course of Study and Self-Identified Social Class. . . . .	45
10.	Distribution of High and Low Grades by Student's Self-Identified Social Class . . . . .	49
11.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Student's Grade-Average and Self-Identified Social Class . . . . .	50
12.	The Distribution of Political Party Preferences by Social Class, Grade-Level, and the Total Population. . . . .	53

Table		Page
13.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Self-Identified Political Party Preference . . . . .	55
14.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Self-Identified Political Party Preference and Social Class . . . . .	58
15.	The Evaluation of Political Referents by Political Party Preference and Grade-Level . . . . .	60
16.	Distribution of Students by Party Preference and Grade-Level. . . . .	61

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Youth and Politics

In the United States formal political life begins at twenty-one.<sup>1</sup> Upon attainment of the twenty-first birthday a citizen of the United States is implicitly recognized as politically mature through the explicit action of being granted the right to register to vote. Those few states which make exception to this policy all grant registration rights at ages less than twenty-one.<sup>2</sup>

Yet, with few exceptions there are no formal channels available to the pre-majority citizen to furnish him an initiation into the political world as anything more than an onlooker. It is only in recent years that either of the major political parties in America has given any attention to the under twenty-one members of society, with such groups as the Teen Republicans which were formed

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Bernard Berelson, Paul Lazarsfeld and William McPhee, Voting, (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1954); Robert Lane, Political Life, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959), among others on how meaningless this formal membership in the polity may be.

<sup>2</sup>Harry Hansen, ed., The World Almanac, (New York: New York Telegram and the Sun, 1961), p. 567.



as an adjunct to the 1960 Presidential campaign activities. Thus, the member of the polity who has attained his majority is, in a sense born full-grown to his place as a potentially participating member of the system, without the benefit of any transitory period of accommodation or initiation into his new place in the polity. Even vicarious participation as a spectator to national politics via television is limited; national election campaigns occur only every four years, or once during the average youth's term in high school.

One of these few formal channels serving to introduce youth to political life is the school system. The schools act in two major ways to help adapt youth to adjust to the future demands of political participation: by what may be termed the Americanization process;<sup>1</sup> and through the operation of student-government systems.

The Americanization process becomes operative as soon as the student enrolls in kindergarten or the first grade. The flag in the classroom, the recitation and memorization of the Pledge of Allegiance all become part of the daily ritual of the American classroom. Patriotic

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Franklin Patterson and others, The Adolescent Citizen, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960), pp. 50-69; Martin Mayer, The Schools, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961), pp. 104-162, 337-360.

exercises, pageants, plays, and games are all used to reinforce the curriculum in inculcating what the school system, as a reflection of the dominant forces in the community, consider to be proper citizenship attitudes for youth to hold.<sup>1</sup> Yet, the Americanization process is based in large part upon history, and may not be related by many students to their present environment; especially when an appreciation of history and tradition are either alien to, or make an uncomfortable mockery of, their cultural sub-system within the larger society.<sup>2</sup> Additionally, the schools of the community may have become so sensitized to controversy because of previous school-centered community disputes that the curriculum has become both historically and politically meaningless.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>O. E. Oeser and S. B. Hammond, Social Structure and Personality in a City, (New York: McMillan, 1954), p. 213.

<sup>2</sup>August deB. Hollingshead, Elmtown's Youth, (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1949), pp. 142-147.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. William McPhee, "Community Controversies Affecting Personal Liberties and Institutional Freedoms in Education," (New York: Columbia University, Bureau of Social Research, 1954, mimeographed); National Commission for the Defense of Democracy Through Education, Defense Bulletins, (Washington, D. C.), monthly during the school year; Marjorie Fiske, Book Selection and Censorship, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1959); David Hulburd, This Happened in Pasadena, (New York: McMillan, 1951); Danger! They're After Our Schools, Sponsored by the American Jewish Committee; The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; The Committee of Tenure and Academic Freedom, National Education Association; Department of Higher Education, National Education Association; and others.

4

In addition to the Americanization process, the schools institute and maintain student-governments, allowing the students some measure of political participation.<sup>1</sup> These student-governments allow a form of political participation via campaigns and elections for various student-body offices. Yet, no matter how free from administrative regulation, student-governments can hardly be considered analogous to the political realities of community, state or nation. The stakes in student-governmental elections are not very large, and there rests the suspicion that the individuals most aware of this are the students themselves. If the assumption is made that the schools are not the only agency preparing youthful individuals for later political life, the question then arises, what else or who else is involved in this process? Hyman has stated that political behavior is learned behavior.<sup>2</sup> This immediately refers back to the question: from what or whom is this behavior learned?

---

<sup>1</sup>This is not to say that this is the only, or the most important reason for the institution of student-governments. Among other reasons, they may be consciously manipulated by the school administration to serve as a buffer between administrative power, and its (to the students) arbitrary nature. It may thus be used to make more palatable (to the students) the exercise of administrative authority, particularly if the action is known to be unpopular.

<sup>2</sup>Herbert Hyman, Political Socialization, (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959), p. 17.

### Socialization

All individuals are members of one or more social systems, e.g. the family, the community, etc.<sup>1</sup> To each of these systems the individual must accommodate himself; to the demands and expectations which the system imposes upon him. This accommodation and adaptation process is known as socialization:

...the process by which people selectively acquire the values and attitudes, the interests skills and knowledge--in short, the culture--current in groups of which they are, or seek to become a member.<sup>2</sup>

This acquisition of values and attitudes takes place through inter-action with individuals and groups and their culture which are significant to the individual being socialized.<sup>3</sup> Behavior is influenced by persons and groups considered important or authoritative, or to whom

---

<sup>1</sup> Irwin T. Sanders, The Community: An Introduction To a Social System, (New York: Ronald Press, 1958), pp. 190-99. A social system is defined as a societal unit of an institutionalized nature which interacts to meet basic human needs. In the following, social system is used in its broadest sense and includes those smaller, less formalized groupings which are often referred to as sub-systems.

<sup>2</sup> Robert Merton, The Student Physician, (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1957), p. 287.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

the socializing individuals are affectively linked.<sup>1</sup> Thus, socialization does not take place at random; the individual is socialized in a given direction by the systems and its agents, acquiring the behavior patterns appropriate to his particular place within the social systems of which he is a member.

Each individual may occupy several positions or statuses within each social system of which he is a member. For each of these statuses there is an appropriate role, as defined by the system. An individual may be simultaneously a man, a father, a teacher, etc. With each role there is a set of behavioral expectations and demands which other members of the social system have connected to the role. Thus, a role identifies an individual and communicates information in the form of behavioral expectations about the actor or possessor of the role to other members of the system.<sup>2</sup>

Concomitant with the behavioral expectations held by other members of the system, is the adoption by the actor of certain frames of reference and attitudes appropriate

---

<sup>1</sup>Frederick Elkin, The Child and Society, (New York: Random House, 1960), p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Theodor M. Newcomb, Social Psychology, (New York: Dryden Press, 1950), pp. 275-294.

to the role. Individuals holding similar roles may be expected to exhibit like behavior patterns within broad limits, and therefore to hold many shared perceptions and attitudes concerning their environment and its constituent parts.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, status positions the individual within a system and proscribes his behavioral boundaries, while his role defines the appropriate actions within these status-inspired boundaries. In the following pages, the major concern will be with roles and the perceptions of role-groups: congeries of individuals sharing the same statuses and therefore the same expected behavior patterns or roles.

An individual need not have fully assumed a role before developing appropriate behavioral patterns or orientations. He may engage in anticipatory socialization,<sup>2</sup> preparing himself for a role, or roles, to be assumed at some point in the future. Thus, youth may readily claim a political party preference, although it

---

<sup>1</sup>Elkins, op. cit., pp. 19-20. For the sake of conceptualization this discussion of role has been simplified and is only skeletal in nature; it assumes, for this purpose, that there is role consensus, i.e. the expectations concerning the role are consistent among the system-members and the actor; it also assumes actors will act consistently.

<sup>2</sup>Merton, op. cit., passim.

may be empty of any ideological content for him, and be no more than a label.

Roles do not exist in a vacuum. As the social system makes certain demands in the form of role expectations, it also provides references for the actor, against which he may evaluate his behavior. Which members of the system the individual selects as referents will help to determine the ultimate interpretation which he gives to his role. Thus, for example, the choice of the mother, rather than the father, as the major political referent in the development of an actor's political role, will result in a different interpretation of the political role than if the father had been selected as the major referent.

### The Problem

Certain statuses and roles are unavoidable by members of a particular social system: people are either male or female; all soldiers have an assigned rank with its concomitant behavioral norms; each employee of a corporation has a position within the organizational structure.

In the United States all individuals are members of a social class, whether they wish to acknowledge it or not.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>W. Lloyd Warner, Marchia Meeker, and Kenneth Eels, Social Class in America, (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960), pp. 3-11.

In schools also, there are groups of statuses and roles common to all students: placement in a grade-level; a major curricular field of emphasis; and a grade-average are all statuses held by all students in conventional high schools, and connected with each is an appropriate role. Thus, all students in a conventional secondary school will have certain school-related statuses, e.g. grade-level, grade-average, and major, at the very minimum. These statuses are unavoidable and are held by all students, regardless of what other statuses and roles they may have due to other positions in the school or in other systems such as families or clubs.

It is with the effect of membership in socio-educational role groups upon the evaluations of the political ideas of selected referents by a group of high school students that the following examination will be concerned. Since high school-age students are relatively unsophisticated concerning politics, and their level of political knowledge is likely to be low,<sup>1</sup> it is assumed that their evaluation of a referent's political ideas will be indicative of the extent of the influence which this referent

---

<sup>1</sup>H. H. Remmers and D. H. Radler, The American Teenager, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957).



may have on the formation of the adolescent's political orientations, and also of the likelihood of the adolescent's consulting with the referent as a source of political information or advice.

It is hypothesized that the various role-groups among the students will have differentiated perceptions of the referents, and that the various referents will be differentially perceived within each role-group.

In order to test this hypothesis data will be examined consisting of the responses of a group of high school students to a question designed to elicit their perceptions as to how good are the political ideas of several primary-group members and authority-figures.<sup>1</sup>

### The Setting<sup>2</sup>

In May of 1960 a study was made, under the auspices of a group of social scientists from Michigan State University, of the student-body of the single public high school in Perryville, Michigan. An unincorporated town, Perryville is located in Ingham County,

---

<sup>1</sup>This data was graciously furnished by Robert Mendelsohn, Department of Political Science, University of Oregon, a member of the group which originally collected the data.

<sup>2</sup>U. S. Bureau of the Census, Congressional District Data Book, Districts of the 87th Congress, 1961, pp. 30-31, 98-99; the source for all information concerning Perryville unless otherwise cited. The name Perryville is a pseudonym.

near Lansing, the location of Michigan State University's campus. In 1960, Perryville's population was 4,818.<sup>1</sup>

The area in which Perryville is situated is a growing one: the population of Ingham County increased between the 1950 and 1960 decennial censuses. Though the area has grown, its population has remained homogeneous: only one of Perryville's 4,818 residents was described in the 1960 census as non-white.<sup>2</sup>

Like much of Michigan outside of the major urban centers, Perryville is an area where the voters cast their ballots for consistent Republican majorities. Only once since 1952, that in 1954, has Ingham County, which is coextensive with Michigan's Sixth Congressional District, sent a Democrat to Congress; in none of the Presidential elections since 1952 has the district failed to deliver a substantial Republican majority.

Perryville lies on the main north-south highway in its section of the state which runs through the center of

---

<sup>1</sup>Hansen, op. cit., p.91.

<sup>2</sup>Information supplied by the U. S. Department of Commerce, San Francisco office.

the community forming its main street. Its economic and recreational life are closely intertwined with nearby Lansing,<sup>1</sup> less than half an hour away by automobile. Homes in Perryville are predominantly of pre-World War II vintage, though tract developments have been built recently. On the outskirts of town are farmlands. The Perryville high school is a new one, of campus style, which draws upon the town and its immediately surrounding territories for its enrollment.

### The Method<sup>2</sup>

The entire student population of the Perryville high school was administered a questionnaire schedule which, because of its length, took portions of two to three sessions to complete. Excluding those students absent on one or both days, the final number of possible respondents to each item in the schedule was 375.

The questionnaire was prepared and administered by the staff of the Bureau of Social and Political Research, College of Business and Public Service, Michigan State University. The Bureau's staff provided the basic

---

<sup>1</sup>In addition to being the home of Michigan State University, Lansing is also the state capital and the site of a large Oldsmobile plant.

<sup>2</sup>All data on methodological procedures was provided by Robert Mendelsohn.

personnel for the operation which was augmented by additional employees specially trained by the Bureau. For the most part, the additional employees were graduate students in the social sciences at Michigan State University.

The schedule was administered to the Perryville students during their homeroom periods of thirty-five minutes, which was the first period of the day. Trained Bureau personnel in each room conducted the administration of the questionnaire, assisted by a set of general instructions broadcast into each room through the school's public address system by a Bureau member. Classroom teachers took no part in the administration and often left the room for the period. The administrators made every effort to communicate to the students that they (the administrators) were in no way connected with the high school and that none of their (the students) responses would be made available to the high school in any identifiable form.

The above general procedure was followed during each meeting. Succeeding halves of the schedule were given during the first two sessions. Following a preliminary examination of the questionnaires, it was decided by the Bureau to return for a third visit due to the number of slightly incomplete questionnaires, missed pages, and absences during one of the sessions. A fear

of bias existed since the questionnaires seemed to indicate that the less able students were disproportionately represented in the incomplete group.

For the third administration the procedures were modified. Those students who had yet to complete a substantial portion of the instrument, either one half due to absence, or several pages of one or both halves, were taken to the school library where several Bureau members were stationed in order to assist them. In addition, other staff members were assigned to one or more home-rooms, depending on the number of incomplete schedules per room. These Bureau members approached the students individually and asked them to complete the items or pages having been previously marked as incomplete by the Bureau. This third session took place approximately one week after the first two.

The respondents answered items regarding their educational levels, socio-economic status, media utilization and preferences, vocational aspirations and expectations, and socio-psychological attitudes relating to such areas as politics, morals, religion, and economic institutions.

Concerning the political ideas of certain selected referents, the students were asked:

In your experience, how good are the ideas of the following people on politics?

The referents listed were: the father, the mother,

teachers, ministers, peers.<sup>1</sup>

The respondents were given a choice of five possible responses, exclusive of exercising the option of not answering at all. The options were, in the following order: very good, good, average, fair, and poor. For purposes of analysis, in order to assure a sufficient number of responses in each cell, the response-choices were collapsed in the following manner: very good and good, into above average; average, remaining the same; fair and poor, into below average, thus allowing in the analysis for three responses, plus the choice of not answering at all.

In the analysis the above and below average responses are considered as being most committal; the average category is considered to be a residual, neutral and noncommittal response, due to the variety of choice originally available to the respondents. For this reason the analysis will concentrate on the above average and below average responses, with less concern with the average responses.

---

<sup>1</sup>In the original schedule peers were designated as friends your age.

### The Variables

By virtue of membership in the student-body of a conventional American high school, a student assumes certain statuses and roles. These unavoidable statuses and roles, common to all high school students, are: placement in a grade-level, e.g. ninth grade, sophomore, etc.; an academic major, e.g. a curricular field of emphasis, such as college-preparatory; a grade-average, e.g. a straight A student, a C student, etc. In addition the student has a physically determined sex role, and a socially and/or psychologically determined role as the member of a particular social class role. Together with political party preferences, the above variables have been selected for analysis because they are common to all American students enrolled in conventional high schools, and thus reduce as much as is possible in an analysis of this type, which is limited to data from a non-representative population, the chance that the variables are idiosyncratic to the situation in which the data was collected.

Hollingshead has examined the pervasive effect of social class status upon members of the community, even when these individuals are still adolescents.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Hollinshead, op. cit., passim.

Both in and out of school, life was far different for Hollingshead's Class I students than for those members of the lowest level of the class structure in Class V.<sup>1</sup> Recreational pursuits, educational opportunities, religious behavior: all are different at different social class levels.

Because of its pervasive effect, any examination of behavior must give due consideration to the effects of social class membership.<sup>2</sup> Thus, in the following examination of the effects of selected socio-educational and political variables, the data is also examined with social class membership controlled. In the case of the variables of grade-average and academic major, social class is controlled from the outset of the analysis, as it is quite likely that the class level membership of the student greatly influences these variables, possibly to the point of being the major operational factor.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Hollingshead's Classes I, II, and III are roughly equivalent to White-Collar students as designated herein, and Classes IV and V to Blue-Collar students, *infra*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>2</sup>Hyman, "Reflections on Reference Groups," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, vol. XXIV, no. 3, pp. 387-388.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Mayer, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-113; Hollingshead, *op. cit.*, pp. 168-178, 462; Henry Clay Lindgren, *Mental Health in Education*, (New York: Holt, 1954), pp. 151 ff.



There are many ways of determining the social class position of an individual: source and/or amount of income, type of residence, educational attainment, membership in voluntary association, etc.;<sup>1</sup> but the problem arises that these may not be satisfactory criteria by which to establish the class level of high school students who have little or no income, have not completed their education, do not reside in a dwelling of their own choice, and in general occupy a unique position as regards their placement in a social class structure by objective measures or standards.

For this reason, the measure of social class deemed appropriate for positioning high school students in a class structure was their own subjective self-identification of social class membership.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Bernard Barber, Social Stratification, (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1957), pp. 19-49.

<sup>2</sup>One of the items on the schedule asked the students whether they considered themselves members of the Upper, Middle, Lower, or Working class. Of the 375 students confronted with such choice, 370 were able to make such a subjective self-appraisal.

In his study of the psychological aspects of social class membership, Centers has pointed out that

Social classes in their essential nature can be characterized as psychologically or subjectively based groupings defined by the allegiance of their members. Integral to their structuring are tendencies toward...common attitudes ~~such as~~ beliefs and behavior in political matters.... These constituent tendencies in the formation of social classes are the responses of individuals to the whole complex situation of their lives...<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the value of Center's theory as a behavioral explanation of the phenomenon of social class membership, it has also pragmatic value in that many adolescents may be unable to accurately answer questions about their parents which would aid in determining the social class level of the parents and family.

Centers has shown that there is a tendency toward a type of regression to take place when self-identifications of class membership are employed.<sup>2</sup> Upper and lower class memberships tend to disappear, with a complimentary surge in middle level identifications: upper class into middle class, and lower class into working class; thus contaminating any multi-level class scheme.

---

<sup>1</sup>Richard Centers, The Psychology of Social Classes, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949) pp. 210-211.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

For this reason, a dichotomized social class system has been operationalized for the following analysis. All students identifying themselves as either upper or middle class are defined as being members of the white-collar class; those identifying themselves as lower or working class are defined as belonging to the blue-collar class.

TABLE 1  
REDEFINITION AND DISTRIBUTION  
OF SOCIAL CLASS MEMBERSHIP

<u>Original Class and Number</u>		<u>Redefined Class and Number</u>	
Upper Class	22	White-Collar Class	271
Middle Class	249		
Working Class	90	Blue-Collar Class	99
Lower Class	9		
Not Ascertained and Don't Know	5		5
Total	<u>375</u>		<u>375</u>

The above dichotomized scheme is used throughout the examination.

Sex has often been used as a variable in the examination of political behavior, with the interpretive emphasis upon the way in which women's political behavior differs from that of men; the male behavior used implicitly as the norm, thus casting the political behavior of women,

by inference, into the area of deviance. Among other explanations which have been advanced to explain the political behavior of women have been sexual desire,<sup>1</sup> the dominant influence of male primary-group members,<sup>2</sup> and the orientation of women toward the home.<sup>3</sup>

These explanations have been concerned with adult behavior. Studies of youth have shown sex-linked differences in political issue-orientations,<sup>4</sup> but little is known about the development of these attitudes, or the referents employed in their formulation. In the following analysis, the attempt is made to determine what, if any, are the differences in the perceptions by male and female adolescents regarding the political ideas of the referents, and the effect, if any, of social class membership within each sex.

Socialization, being a developmental process, does not occur overnight, but rather over a period of months and years.

Data over time on the perceptions of political

---

<sup>1</sup> Lane, op. cit., pp. 120-122

<sup>2</sup> Angus Campbell, Gerald Gurin, and Warren E. Miller, The Voter Decides, (Evanston: Row, Peterson, 1954), pp. 191, 197, passim; Berelson, et al., op. cit., pp. 88-93.

<sup>3</sup> Hyman, Political Socialization, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Ibid., pp. 30-35; Remmers and Radler, op. cit.

referents is not available, but it approximately simulated through the examination of responses of students in the consecutive grade-levels.

The use of cross-sectional data arranged consecutively by grade, and so approximately by age levels obviously does not constitute a developmental study in the longitudinal sense. It does however permit inferences about the developmental process and the suggestion of tentative hypotheses.<sup>1</sup>

Again, social class is controlled for; particularly since reductions in educational opportunities for blue-collar students may lead to a disproportionate drop-out rate in the final years of high school.<sup>2</sup>

Hollingshead, among others, has investigated the effects of social class membership on the attainment of grades and the choice of a course of study.<sup>3</sup> The middle-class nature of the school itself, mitigates against full utilization of educational opportunities by members of the lower classes, while loading the dice in favor of the middle-class emulated members of the upper classes.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Hess and David Easton, "The Child's Changing Image of the President," Public Opinion Quarterly, vol. XXIV, no. 4, p. 633.

<sup>2</sup> Hollingshead, op. cit., pp. 330-335, 472.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., also pp. 168-178, 462.

<sup>4</sup> Lindgren, Ibid.

Thus, any examination of the variables of grade-average attainment and academic major must control for social class in order to investigate any influence of these variables by themselves.

In addition to the socio-educational variables discussed above, the effects of political party preferences are examined. The Perryville students were asked to identify themselves as strong, average, or independent Republicans or Democrats, as Independents, or to indicate that they had never thought of it (Non-Identifiers as to political party preference). For purposes of analysis, all Republicans, whether strong Republican, average Republican, or independent Republican were collapsed into a single group; the same procedure was followed for Democrats, while Independents and Non-Identifiers were kept separate from one another in the examination.

The expected lack of a consistently oriented political ideology among high school youth would seem to preclude significant differences,<sup>1</sup> but some studies particularly the Purdue polls, would suggest that sufficient political attitudes have been developed by the time the student is in high school to make investigation of differences among students with different party preferences worthwhile.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Hyman, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>2</sup>Remmers and Radler, op. cit.

The above socio-educational and political variables provide the basis for the following examination of the perceptions of political referents, in an endeavor to discover more information bearing upon the socialization process as it is affected by the various role-groups to which the socializing individual may belong, and the affects of these various roles on political orientations.

## CHAPTER II

### ANALYSIS

Before examining any specific role-groups, the total population was examined in order to determine the elements of response characteristic of the Perryville student-body as a whole.

TABLE 2

THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS  
BY THE TOTAL POPULATION  
(percent)<sup>a</sup>

---

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Ministers</u>	<u>Peers</u>
Above Average:	51	36	40	31	5
Average:	37	46	35	35	51
Below Average:	10	14	17	17	39
NA, DK:	3	3	9	17	5

---

N = 375

---

<sup>a</sup>Percentages on this and subsequent tables may not total 100 due to rounding.

In the generalized picture presented by the total population, the most favorably perceived referent is the father, the child's ego-ideal as concerns the secular world.<sup>1</sup> He is the only referent to receive above average

---

<sup>1</sup>Hyman, op. cit., pp. 69-84, passim.



evaluations by as many as 50 percent of the respondents. The other parent, the mother, is seen by only one-third of the same students as having similar political sophistication. This is in keeping with previous research which has emphasized the dominant position that the father enjoys as regards his ability to influence other members of the family on political matters.<sup>1</sup> Whether the father is able to exert his influence by reason of his favorable image vis-a-vis political ideas, or whether this high evaluation is due to his influential position cannot be determined from the data available; but on the basis of other studies it may be hypothesized that this high evaluation is given the father in deference to his role as the dominant family political figure.<sup>2</sup> By inference, this would explain why the mother, a non-political ego-ideal in most cases, receives less favorable evaluations than her male parental counterpart, although she may be expected to be favorably perceived by youthful members of the family in an affective sense.

With one exception, all of the referents are seen by at least 30 percent of the respondents as having

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, Bernard Berelson, and Hazel Gaudet, The People's Choice, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), pp. 140-145; Campbell, et al., pp. 203-206.

<sup>2</sup>Hyman, ibid.

above average ideas on politics, while less than 20 percent are perceived to have political ideas which are below average. The one exception is the students' own peer-group. Only one out of twenty students is willing to accord an above average rating to his peers, while eight out of twenty rate the political ideas of their contemporaries as being below average.

Implicitly, by rejecting the political ideas of of their peer-group, the students are saying that the political world is, in their perceptions, strictly an adult one. Politically, the respondents are least confident in themselves.

Next to the father, the referent most likely to receive an above average evaluation is the teacher, who at least in the case of a social studies instructor, is likely to communicate with the student concerning things political.

The community role of the other authority figure, the minister, is a prestigious one with an aura of expertise, at least in the spiritual area. Yet, other than the peer-group, no other referent is perceived less favorably as regards his political ideas, leaving the implication that from the spiritual area, at least, authority does not transfer well to other realms.

Thus, fathers are most likely to receive favorable ratings as regards their political ideas, followed by teachers, mothers, ministers, and peers, in that order. Peers receive the least favorable ratings: only one sixth as many above average responses as the next lowest referent, and more than twice as many below average ratings as the nearest referent, the minister.

TABLE 3

THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS  
BY STUDENT'S SEX  
(percent)

	Father		Mother		Teachers		Ministers		Peers	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Above Average:	49	53	32	41	39	42	24	39	4	6
Average:	38	35	45	46	36	33	39	30	50	52
Below Average:	11	8	18	11	18	16	20	14	40	38
NA, DK:	2	4	4	3	6	9	18	16	5	4

N: male=205; female=170

Sex. The evaluation of political referents by each sex shows a consistent difference between adolescent boys and girls which holds at both the above and below average response-levels. The girls are more likely to give favorable evaluations to the referents, regardless of which one is examined. In all cases, the referents

receive a higher proportion of above average ratings from the female respondents, and similarly, a lower proportion of below average evaluations.

Two referents, the mother and ministers, receive the most sex-differentiated responses. To these two referents the male respondents respond least positively when compared with the females. It is noteworthy that neither of these figures is as likely to be considered a worldly figure by boys as the other referents, with the possible exception of the teacher.

The less critical attitude toward political referents held by the female respondents may be considered as possible evidence of a predisposing factor which may facilitate women in the acceptance of a politically subservient role to male family members.<sup>1</sup> Higher evaluations of all referents suggest that it should be less difficult for females to accept the political decisions of another, i.e. the husband or father, since there should be relatively lower resistance than would be the case if women were more generally critical of the political ideas

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Lazarsfeld, et al., ibid; Campbell, et al., ibid

of others, thus facilitating the adoption of a role of submission vis-a-vis the male and his political ideas.

On the question of sex-linked differences in the amount of interest concerning politics, there appears to be little differentiation between the sexes, if the proportion of not ascertainable and don't know responses is taken as a crude measure of political interest. The total rate of NA, DK responses is almost identical between boys and girls, although there are differences in the distribution rates among the various responses.

In summary, girls are more likely than boys to give positive evaluations to a given referents; girls appear to transfer authority from one realm to another more readily than boys, e.g. the higher evaluation given ministers by the female respondents is the most pronounced difference between the referents of each sex; the higher evaluation of the mother by girls may also be an expression of authority-transference from realm to realm as well as sex-bias; girls seem no more or less interested in politics, as shown by their response rate to a question seeking political attitudes.

Grade-level. The analysis of responses by the grade-level of the respondents offers the only opportunity for the analysis of data in an at least quasi-developmental form.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Supra, pp. 21-22.

**TABLE 4**  
**THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS**  
**BY STUDENT'S GRADE-LEVEL**  
**(percent)**

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Ministers</u>	<u>Peers</u>
Above					
Average:					
Nine	47	38	36	32	5
Ten	50	31	34	36	5
Eleven	56	36	40	33	5
Twelve	49	32	52	22	5
Average:					
Nine	33	41	29	32	38
Ten	40	44	38	34	51
Eleven	33	47	36	37	55
Twelve	38	50	31	37	62
Below					
Average:					
Nine	16	18	28	24	53
Ten	6	12	17	13	40
Eleven	8	14	16	15	35
Twelve	9	14	6	15	27
NA, DK:					
Nine	3	3	6	12	4
Ten	4	2	10	17	4
Eleven	3	4	7	16	5
Twelve	3	5	11	27	6

N: Nine=95; Ten=104; Eleven=95; Twelve=81.

The quasi-developmental data by grade-level shows a consistent direction at the below average level, although not for the favorable above average responses.

At the above average level only teachers gain favor in the perceptions of the students in successive grades in a substantial amount. The father and the peer-group both remain relatively unchanged, although in the case of the father, the similar levels of ninth and twelfth grade students' responses represent a return which ignores shifts among tenth and eleventh grade students. Both mother and ministers lose absolute favor as political referents.

At the below average level all referents receive fewer unfavorable evaluations by the time the students reach the twelfth grade, most notable in the case of the teacher, who also shows the most substantial above average gains. Similarly, the two referents showing the least drop in the proportion of below average responses are the mother and ministers, the only referents showing fewer above average ratings through successive grades.

As the students are examined at successive grade-levels they show a tendency to look less to such figures as the mother and ministers and more to teachers, while continuing to perceive the father's political ideas as favorable in about the same proportion. At any grade-

level, only one student in twenty sees his peers as possessing good political ideas.

While the proportion of students rating as above average the political ideas of the various referents may do one of three things, i.e. increase, decrease, or remain relatively stable, the direction of change is consistent at the below average level for all referents. In the case of all referents the students become more tolerant, at least in so far as they are less willing to respond in a critical manner. At the same time, the students also become less willing to respond at all regarding the political ideas of the two referents with whom the students' relationships are most formal, e.g. teachers and ministers.

Because of the net losses of the parents and ministers as compared to teachers and the peer-group, it appears that with age, adolescents become less likely to give high evaluations to the political ideas of individuals who are, to most youths, figures of moral leadership or authority in its broadest sense. Thus, with age, youth may become less imbued with a civic class, good government type of vision of the political world. It would, of course, require more verifiable data concerning the referents as figures of moral authority before such a hypothesis could be any more than tentatively advanced



as a desirable goal for further research. It would also suggest that those factors which predispose some individuals towards a cynical view of the polity may be operative in adolescence.<sup>1</sup>

TABLE 5

THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS  
BY SELF-IDENTIFIED SOCIAL CLASS  
(percent)

	Father		Mother		Teachers		Ministers		Peers	
	W-C	B-C	W-C	B-C	W-C	B-C	W-C	B-C	W-C	B-C
Above										
Average:	57	34	40	25	42	36	34	24	6	2
Average:	34	43	46	44	35	34	33	40	53	45
Below										
Average:	7	16	11	23	16	20	17	18	38	43
NA, DK:	2	6	2	7	6	11	16	17	3	9

N: W-C=271; B-C=99.

Social Class. An examination of the responses by white-collar and blue-collar students shows differences in responses in a consistent direction between the two groups. For all referents, the evaluations made by the white-collar students are more likely to be favorable,

<sup>1</sup>Robert E. Agger, Marshall Goldstein, and Stanley Pearl, "Political Cynicism: Measurement and Meaning," (Eugene: University of Oregon, no date, mimeographed).

e.g. a higher proportion of above average responses and a lower proportion of below average responses. The differences are the most pronounced in the case of the affectively-linked referents: the father and the mother, and to a lesser extent, the peer-group.

In the case of the parents, the blue-collar tendency toward rejection, as compared with white-collar members, is to be expected. Hollingshead has pointed out the ability of lower class adolescents to recognize the stigma attached to their class membership in the perceptions of members of higher classes.<sup>1</sup> The lower class youth are able to apprehend their familial origins as the source of their unfavorable class position, and are thus resentful toward the cause of their low status. If this hypothesis is correct in explaining the tendency of blue-collar Perryville youth to reject the political ideas of their parents, it also implies that youth perceive politics as an area of value as regards a mechanism for rejection; again leading to the inference that youth perceive politics as a part of the adult world.

In the case of the peer-group, the Perryville

---

<sup>1</sup>Hollingshead, op. cit., pp. 102-120, passim, and 443-445.

blue-collar students contradict Hollingshead's Elmtown study, whose Class IV and V students showed great cohesiveness and loyalty to one another.<sup>1</sup> The higher evaluation of their peer-group by the white-collar students in Perryville may be tentatively explained as follows: the white-collar students in Perryville are well aware that they are more generally accepted by the culture of the community. Since their friends are likely to belong to the white-collar class too, the students are merely reflecting community values in being more likely to rate their peers more favorably. It should be kept in mind, that neither white-collar nor blue-collar students rate their peers with anything near the favorableness accorded to any of the other referents.

The blue-collar students show a somewhat greater reluctance than their white-collar contemporaries to make any evaluation at all of the political ideas of the referents as shown by their slightly greater tendency to give no response at all. This may be taken as a harbinger of the lower class adult tendency toward non-interest or participation in politics.<sup>2</sup> The demonstrable proposition that social class membership and the evaluation of political

---

<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 215-222, passim, 288-325, passim; supra, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> Lane, op. cit., passim, esp. pp. 220-23<sup>4</sup> for a general statement and summary of the literature.

referents are related makes it mandatory that this variable be controlled for in the following analysis of school-linked variables, and suggests the need for a re-examination of the variables relating to sex and grade-level.

TABLE 6

THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS  
BY STUDENT'S SEX AND SELF-IDENTIFIED  
SOCIAL CLASS  
(percent)

	<u>Father</u>		<u>Mother</u>		<u>Teachers</u>		<u>Ministers</u>		<u>Peers</u>	
	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>
<b>Above</b>										
<b>Average:</b>										
Male	56	31	37	21	44	31	28	18	7	2
Female	59	41	45	32	43	41	42	35	7	3
<b>Average:</b>										
Male	34	47	47	42	36	35	35	48	54	42
Female	32	38	45	49	32	32	31	27	52	51
<b>Below</b>										
<b>Average:</b>										
Male	9	16	14	27	27	29	22	15	39	44
Female	5	16	8	27	14	22	11	24	37	43
<b>NA, DK</b>										
Male	1	6	2	10	4	15	16	19	1	13
Female	4	5	2	3	10	5	16	14	4	3

N: W-C Males=140; W-C Females=131;  
B-C Males= 62; B-C Females= 37;

Sex and Grade-Level Controlled for Social Class.

When the sex variable was examined alone, it was found that girls consistently gave higher proportions of above average evaluations, and at the same time, a smaller proportion of below average evaluations than did boys. This was particularly true of two referents, the mother and ministers.

When sex is controlled for social class, it is found that the tendency for girls to give more favorable evaluations still holds true, but that it is particularly true of blue-collar students, indicating that the ease with which females may adopt politically subservient roles is closely linked to their position within the class structure.<sup>1</sup> At the below average response-level, the sex difference is less pronounced; differences in evaluations being larger between white-collar and blue-collar members than between male and female respondents.

TABLE 7

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY GRADE-LEVEL  
AND SOCIAL CLASS

	<u>Nine</u>	<u>Ten</u>	<u>Eleven</u>	<u>Twelve</u>
White-collar	74	79	70	48
Blue-collar	21	24	23	31

<sup>1</sup>Supra, pp. 29-30.

When the distribution of students by grade-level and class is examined, an unexpected pattern emerges. Rather than fewer blue-collar students in the twelfth grade as compared to the ninth, there are more, while at the same time, the number and the proportion of white-collar students drops between the ninth and twelfth grades. It would seem likely that this phenomenon is a direct consequence of the instrument used to determine social class, i.e. self-identification. It is suggested that the growing proportion of blue-collar to white-collar students is an articulation of the student's growing awareness of social class distinctions.

TABLE 8

THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS  
BY STUDENT'S GRADE-LEVEL AND SELF-  
IDENTIFIED SOCIAL CLASS  
(percent)

	<u>Father</u>		<u>Mother</u>		<u>Teachers</u>		<u>Ministers</u>		<u>Peers</u>	
	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>
<b>Above</b>										
<b>Average:</b>										
Nine	55	23	42	24	35	38	34	29	7	0
Ten	56	29	47	21	39	21	43	12	4	4
Eleven	61	40	37	26	40	39	30	43	4	0
Twelve	54	39	31	29	63	39	25	20	2	3
<b>Average:</b>										
Nine	30	46	43	33	34	14	31	33	43	19
Ten	39	46	46	42	39	37	33	37	57	33
Eleven	30	43	47	52	39	39	36	40	57	57
Twelve	37	44	50	48	25	42	33	45	65	65
<b>Below</b>										
<b>Average:</b>										
Nine	14	24	14	33	26	38	23	29	47	71
Ten	4	12	8	29	15	25	11	21	38	50
Eleven	6	13	13	13	14	13	19	9	34	35
Twelve	4	16	12	19	4	10	15	16	29	26
<b>NA, DK:</b>										
Nine	1	0	1	10	5	10	12	10	3	10
Ten	1	12	0	8	6	17	13	29	0	12
Eleven	3	4	3	9	7	9	16	9	4	9
Twelve	4	0	6	3	8	10	27	19	4	6



When grade-level is examined with social class controlled, it is discovered that many of the quasi-developmental patterns in the grade-level data (table 6) are actually caused primarily by the actions of one social grouping, i.e. the white-collar or the blue-collar students. Similarly, shifts by one or the other social class may be hidden in the non-class-differentiated data.

Evaluations of the father which show no significant change through the grades when social class is ignored, actually become much more favorable among blue-collar students.

Similarly, the blue-collar students' perceptions of the mother improve between the ninth and twelfth grades, while the drop in favorability which is recorded when social class is not controlled, is seen to be due to the decreasing proportion of favorable ratings by white-collar students.

The increased proportion of above average responses given to the father and the mother indicate a growing tolerance toward the parents through the high school years on the part of the blue-collar youths, suggesting that rejection of the parents emerging out of resentment

toward the social class level situation may be outgrown as the youth accepts his class position and its concomitant statuses.<sup>1</sup>

When class is controlled, the great increase in favorable perceptions of the teacher is seen to be a white-collar phenomenon; at the same time, the stability in the evaluations of the peer-group disappears. Only in the case of the ministers do the two class groups' responses resemble one another as regards their proportions at the above average level.

When class is controlled at the below average level, it is found that the growing tendency away from a critical evaluation is more a characteristic of blue-collar than white-collar students.

Except for teachers, the primary cause for the generally improved ratings of the referents is the increasingly favorable attitudes which are exhibited by the blue-collar youth, rather than by the change in perceptions of the white-collar students. Thus the major general change through the grade-levels, when social class is controlled, is seen to be the increasingly less critical view of the referents which is held by the blue-collar students. It would require further re-

---

<sup>1</sup>Supra, p. 35.

search to determine whether this phenomenon is actually a growing tolerance or merely the development of an acquiescent attitude toward the referents.

Courses of Study. In two school areas in particular, social class plays a vital, if not, determinant role. These two areas are the selection by the student of a major course of study,<sup>1</sup> and in the achievement of the student's grade-average.<sup>2</sup>

Majors tend to attract or repel students of each class. In Perryville, for every four white-collar students taking a college preparatory major, there is only one blue-collar student enrolled in a similar program, although the white-collar students outnumber the blue-collar students by less than three to one in the total population. The college preparatory major is a prestige course of study, but whether this is more a function of its academic nature or is simply a preference among students and/or their parents who seek to maintain or raise their social class status is not available from the data at hand.

Thus, to investigate the relationship between course of study and the evaluation of political referents,

---

<sup>1</sup>Hollingshead, op. cit., pp. 168-171, 462.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 172-174.

without taking into consideration the effects of social class would be to invite contaminated measures which did not reflect the school-linked variable, but the effects of social class instead.

TABLE 9

THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS  
BY COURSE OF STUDY AND SELF-  
IDENTIFIED SOCIAL CLASS  
(percent)

	<u>Father</u>		<u>Mother</u>		<u>Teachers</u>		<u>Ministers</u>		<u>Peers</u>	
	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>
Above										
Average:										
CP	70	42	50	32	48	39	39	19	3	3
Non-CP <sup>a</sup>	47	31	32	22	39	33	30	27	8	1
Average:										
CP	28	39	41	52	36	29	34	42	60	39
Non-CP	39	45	50	40	34	36	33	39	40	48
Below										
Average:										
CP	2	13	7	13	14	16	10	19	35	45
Non-CP	11	18	15	28	18	22	22	18	39	43
NA, DK:										
CP	0	6	2	3	3	16	16	19	2	13
Non-CP	4	6	3	9	10	9	15	16	3	7
N:	W-C College Prep.=117;		B-C College Prep.=31.		W-C Non-College Prep.=150;		B-C Non-College Prep.=67			

<sup>a</sup> Non-college preparatory students include those who indicated their course of study to be general, commercial or business education, vocational, agriculture, or some combination of the preceding majors.

In general, college preparatory majors give more favorable evaluations to the political ideas of the referents

than do non-college preparatory students; this also holds true when social class is held constant. The college-preparatory students are more likely to give above average ratings to the referents with two exceptions: non-college preparatory white-collar students are more favorable in their evaluations of the peer-group than are college preparatory students of the same social class; among blue-collar students it is the non-college preparatory students who are most likely to give an above average rating to the political ideas of ministers.

The response pattern is similar at the below average response-level: non-college preparatory and blue-collar membership being the elements which dispose a student in the direction of rating the political ideas of the referent as below average. The exceptions being the minister, where white-collar non-college preparatory students are more prone to criticise the political ideas of ministers than are the white-collar college preparatory majors, and the peer-group, where blue-collar college preparatory students are slightly more critical than their less academically oriented fellow class members.

Overall, the higher the social class and the more academic the course of study, the more likely the respondent is to make positive evaluations of the referents. This tendency is especially marked in the case of the parental referents, where the white-collar college preparatory

students give more than twice as many above average evaluations to either of the parents than do the blue-collar non-college preparatory students. At the below average response-level the discrepancy is even more marked.

When course of study and grade-level are compared as regards their powers of discrimination, they are found to be about equally powerful. In most cases at either the above average or the below average level, the differences in the evaluations of the referents are of nearly the same magnitude, either when comparing students of similar majors and different social class identifications or similar class identifications and different courses of study.

To explain why groups of students taking different academic courses of study have differentiated perceptions of the referents, a tentative hypothesis may be advanced: that success in coping with his environment, or lack thereof, is often, for the adolescent, connected with educational values; success as indicated by participation in the more difficult and prestigious college preparatory course of study leads to attitudes of well-being which predispose the student toward more favorable orientations via political referents, whom he is likely to see more as equals than remote authority figures who flaunt their superior knowledge. Thus, the non-college preparatory students interpret the lack of educational success as an inferior position and

react accordingly. If such an hypothesis is to escape disproof,<sup>1</sup> it must also hold true when the data on grade-averages is analysed, i.e. the higher the grade-average and social class, the more favorable the orientations toward political referents.

Grade-Average. One of the items answered by the Perryville students concerned their grade-average attainment. They were asked which of the following they considered to be their grade-average: A average, A-B average, B average, B-C average, C average, C-D average, D average, D-F average, and F average. In order to insure a sufficient number of respondents in each cell since social class was to be controlled from the outset, response-categories were collapsed in the following manner: A, A-B, and B into B and up; B-C and C into C and up; C-D, D, D-F, and F into below C; with C remaining the same.

When the proportion of extreme grades, i.e. B and up and below C is examined with each class, it becomes apparent that grade-average and social class are indeed linked. For every three white-collar students attaining a high grade-average there are only two whose grades are low; while among blue-collar students the chances of having a high grade-average are only half those of getting a low grade-average.

---

<sup>1</sup>Donald T. Campbell, "Quasi-Experimental Designs for Use in Natural Social Settings," (Evanston: Northwestern University, no date).

TABLE 10  
 DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH AND LOW GRADES  
 BY THE STUDENT'S SELF-IDENTIFIED  
 SOCIAL CLASS  
 (percent of each class)

	<u>White-Collar</u>	<u>Blue-Collar</u>
B & up:	24	16
Below C:	16	35
N: W-C, B & up, 65;    W-C, Below C, 36. B-C, B & up, 16;    B-C Below C, 34.		

Several authors have pointed out the class bias of the public schools, especially in their allotment of grades.<sup>1</sup> The schools cannot be entirely blamed for the greater academic success of students from the upper levels of the social structures. The dominant American culture-complex, with its success ethos and its emphasis on achievement is a reflection of the values of these classes. The lower class student, often alienated from conventional values and social institutions, lacks sufficient motivation to strive for academic success, in a world he does not identify with or understand. In a vicious cycle, this alienation may lead to poor grades, which may in turn lead to attitudes of defeat and further alienation.

---

<sup>1</sup>Cf. Ibid.; Lindgren, op. cit.



**TABLE 11**  
**THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS**  
**BY STUDENT'S GRADE-AVERAGE AND SELF-**  
**IDENTIFIED SOCIAL CLASS**  
**(percent)**

	<u>Father</u>		<u>Mother</u>		<u>Teachers</u>		<u>Ministers</u>		<u>Peers</u>	
	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>
Above										
Average:										
B & up	65	50	47	44	46	44	38	25	2	6
C & up	56	38	38	21	42	34	31	28	8	2
Below C	50	24	31	21	33	29	36	18	6	0
Average:										
B & up	32	31	44	50	36	31	40	31	66	56
C & up	33	47	45	55	39	38	33	38	51	45
Below C	36	44	59	32	31	32	25	50	44	41
Below										
Average:										
B & up	3	12	8	0	15	6	12	19	32	25
C & up	8	11	13	21	14	21	16	21	38	48
Below C	11	24	11	32	28	24	28	12	47	44
NA, DK:										
B & up	0	6	0	6	2	19	9	25	0	12
C & Up	3	4	4	2	8	6	20	13	4	4
Below C	3	9	0	15	8	15	11	21	3	15

N: W-C, B & up = 65; C & up = 167; Below C = 36.  
 B-C B & up = 16; C & up = 47; Below C = 34.

The hypothesis stated previously, that success leads to favorable evaluations of political referents, is not dis-  
 firmed by the data on grade-average controlled for social  
 class. The higher the grade-average of the respondent, the  
 more likely he is to make favorable evaluations of the re-  
 ferents; this also holds true when social class is held  
 constant.

Thus, unlike course of study and social class, which had discriminatory powers of like magnitude at both the above and below average levels, grade-average and social class do not yield such regular results.

At the above average level social class is slightly more reliable; in only one case do blue-collar students of a given grade-average give a larger proportion of favorable ratings than do the white-collar students. However, at the below average level, grade-average is a somewhat better indicator of the likely differentiation of responses, although in half of the cases the relationship is not linear.

It is hypothesized that the cause of the greater ability of course of study as compared with grade-average to predict a given group's distribution of evaluations is in the nature of the acquisition of the status itself. Course of study is selected by the student himself, albeit with varying amounts of parental assistance, while grade-averages are the sum of the evaluations of the student by teachers of assorted perceptions and biases. Thus, course of study may be more nearly indicative of those characteristics which lead to given perceptual and evaluative tendencies on the part of the students.

Political Party Preference. Concerning their political party preference, the Perryville students were

asked to complete the following question:

Generally speaking do you consider yourself to be a--strong Republican, average Republican, independent leaning toward Republican, Independent with no leaning toward either party, Independent leaning toward Democrat, average Democrat, strong Democrat, never thought of it, Other.

For purposes of analysis all students showing any leaning toward either the Republican or Democratic party are considered as preferring that party.<sup>1</sup>

Like their franchised elders, the high school students of Perryville show a strong preference for the Republican party. When identifying their preference, the students are twice as likely to identify themselves as Republicans as they are as Democrats; they are, in fact, more likely to identify themselves as Independents than they are to identify themselves as Democrats.

---

<sup>1</sup>The eleven respondents choosing Other were excluded from this phase of the analysis.

TABLE 12

THE DISTRIBUTION OF POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCES  
BY SOCIAL CLASS, GRADE-LEVEL, AND THE  
TOTAL POPULATION  
(percent)<sup>a</sup>

	Social Class		Grade Level				Total Population
	W-C	B-C	9	10	11	12	
Democrats	21	18	24	13	26	19	20
Republicans	43	31	21	43	47	49	40
Independents	22	28	30	26	20	21	24
Never Thought of it (No ID)	13	23	25	17	7	11	15

<sup>a</sup>Percentages of students expressing party preferences only.

An examination of the students' party preferences by grade reveals that an increasingly large proportion of the students opt the Republican party as their preference with each increase in grade-level.<sup>1</sup> Concomitant is a drop in the proportion of Independents and Non-Identifiers (never thought of it), and a less regular drop in the proportion of Democrats.

The distribution of party preference by social class shows that white-collar students are more likely than their blue-collar contemporaries to choose one of

<sup>1</sup>It is considered doubtful that this is an example of the widely-held proposition that increases in education lead to the likelihood of Republican preferences due to the youth of the respondents and their lack of exposure to those facets of society where high education is useful for access and Republicanism may be an asset, e.g. portions of the business and professional community; cf. Lane, *op. cit.*, pp. 302-303.

the major parties: over 60 percent of the white-collar students identify themselves as Republicans or Democrats, as compared to less than 50 percent of the blue-collar students who make such a choice. Both classes prefer the Republican to the Democratic party: white-collar students by a two to one margin; blue-collar students by a somewhat narrower three to two ratio. About a third more Republicans consider themselves to be white-collar rather than blue-collar class members, while the class distribution of the Perryville student Democrats is almost evenly divided.

TABLE 13  
 THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS  
 BY SELF-IDENTIFIED POLITICAL  
 PARTY PREFERENCE  
 (percent)

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Teachers</u>	<u>Ministers</u>	<u>Peers</u>
<b>Above</b>					
<b>Average:</b>					
Demo.	62	42	49	36	17
Rep.	56	37	40	30	7
Ind.	45	30	36	35	6
No ID	31	29	31	29	2
<b>Average:</b>					
Demo.	29	37	27	32	47
Rep.	36	47	35	36	57
Ind.	37	47	39	32	53
No ID	49	53	42	33	42
<b>Below</b>					
<b>Average:</b>					
Demo.	8	16	18	19	49
Rep.	6	12	17	17	31
Ind.	11	19	15	19	36
No ID	20	17	18	16	55
<b>NA, DK:</b>					
Demo.	1	4	5	14	1
Rep.	3	3	7	17	5
Ind.	0	3	10	14	5
No ID	0	0	9	22	0

N: Demo. = 73; Rep. = 144; Ind. = 88; No ID = 10.

When the responses are examined at the above average response-level, uncontrolled for any other variable, it is found that Democrats give higher evaluations than any of the other party groups to all of the referents except the peer-group. The above average responses could be arranged in the same descending order for all of the

referents except the peers and the minister, where Independents are more favorably disposed toward the referent than are Republicans. This descending order is: Democrats, Republicans, Independents, and Non-Identifiers. While Democrats lead Republicans at the above average level of favorable responses, they are also higher at the unfavorable, below average level, in the number of critical evaluations that they make of the referents. There is not at the below average level, the same type of common, sequential pattern which exists at the above average level.

There is strong reason to suspect that the Non-Identifiers are not what their responses to party preference appears. That they respond at a rate unsurpassed by any other party-preference group is implicit evidence that they have thought about politics, at least as regards the referents.<sup>1</sup> It might be argued that the responses to the political ideas of the referents were spur of the moment, snap judgments, but this would suggest a question as to why they did not make a similar snap judgment as to political party preference. The fact that their response rates are so high, the highest of all the party

---

<sup>1</sup>For three of the referents the No ID students registered no NA, DK responses at all (father, mother and peer-group).

preference groups for the two parental referents, of whom they are more critical than any of the other groups, suggests the hypothesis that a self-proclaimed lack of partisan orientation on the part of the offspring, is actually a form of rejection or criticism directed toward the parents.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Supra,



**TABLE 14**  
**THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS**  
**BY SELF IDENTIFIED POLITICAL**  
**PARTY PREFERENCE AND**  
**SOCIAL CLASS**  
**(percent)**

	<u>Father</u>		<u>Mother</u>		<u>Teachers</u>		<u>Ministers</u>		<u>Peers</u>	
	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>	<u>W-C</u>	<u>B-C</u>
<b>Above</b>										
<b>Average:</b>										
Demo.	71	29	48	24	46	59	30	29	2	0
Rep.	61	38	40	31	45	24	34	14	8	3
Ind.	52	35	37	15	40	27	37	31	7	0
No ID	30	32	30	27	33	27	33	23	3	0
<b>Average:</b>										
Demo.	20	59	36	41	33	18	37	41	48	41
Rep.	32	48	46	48	34	41	32	52	59	48
Ind.	40	31	50	42	42	35	35	27	57	50
No ID	55	41	61	41	42	41	30	36	42	41
<b>Below</b>										
<b>Average:</b>										
Demo.	9	6	14	24	20	12	18	11	50	47
Rep.	4	10	10	17	16	24	16	24	29	41
Ind.	7	19	13	31	12	23	20	19	39	38
No ID	15	27	9	27	15	23	12	23	52	50
<b>NA, DK:</b>										
Demo.	0	6	2	12	0	12	14	24	0	12
Rep.	3	3	3	3	5	10	18	10	4	7
Ind.	2	15	0	12	7	15	8	28	0	12
No ID	0	0	0	5	9	9	24	18	3	9

W-C: Demo. = 56; Rep. = 114; Ind. = 60; No ID = 33.

N:

B-C: Demo. = 17; Rep. = 29; Ind. = 26; No ID = 22.

When party preference is examined while controlling for class, it is found that the sequence at the above average level which finds Democrats being most favorably disposed towards the referents is only true of the white-collar students; the pattern of the blue-collar students at the above average level is irregular, and lacking in a common pattern. At the below average level, there is a similar lack of pattern in the responses of either class level.

Thus, it is likely that what appeared to be a pattern of responses in the non-class controlled data at the above average level is actually an artifact of the high proportion of white-collar students in the population.

TABLE 15

THE EVALUATION OF POLITICAL REFERENTS  
BY POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE AND  
GRADE LEVEL  
(percent)

	Father				Mother				Teachers				Ministers				Peers			
	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12	9	10	11	12
<b>Above</b>																				
<b>Average:</b>																				
Demo.	64	64	52	60	45	50	40	27	45	50	44	60	27	43	28	20	0	0	0	7
Rep.	60	53	62	51	40	48	35	31	40	37	32	54	30	47	27	21	15	2	7	8
Ind.	43	41	45	50	32	33	14	31	29	22	50	50	32	30	41	31	7	7	5	0
No ID	35	33	38	12	39	22	29	12	30	33	33	25	43	22	39	0	0	6	5	0
<b>Average:</b>																				
Demo.	23	29	36	33	23	36	44	53	23	7	40	33	37	21	44	40	45	21	60	47
Rep.	35	38	30	38	45	38	47	54	30	37	40	31	35	35	35	38	30	57	50	72
Ind.	36	33	32	44	46	41	59	50	43	41	32	31	32	33	18	37	50	44	59	56
No ID	39	57	57	62	44	67	62	50	22	61	62	37	22	33	48	37	26	44	52	50
<b>Below</b>																				
<b>Average:</b>																				
Demo.	14	7	8	7	32	14	8	13	32	29	8	6	27	14	12	20	55	71	36	45
Rep.	5	5	7	8	10	10	12	13	25	23	20	5	20	10	22	16	50	40	32	18
Ind.	14	19	18	6	14	22	27	19	21	26	9	6	25	26	27	12	36	44	36	37
No ID	26	11	5	25	17	11	10	25	39	0	0	12	22	17	0	12	70	50	43	25
<b>NA, DK:</b>																				
Demo.	0	0	4	0	0	0	8	7	0	14	8	0	9	21	16	20	0	7	4	0
Rep.	0	3	2	3	5	3	5	3	5	3	7	10	15	8	15	26	5	2	10	3
Ind.	7	7	5	0	7	4	0	0	7	11	9	12	11	11	14	19	7	4	0	6
No ID	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	12	9	6	5	25	13	28	24	50	4	0	0	25

TABLE 16  
 DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY PARTY  
 PREFERENCE AND GRADE-LEVEL

	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>
Demo.	22	14	22	15
Rep.	20	45	40	39
Ind.	28	27	17	16
No ID	23	18	16	8

At the above average level, when grade-level is controlled, three out of four of the party preference groups lessen their proportion of favorable evaluations of the father between grades nine and twelve; only the Independents increase in their favorable attitudes toward the father. The largest decline for both the father and the mother is registered by the Non-Identifiers, who by the twelfth grade, are most critical of all of the referents.

In keeping with the pattern established by the respondents, when controlled for grade-level only, all of the party preference groups become more critical of the mother between grades nine and twelve.

Except for Non-Identifiers, teachers gain from all the groups, as they did from the students of the successive grade-levels when no other variables were controlled.

With the exception of Independents, whose perceptions of the political ideas of ministers change little,

referents by the time they reach their senior year.

The peer-group gains slightly among Democrats only. All other groups become more critical or show no net change between the ninth and twelfth grades.

At the below average level, the general tendency of the party preference groups is to become less critical, or at least no more critical of the referents between the first and last years of high school. There are, though, exceptions: Republicans become more critical of their parents with each increase in grade-level, until by the twelfth grade they are as critical as the students who prefer the Democratic party.

Students who identify with either of the major parties are usually more likely to lessen their critical attitudes between grades nine and twelve in greater proportion than are the students who call themselves Independents or Non-Identifiers.

In summary, there is a relationship between party preference and the evaluation of the referent vis-a-vis his political ideas. This condition was not expected at the outset of the examination, as party preference was expected to be no more than a convenient, but relatively meaningless label. It was believed likely that party preference was unsupported by any ideological framework or psychological predispositions which would affect the political orientations or perceptions of the various

groups identifying with either major party, or as Independents, or who claimed not to have thought of party preference at all.

The responses of the party preference groups, when controlled for any other variable, show a consistent pattern which finds Democrats giving larger proportions of both above and below average responses to the referents than do students identifying themselves with the Republican party. Both groups identifying with the major parties, were, however, more favorable at both levels than Independents or Non-Identifiers.

The descending order of party preference groups, by proportion of above average responses, is also the ascending order of neutral AVERAGE responses, excluding responses to the peer-group in both cases. This implies that a ranking of party preference groups is also a ranking of political commitment, i.e. a willingness to hold substantive political attitudes. Thus, the larger the proportion of a group responding at the above and below average level, and the fewer at the average and not ascertainable, don't know levels, the greater the group's political commitment. Further evidence of this possible linkage among party preference, favorableness of perceptions of political referents, and political commitment is the rate of not ascertainable, don't know responses; these responses show tendency to replicate the order of the

average responses, though not with such regularity. Thus, it may be tentatively hypothesized that political commitment, favorable evaluations of political referents, and party preference are all interrelated, though the data does not permit any inference as to the developmental sequence.

When party preference is examined while controlling for social class, the regular descending order of proportions of above average responses is found to hold true only for white-collar students; for blue-collar students no such regular relationship exists. The lack of any regular relationships is also true of both classes at the below average level.

For all party preference groups the expected relationship exists when class is examined while controlling for party: white-collar students are generally more favorably disposed towards the referents, regardless of referent or party preference group under examination.

Generally, the self-identified party preferences of the Perryville youth lead to the conclusion that Democrats view political referents more favorably than do Republicans, who in turn are more favorably disposed toward the referents than Independents, who are more favorably oriented towards the referents than are the students who are Non-Identifiers. There is no definite sequential pattern to the development of perceptions of the referents

by the party preference groups, but the overall effect between grades nine and twelve of most significance is the development of more generally favorable orientations toward the referents by the Independents and the Non-Identifiers, whose proportional share of the population is also decreasing at the same time. Both factors indicate a growing acceptance of the political world by these students. The effects of social class are the same among party preference groups as among the total population, e.g. a tendency for white-collar students of all party identifications to view the referents more favorably.

Finally the effect of social class on the distribution of party identifiers is not as strong as might be expected; among blue-collar students slightly more are Republicans than Democrats.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>The lack of a strong blue-collar affinity for the Democratic party is probably a function of Republican domination of the local political scene. Cf. Berelson, *et al.*, pp. 39, 55-61.



## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY

The preceding section has described the responses of the Perryville high school students to a question asking them to evaluate the political ideas of selected referents, and has tentatively suggested hypotheses which might help to explain the motivational factors leading to the behavior in question. In the following pages the positions of the various referents and role-groups will be summarized.

#### The Referents

The Father. Of the referents, the most favorably perceived is the father. Not only is the father of the referent most likely to be accorded an above average evaluation, but also the least likely to be perceived as the possessor of below average political ideas. The highest groups giving the father above average evaluations do so at a rate of seven out of ten evaluations; by contrast, the most critical groups give the father below average ratings approximately one out of every four times.

The most favorable responses to the father as a political figure come from those groups of students pre-

ferring the Democratic party; those who identify themselves as members of the white-collar class; and the academically successful, both in terms of goals and performance.

Those students most critical of the father are the ones who do not identify with any political party; blue-collar class members; and students in their first year of high school. At the most, below average responses make up about one-fourth of the total number of evaluations of the father from the most highly critical groups.

The Mother: The mother does not enjoy the degree of favor regarding her political ideas that is accorded the other parental referent, the father. The highest proportions of above average responses received by the mother are from groups giving her above average ratings approximately one-half of the time; this compares with the father's high of about 70 percent. Critical ratings of the political ideas of the mother as below average are made by as many as one-third of the responding group. Most favorable groups are Democrats, white-collar students, and the academically successful; the same groups who see the father most positively. Those least favorably disposed to the mother as a political referent are students identifying themselves as members of the blue-collar class; those with below average grades; and freshmen who identify themselves as preferring the Democratic party.

Teachers. Next to the father, the most favorably perceived political referent is the teacher, who achieves this position with a great deal of assistance from the twelfth-grade students of all types. The favorable position which teachers enjoy regarding their political ideas vis-a-vis twelfth-grade students represents an increase of 40 percent in the proportion of above average responses received over those received from ninth-grade students.

Less favorably oriented toward teachers are those groups within the student population holding positions of lower status in the school: ninth-grade students in their first year in high school, students with poor grades, and members of the blue-collar class.

Ministers. Next to the peer-group, ministers are the least favorably perceived among the referents. There are though, groups who give ministers above average evaluations approaching 50 percent rate. Most favorably oriented groups concerning the political ideas of ministers are sophomores and blue-collar members. Highly critical views are held by freshmen and political Independents.

The Peer-Group. The question as to which groups see their peers most favorably as political referents is not a particularly meaningful one in a sense, since no group makes more than 15 percent of the evaluations of their peers as being above average; most groups respond considerably

less favorably than that. The most favorable respondents, those making 15 above average evaluations out of each 100, are the freshmen Republicans. The next most favorable groups are only half as much so as are the first-year Republicans, making above average ratings in only eight percent of the cases. These groups include white-collar Republicans, twelfth-grade Republicans, and students of mediocre academic achievement. Among many groups, there is not to be found even one student willing to rate the political ideas of his peers as above average.

Several groups are highly critical of their peer-group as political referents, with as many as 70 percent finding the political ideas of their peers to be below average. These groups include ninth-grade students and those who claim to have never thought of a political party preference.

Summary. In general, the highest evaluations are given to fathers and teachers, followed by the mother, ministers, and the peer-group, in that order.

It appears that the father is the most favored as a reference point for political ideas by the Perryville high school students. His highly regarded position in this respect is the result of a combination of factors. In the majority of families he is the acknowledged

authority figure; he is listened to and obeyed in matters covering a wide range of contents and importance.<sup>1</sup> He also acts as a mediator between the home and its environment and the world outside, and is thus sought by the offspring as an agency of transmission and translation vis-a-vis the child and the non-familial environment.<sup>2</sup>

In the case of the mother, her authority as regards the outside the home area is less strong than the father's. She is looked upon as the translator of the internal, home environment, an area in which politics are not often seen as an integral part.<sup>3</sup> Thus, since it is not her domain, the mother is less highly regarded as concerns her political ideas.

Other than the father, the most respected referent, as regards his political ideas, is the teacher. Like the father, the teacher acts as a translator of the external environment; it is precisely this activity which might be termed the core of his professional duties. High school teachers, because of their close contact with their students often exert a profound influence on the personality and intellectual development of their charges.<sup>4</sup> Thus,

---

<sup>1</sup>Hyman, op. cit., pp. 30, 83.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Adolescent Development, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955), pp. 380-385, 492-493.

teachers may be chosen as authority-figures to an extent beyond that which they hold such a position by virtue of their occupational role; their authority may be transferred from the specifically class-room situation to other areas in the perceptions of their students.

In the evaluations of the adolescent respondents, the political ideas of ministers hold an anomalous position. Although ministers are generally respected members of the community, speaking with great authority within specific realms, their political ideas are rated as the poorest of all of the adult referents. That ministers, whose authority in religious matters is virtually unquestioned, are considered so lacking in authority on political matters, suggests that religion is not perceived as salient to the environment in the way that politics is: that is, though religion may be of importance to an individual, its precepts are not seen as having any connection with the political world. If such a condition does pertain, it may be hypothesized that an individual referent's political ideas will be evaluated in direct proportion to their perceived nearness or distance to the secular world as it is defined by the individual evaluator: the more secular, the better.

The political ideas of the peer-group come under heavy fire from most of the adolescent population. The large-scale rejection of the political ideas of peers indicates by implication, that the Perryville students

do not see politics as salient to their own personal milieu, but rather as an area which they perceive to be the province of adults. The almost total lack of evaluations of peers as holders of good political ideas, together with the overwhelming condemnation of the peer-group shown by the high proportion of below average ratings given them, implies a rejection of politics as a possible area for wide-spread youthful participation, since they so severely doubt the competence of their contemporaries.

#### Authority and Affection

The general hypothesis which emerges from the data as it concerns the referents is that the more authoritative a referent is perceived to be vis-a-vis the external environment, regardless the degree of affective relationship between referent and youthful respondent, the higher will be the evaluation of the referent as a political figure. The hypothesis emerges from the observation that the referents receiving the highest evaluations are the father and teachers, both individuals who mediate between youth and their external environment in an authoritative manner, but only one of whom, the father, can be automatically assumed to be affectively-linked with the evaluating youth. Both the mother and the peer-group may be considered to be more likely to be affectively-linked to the respondents than can be teachers, but neither of them

receive the positive evaluations concerning their political ideas that is accorded the less affectively-linked referent, the teacher. Thus, in the realm of political ideas, authority takes precedence over affective relationships in leading to favorable perceptions.

#### The Role-Groups

In selecting the variables for analysis, the attempt was made to choose only those variables which were likely to be common to all students in conventional high schools, regardless of any regional or environmental factors which might occur in specific cases. This was done to minimize as much as possible those factors which might be idiosyncratic to the particular Perryville situation. Thus, although the Perryville group can in no way be considered as a sample of some larger, more general population per se, their responses may suggest hypotheses which are applicable to a wider population of high school students. Thus, the variables which were examined were those concerned with roles common to all students, whether enrolled in the Perryville high school, or some other traditional public high school. These variables were tested in order to determine if the various role-groups among the Perryville student population would differentiate in their evaluation of the political ideas of the several referents. The differentiated responses exhibited by the total population in regards to specific referents provided strong basis



for the assumption that specific role-groups would also differ in their evaluations, just as had the total population in their evaluations of specific referents.

The variables examined were: sex, grade-placement, social class, major course of study, grade-average, and political party preference. The major control variable was social class, and was used as a control in conjunction with each of the above variables.

Social class was chosen as the control variable because of its pervasive influence upon the behavior of an individual, even if such individual is an adolescent.<sup>1</sup> The medium of self-identification was used to determine the student's social class membership for two reasons: among its possible definitions, social classes may be considered to be psychologically-based groupings, commanding allegiances of their members, and structuring their behavior;<sup>2</sup> appropriate criteria for an empirically-oriented judgments of social class structure and membership are difficult to obtain for youth, due to their

---

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Hollingshead, Ibid.; Warner, et al., Ibid.; James West, Plainville U. S. A., (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961); Robert S. and Helen Merrill Lynd, Middletown, (New York: Harcourt and Brace, 1956).

<sup>2</sup> Centers, Ibid., pp. 210-211, supra, pp. 18-19.

lack of self-determination of many of their statuses, and their lack of accurate information concerning the various statuses of their parents, e.g. specific occupation and income data, which might be utilized in the determination of class membership of the family.

Sex. When the variable of sex was examined, it was found that girls were consistently more charitable in their evaluations of the political ideas of the referents than were boys; that is, girls were more likely to give above average evaluations, and less likely to give below average evaluations, than were boys, regardless of the referent, but especially true in the case of the mother and ministers. The especially high evaluations given the mother and ministers suggest that although girls may well perceive politics as part of the external environment, they do not necessarily approve of this connection, since the two figures whose evaluations are most differentiated by sex are figures not considered to be worldly in a secular way; politics being generally considered a worldly and secular area. The analysis of the responses by sex suggests that when evaluating political referents, females may be less likely than males to base their evaluations on politically relevant factors, and more on characteristics salient to other areas.<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Supra, pp. 29-30, 39.

The higher evaluations which girls give to the referents may be considered as indicative of the factors which predispose women to accept the political ideas of primary-group member males. Their higher opinions of the ideas of others concerning politics would tend to make women more readily accept and adopt the advice of others.

Grade-level. The data by grade-level offered the nearest equivalent to developmental data; though it was not actually collected over time, the grade-level data implies at least a quasi-developmental development, both through the school grade-levels and through the average high school age levels of approximately fourteen or fifteen to eighteen or nineteen years.

There was found to be no definite developmental pattern applicable to all referents, although nearly linear sequences were found in some cases. In other cases, the developmental pattern was curved, e.g. from critical to favorable and then back to critical by the twelfth grade. The relationships most closely resembling linear development were most often found at the below average level, leading to the hypothesis that tolerance, more than approval, toward the political referents is developed over time through adolescence.

At the above average level the most favorable developmental pattern was that of the teacher, whose ratings grow more and more favorable through the progressively

higher grade-levels, until by the senior year, the teacher is the most highly rated referent.<sup>1</sup> This suggests that the political-intellectual horizons of adolescents broaden through the high school years, causing them to become less reliant on their parents as a source of political information or advice. This is partially corroborated by the drop in favorability suffered by the evaluations of the political ideas of the mother.

Course of Study and Grade-Average. Among the variables examined were three which could be considered as crude measures of success, or lack thereof, and concomitantly, as indicators of prestige. Two of these variables were concerned with success or prestige within the school situation: grade-average and major course of study. The third, social class, indicates a degree of success or prestige within the larger community.

A high grade-average may be considered indicative that the student is successful within the school, and is one of the measures of success used by lay people within the community to gauge achievement within the school and award concomitant prestige. To many persons, a high

---

<sup>1</sup>It should be noted that the senior year is the traditional place in the curriculum for the most political of the high school social science courses, Problems in American Democracy or some similarly titled course, or the more traditional Civics.

grade-average is a sign of accomplishment of the tasks which are set before the student by the schools; a low grade-average is seen as an indicator of failure, of an inability to meet the demands of the educational process as exemplified by the evaluating mechanism of the schools. Likewise, the choice of a course of study carries with it the implication of success or failure. Only those students of above average academic attainment are supposed to enroll in the college preparatory course. The college preparatory course also carries with it the idea of ambition: the "go to college and get ahead" ethos.

Yet, neither grade-average nor course of study may actually be indicative of anything more than favorable location within the social structure, which of itself may be taken by many as a sign of success. Thus a vicious cycle may be maintained: favorable social class leads to high grade-averages, which lead to opportunities for enrollment in the college preparatory major which lead to a maintenance of favorable social class position, which made possible the initiation of the cycle in the first place.

Whether or not grade-average, course of study, or social class are actually valid or reliable measures of success within the school and the community is irrelevant, so long as they are generally considered to be such by broad segments within the community, for this belief will be transmitted to the students, and will become part of

their perceptions of the environment, and as it affects them, of their self-image. Thus, students possessing the success characteristics of high grade-average, college preparatory course of study, and high social class will have greater prestige within the community than their low grade-average, non-college preparatory major, low social class contemporaries.

When the responses of the successful versus the unsuccessful students were examined, the successful students were found to give consistently more favorable evaluations of the political ideas of the referents, as compared with their less successful contemporaries. Exceptions were usually in the case of the peer-group.

#### The Perceptions of the Successful

The more favorable attitudes characteristic of the more successful students leads to this hypothesis: success and/or prestige for adolescents which is a result of their self-perceived achievement in coming to terms with their educational and social environment engenders attitudes and orientations which encourage the development of favorable perceptions of the political ideas of others. It would be expected that these positive political orientations would not be limited to the political ideas of selected referents, but would extend into other political sectors.

Additional evidence of the viability of the success syndrome as an explanation of political behavior is found in studies of adult participation in politics which indicates that interest and activity in politics are positively correlated with such success-type factors, as education, occupation, income, etc.<sup>1</sup>

If the behavior of the students may be taken as a portent of future adult behavior, it is to be expected that those individuals whose class level and academic performance was of the type generally considered as successful will be the most likely to participate actively in politics and the least rigid and dogmatic in their political attitudes and opinions, by virtue of their greater tolerance and admiration of the political ideas of other individuals, as shown by their responses as adolescents to the political ideas of the referents.

#### Political Party Preferences

Before the data was analyzed, there was felt to be little reason to suspect that there would be any consistent differences between students of varying political party orientations. There was no cause to believe that party preferences would be anything more than a label, or

---

<sup>1</sup>Berelson, et al., op. cit., passim; Campbell, et al., op. cit., passim; Lane, op. cit., passim; Lazarsfeld, et al., passim.

that it would represent different ideological or psychological predispositions toward viewing the political world in a particular way. Examination proved this belief wrong, for essential differences were found among the various partisan groups.

Democrats were found to give a higher proportion of above average evaluations than Republicans, Independents, or Non-Identifiers. This held true for all referents except the peer-group. At the same time, Democrats gave a higher proportion of below average evaluations than did Republicans, though fewer than did Independents or Non-Identifiers for any of the referents, again excepting peers.

In the case of students who replied in reference to their party preference that they had never thought of it, there is reason to doubt the accuracy of this response. Their response rate in evaluating the referents shows the lowest proportion of not ascertainable and don't know responses for the father, the mother, and the peer-group. Logic suggests that it is unlikely that such a high response rate to a question concerning politics should be associated with a group claiming to never have thought about their political party preference.

There was also found to be a linking of favorable orientations and commitment, as measured by the willingness to make a definite, non-neutral response. If above



average responses to any of the referents except the peer-group are arranged in descending order from most to least often favorable; it is found that this is the reverse order of the non-committal, average responses. Thus party preference, favorableness of orientation, and political commitment are found to be interrelated.

#### General Summary

The basic problem under examination was to determine whether or not various role-groups among an adolescent, high school population differentiated in their evaluations of the political ideas of their father, mother, teachers, ministers, and their peer-group; and whether or not there were differences in the evaluations made by various subgroups within the total population.

The hypotheses escaped disconfirmation, i.e. there were substantial variations in the evaluations given by the students to each referent, and within the population, specific role-groups had significantly differentiated perceptions of the referents.

In general, the most favorably perceived referents were the father and teachers, followed by the mother and ministers, with the peer-group trailing far behind.

From this data emerged the tentative hypothesis that the more authoritative a referent is perceived to be vis-a-vis the external environment, regardless of the degree of affect-

ive relationship between referent and youthful respondent, the higher will be the evaluations of the referent as a political figure. This came from the observation that the two referents receiving the highest evaluations were the father and teachers, both figures who mediate between youth and their external environment in an authoritative manner. Although the father may be assumed to be affectively linked with the youthful respondent, both the mother and the peer-group may be considered more likely than the teacher to interact affectively with the respondent. Yet neither received the positive evaluations accorded the less affectively-linked referent, the teacher.

Among the role-groups, those found to be most favorably disposed toward the referents were those who were most successful in adapting to the demands of educational and social institutions and structures. Thus, members of the white-collar class, college preparatory majors, students with high grade-averages, and members of the senior class were most likely to have the most positive perceptions of the referents. The hypothesis generated by this data was that success for adolescents which is a result of their self-perceived achievement in coming to terms with their educational and social environment engenders attitudes and orientations which encourage the development of favorable perceptions of individuals as political referents.

An examination of the responses by political party preference revealed that students identifying with either major party, but slightly more the case for students identifying themselves as Democrats, were more favorable in their evaluations than Independents or those who claimed never to have given consideration to party preference.

Thus, differentiation was found to exist concerning the various perceptions of each political referent, and also among the different role-groups and political party preference groups.

These findings herein lead to certain tentative hypotheses about the political system as a whole. If the characteristics shown by the Perryville students are not idiosyncratic, it is expected that political change is most likely to take place among high status groups, due to the more favorable orientation held by these individuals toward the political ideas of others, thus indicating a more tolerant and open attitude toward ideas not held by themselves. An ability to listen openly and attempt to assess objectively is a prerequisite for change within a democratic system. For similar reasons, Democrats are hypothesized to be more receptive toward possible change than Republicans for the same reason.

It is expected that those higher status groups most favorably disposed toward the referents will be composed of those individuals who will be active rather than passive participants in the political world after attaining their majority. This condition is expected to pertain due to the positive orientation toward politics as a whole which is implied by a favorable attitude concerning the political ideas of the referents.

The data also suggests that most individuals perceive political referents in generally similar ways, the differences being in the degree to which they see a particular referent as good or bad. Thus, it would be expected that a homogeneous group of individuals would arrange a group of political referents in similar rank order, but that different individuals would differ in their overall perceptions of to what extent the highest ranked referent was good, the lowest bad, etc.

Further study of the political attitudes and orientations of adolescents should endeavor to discover how closely linked is adolescent and adult behavior.

It is further suggested that study of political referents vis-a-vis both adolescents and adults should seek to determine in what specific political areas various referents may have the most influence as to stabilizing political orientations, or generating the attitudes necessary for political change.

In order to understand the genesis of political behavior more efforts must be made to examine the political perceptions, orientations, and attitudes of children and youth. A tacit assumption of the above study was that youth does indeed have political views which are differentiated and worthy of examination. This assumption was not disconfirmed by the data, but neither were all the questions answered which the data generated. It must remain for further research to answer these questions, and in turn, to propose further problems of its own.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

### BOOKS

- Barber, Bernard. Social Stratification. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1957.
- Berelson, Bernard R.; Lazarsfeld, Paul F., and Mc Phee, William. Voting. Chicago: University of Chicago, 1954.
- Campbell, Angus; Gurin, Gerald; and Miller, Warren E. The Voter Decides. Evanston: Row, Peterson, 1957.
- Centers, Richard. The Psychology of Social Classes. Princeton: Princeton University, 1949.
- Doob, Leonard W. Social Psychology. New York: Holt, 1952.
- Elkin, Frederick. The Child and Society. New York: Random House, 1960.
- Fiske, Marjorie. Book Selection and Censorship. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California, 1959.
- Friedenberg, Edgar Z. The Vanishing Adolescent. Boston: Beacon Press, 1959.
- Golden, Rose K.; Rosenberg, Morris; Williams, Robin, Jr.; and Suchman, Edward A. What College Students Think. Princeton: Van Nostrand, 1960.
- Hollingshead, August deB. Elmtown's Youth. New York: Wiley and Sons, 1949.
- Hulburd, David. This Happened in Pasadena. New York: McMillan, 1951.
- Hurlock, Elizabeth. Adolescent Development. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1955.
- Hyman, Herbert. Political Socialization. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959.

Lane, Robert E. Political Life. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1959.

Lindgren, Henry Clay. Mental Health in Education. New York: Holt, 1954.

Lipset, Seymour M. Political Man. Garden City: Doubleday, 1960.

Lynd, Robert S. and Helen Merrill. Middletown. New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1956.

Mayer, Martin, The Schools. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1961.

Merton, Robert. The Student Physician. Cambridge: Harvard University, 1957.

Newcomb, Theodore M. Social Psychology. New York: Dryden Press, 1950.

Oser, O. E., and Hammond, S. F. Social Structure and Personality in a City. New York: McMillan, 1954.

Patterson, Franklin and others. The Adolescent Citizen. Glencoe: The Free Press, 1960.

Remmers, H. H., and Radler, D. A. The American Teenager. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1957.

Sanders, Irwin T. The Community: An Introduction to a Social System. New York: Ronald Press, 1958.

Vidich, Arthur J., and Bensman, Joseph. Small Town in Mass Society. Garden City: Doubleday, 1959.

Warner, W. Lloyd; Meeker, Marchia, and Bels, Kenneth. Social Class in America. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1960.

West, James. Plainville, U. S. A. New York: Columbia University, 1961.

Agger, Robert E.; Goldstein, Marshall; and Pearl, Stanley. "Political Cynicism: Measurement and Meaning." Eugene: University of Oregon, no date, mimeographed.

Campbell, Donald T. "Quasi-Experimental Designs for Use in Natural Social Settings." Evanston: Northwestern University, no date.

Danger! They're After Our Schools. Sponsored by the American Jewish Committee; The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education; The Committee of Tenure and Academic Freedom, National Education Association; and the Department of Higher Education, National Education Association.

Defense Bulletin(s). Washington, D. C.: National Commission for the Defense of Democracy through Education, monthly during the school year.

Greenstein, Fred I. "The Benevolent Leader: Children's Images of Political Authority," American Political Science Review, Vol. LIV, N. 4.

Hess, Robert D., and Easton, David, "The Child's Changing Image of the President," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. XXIV, N. 4.

Hyman, Herbert. "Reflections on Reference Groups," Public Opinion Quarterly, Vol. XXIV, N. 3.

McPhee, William N., "Community Controversies Affecting Personal Liberties and Institutional Freedoms in Education." New York: Columbia University, Bureau of Social Research, 1954, mimeographed.

U. S. Bureau of the Census. Congressional District Data Book, Districts of the 82th Congress, 1961.



Typed by:

Jeannette D. Watkins  
at Berkeley, California