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## An Investigation of the Comparative Psychology of Ecuadorean and North American Adolescents Boys

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COMPARATIVE PSYCHOLOGY OF  
ECUADOREAN AND NORTH AMERICAN ADOLESCENTS BOYS

By

James E. Malo, S.J.

Dissertation presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Arts Degree in Psychology.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Fr. James E. Malo, S.J., was born in Ecuador in 1928. He was admitted in the department of Psychology of the Graduate School of Loyola University in 1962. He took his comprehensive examinations for the M.A. degree in 1963. He made the required clerkship under the supervision of Dr. LeRoy Waukk at the Catholic Family Consultation Service, in Chicago. He worked particularly in testing and counseling. He took summer courses on Abnormal Psychology and Existential Psychology at Harvard University. After his return to Ecuador he has been teaching in the Department of Psychology of the Universidad Cat6lica in Quito. He is also head of the Psychological Service Department of the Catholic Hospital of Quito.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### THE PROBLEM AND PROCEDURE

Adolescence is one of the most intriguing fields of study for the psychologist and for the educator, not only because of the difficulties and complexities that it presents, but also because it offers a challenging opportunity for effecting good. Whoever has shared, as an educator or as a parent, in the changing and often puzzling world of the teen-agers, most have experienced the pressing need to understand them in order to better help them. It is more than a topic to say that young people are the hope of the future; it is a profound truth. But, in order that this truth may bear its fruits, it is imperative that the adults learn to know the adolescent better than he understands himself, they ought to be able to feel as he feels and to be aware of his problems and of his reactions to the environment.

Many books and research studies have been written on adolescence. Some of them discuss observations from outside, of how the young people seem to behave or react in certain circumstances. Others have tried to get inside the self of the boy to report how he sees himself. In Ecuador and in other Latin American countries many of those books are to be found in their Spanish translations. College students of Psychology and Education use those books as textbooks in their courses of Psychology of Adolescence and Evolutional Psychology. It is true that some of the professors illustrate their lectures with their own observations of the Ecuadorean teen-agers, but there is not a single scientific study that has tried to describe, from outside or from inside, the problems and behavior of those teen-agers.

It is safe to assume, from a common sense point of view, that the psychology of the Ecuadorean adolescent is not fundamentally different from that of other adolescents in the West. The cultural background and child rearing habits are largely similar in all of the Western countries. Nevertheless, it was necessary to start off a research into the psychology of the Ecuadorean adolescents, not because they might be different from the adolescents of other countries, but because the Ecuadorean parents and educators --

would be greatly helped in their endeavors if they had a more adequate picture of how their sons and students see their problems and themselves.

As far as the method of this investigation is concerned, the study could have been conducted in a thousand and one ways. It was decided to choose the technique proposed by Urban H. Fleege, for it seemed that an initial study of the adolescent should start from himself, asking him to talk about his problems as he sees them from his own viewpoint. There is in such a method, it is true, the danger of subjectivism from the adolescent's side. Future studies can take up the problem from a different angle and so confirm and reject the present results by means of more objective techniques.

Fleege (1945) wrote his doctoral dissertation for the Catholic University of America under the title Personal Problems of the Modern Adolescent which was later developed as a book entitled Self-revelation of the Adolescent Boy. It would seem from the Bibliography, that the author was the first to use a questionnaire to get factual information from the adolescent himself. However, the important fact is that this psychological technique proved itself very useful and gave the author a great amount of information that he could later tabulate and interpret.

The original questionnaire designed by Fleege (which he also calls a "problemnaire") consists of a series of 214 questions trying to explore the ideas and feelings of adolescent boys in different areas such as family background, home, school, social relations, religion, sex, and self. He was satisfied of the validity and reliability of his questionnaire by the internal consistency evident in his data in answers to interlocking and reverse questions scattered through the problemnaire.

For the present study it was decided to select 94 questions, most of them addressed to find out how the adolescents see their problems at home and within themselves, while some questions were thrown in for the purpose of checking the reliability of the information. All of the questions were translated into Spanish from Fleege's original. There was no danger of finding questions inapplicable to the Ecuadorean population, since the boys were simply asked to report on how they felt or thought in different situations which are not necessarily determined by culture.

The questionnaire was administered to 586 fourth-year boys in six different high schools in three large cities: Quito, Cuenca, and Riobamba. The reason for this wide selection was the necessity of obtaining a representative -- sample of the high school population in which all socio-economic levels would be included. Thus, four high schools - selected were Catholic; the other two were State high ---- schools. Since the State high schools are free the great majority of boys belonging to the lower socio-economic --- class would be admitted to them. On the other hand, the - great majority of the Catholic high school population would be made up by students from the middle and upper socio-economic classes. There are, too, exceptions in both sides, of course, but choosing the sample from various high schools all social classes are represented. The only important human group excluded was that of the Indians, for whom the - findings of this study are not applicable.

Of these 586 questionnaires some, about 35, were rejected because their authors were above the age of sixteen. Therefore, the present study is limited to boys aged fifteen to sixteen. The comparison of results from young people of seventeen and eighteen will be the subject of a future investigation.

The administration of the questionnaires was personally conducted by the writer, except for the two State high schools where the presence of a priest could have made the boys somewhat suspicious about the purpose of the investigation. Lay psychology students of the Catholic University of Ecuador were in charge of giving the questionnaires in those high schools.

That there was a good rapport and an atmosphere of cooperation is apparent in the remarks that most of the boys added at the end of the questionnaire. Here are a few examples:

"The questionnaire is wonderful, I have to thank for it. It will help solve the youth's problems."

"I've found all my problems treated. It's very interesting."

"It was very valuable."

"The questionnaire was very interesting, because we, young people, need things like these to be better under-

stood."

"The questionnaire makes you think about yourself. I should've liked some questions about girls."

It was stressed that no names were to be signed in order to safeguard the anonymity and thus make sure that the answers were truthful. It was explained to them the purpose of the project and the usefulness it could have for other boys in Ecuador if they answer the questions truthfully.

The next step was to tabulate the answers to the various items in the form of percentages.

Since one of the aims of this study was to find the similarities and differences of the problems of Ecuadorean adolescents compared with those of the American adolescents, so as to discover whether those problems were peculiar to the Country or rather they seemed to be common of the adolescents at large, the results obtained by Fleege in his sample of 2000 American boys were always kept in sight. The statistical method used was quite simple: the percentages of each answer were compared between both samples. The purpose of this investigation, which is simply to break the ground for future research, seems to be served well enough by this technique.

## II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The adolescence is that period of life when the individual is reaching the summit of his mental and physical growth. It is a period of intense social activity, for -- the individual is trying to adjust to his environment and to gather experiences in much more conscious way than during the years of childhood. The adolescent begins to realize that the assimilation of those experiences will open -- for him the door to the world of the adults and will guarantee his efficiency in that world.

In the intellectual aspect the adolescent is moving towards the highest point of his potentiality in mental ability. He has still much to learn and to experience, but his neurological development is largely complete. He needs experience and status as an adult or fully responsible member of his community.

It is at this point that the adolescent's problems originate. Economic and cultural factors do not allow him to take his place as an adult, with all the rights, privileges and responsibilities that belong to the adult age. He is often forced to behave like a child and he is denied the experiences and responsibilities which could change his role of a child for that of an adult.

Thus, adolescence is not a concept which can be defined in essential terms; it is the period in which society accords the individual to live the role of teen-agers, encountering the personal problems posed by this role, and undergoing the persona, physical, social, and emotional growth and development characteristic of the second decade of life.

Much has been written about the difficulties of being an adolescent. But there is little valid reason to suppose that the reactions of an adolescent in face of his problems, his strivings to adjustment and understanding are in some degree more difficult or more traumatic for him than for a person of any age facing a problem, an unresolved conflict or the urge to come to a working agreement with his environment. It has been said, with reason, that the adolescent is immature and lacking experience; but it must be remembered that the adolescent is not the only inexperienced and immature human being. He is, above all, a human person, and he must be understood as such before being considered an adolescent.



Among the problems encountered by the adolescent in his daily life there is one which is peculiar of his age. That is the relationship of the young boy with the adults, specially with his parents, and the gradual independence from adult controls in order to reach his own status. As Meyer (1944) notes:

Biologically, the adolescent with completed puberty - may be considered emancipated. But in our kind of society the period of dependence on adults is prolonged. The technological world requires a greater and greater extension of the period of formal education. The complexity of jobs requires maturity and judgment. Taking the age of fourteen as a convenient average - for sexual maturity and nearly that many of complete physical maturity before he can be regarded as an -- adult and be taken seriously by an adult world.

The most important single cause of parent-youth conflict is the perseveration of parent's attitudes that interfere with the adolescent's greatly expanded need for volitional independence. The factors that generally influence parents to retain a restrictive, authoritarian and interfering role can be attributed to the parents' fears that - the adolescent will not grow up to be a responsible, mature and respectable individual. Studies like those of Gabriel (1939) and Scott (1940) indicate that such restrictive attitudes are widespread at all social levels among parents of adolescents.

Goodenough (1945) observes that while the adolescent feels he is a grown-up and wants to be treated as such, he still shows some infantile traits. On the other hand, his parents feel that he is growing and that he should behave as grownups do, but on the force of habit they still treat him like a child. Sherif and Cantril (1947) indicate some of the complaints expressed by a boy of sixteen: "Being -- called up in the morning more than twice; being told what I should eat; being asked questions about homework; being 'balled down' about my school marks; always being nagged -- about the length of time I use the phone, the light I read in, and the radio programs I hear." It is easy to see that all these things, although they might seem useful to keep some discipline at home, tend to underestimate the adolescent's responsibility making him appear as a child that has to be told what to do and how to do.

One of the problems of family life is that parents and

sons very often perceive the same situation in a different way. Johnson (1952) in his study on the conceptions of -- parents held by adolescents, found that the subjects of his study considered the father as the non-authoritarian figure and more as the provider; while the mother was the authoritarian figure, her role being that of a moral and behavioral guide, source of affection and housekeeper. Haskett - (1953) in a study of adolescents' concepts regarding the - role of parents, found results agreeing with those of Johnson, particularly in that adolescents see their mothers as a guide and their fathers as providers.

Findings such as those of Johnson and Haskett are in sharp contrast with the traditional view, still held by the parents, that the role of the parent is authoritarian. -- Where such differences in viewpoints exist it is obvious - that there will be frictions between parents and sons and other interpersonal problems.

In another study Hess and Goldblatt (1957) asked, "What concept do teen-agers have of adults, and conversely, what concepts do adults have of teen-agers?" They sought to -- find out to what extent were the concepts of these two --- groups about each other in line with reality. The authors interviewed and administered a rating scale to a group of thirty-two teen-agers. The following results were summarize by the investigators:

1. The adolescents tend to idealize adults, that is - they have much higher opinions of adults than do the parents.
2. Adolescents see a relatively greater status difference between teen-agers and adults than do the parents.
3. Adolescents believe that the average adult has a generalized tendency to depreciate teen-agers.
4. Parents anticipate that teen-agers will have a -- selective tendency to undervalue adults.
5. Adolescents believe that the adults will evaluate themselves relatively accurately.
6. Parents believe that teen-agers have unrealistically high opinions of themselves.

When such discrepancies of opinion occur in the mutual

perception of parents and sons, it is no wonder that misunderstandings are bound to creep in the relationships between adolescents and adults, and that when these misunderstandings occur it will be difficult for both sides to come to a satisfactory agreement.

The importance of the home as the decisive factor in the development of the individual has long been recognized by psychologists and educators. Since the psychology of adolescence emerged as a topic in modern psychology in the late nineteenth century with the appearance of the monumental work of G. Stanley Hall (1904), authors such as Jersild (1957), Horrocks (1962), Hurlock (1961), and Rogers (1962) emphasize the special significance of the home in shaping the growing personality of the boy. The family remains the most potent factor in regulating the behavior of young people. Parental standards help keep them oriented in a world that appears to them threatening and complex.

Furthermore, the type of relationship between the adolescent and his family is of the utmost importance to determine his adjustment to other persons. As Anderson (1940) has shown, the adolescents whose parents are always nagging and criticizing them, or those whose parents control their external activities too strictly or, on the contrary, are too permissive, have become quarrelsome, disobedient, nervous and quick-tempered. The adolescent's behavior is closely related to the patterns of conduct observed at home.

In regard to the general problem of the family influence in the personality development of the adolescent, Bos-sard (1948) writes:

"The family does more than merely transmit the culture ... it selects from the existing surroundings what is transmitted, it interprets to the child what is transmitted, it evaluates what it transmits. The culture into which the child is born has its folkways, its mores, and its scale of rewards for differing schematizations of living. But it is within the bosom of the family that judgments are formed, conflicts of culture are resolved, choices are made or at least influenced."

The adolescent's level of adjustment, his development as a person depend, to a great extent, on the attitudes of his parents and on the social and psychological climate of his home. In a study comparing the child rearing attitudes

of parents of a group of adjusted as compared to a group - maladjusted children, Peterson and his collaborators (1959) reported that the parents of children who showed adjustment difficulties were themselves less well adjusted and sociable, less democratic, and tended to experienced more disciplinary problems than was true of the children who manifested no maladjustive tendencies.

The home climate varies greatly; it can be good, bad or variable. In the same home the climate can vary from one time to another, and of course it varies from one child to another. The parents, due to their position, are to a large extent, responsible for that climate (Hurlock, 1961). In America, since the beginning of the century, there have been noticeable transformations in the structure of family life. Of the transformations that have taken place some are closely related to the home climate. Among these investigators such as Jameson (1940), Strecker (1946), and Bossard (1953) have enumerated the relative authority of the father or mother, the nature of domestic discipline, the decrease in number of the group of relatives and the increase in importance of the immediate family, the changes in family stability due to the increasing number of divorces.

Since the present civilization is changing more rapidly than any other civilization in history, parents seem unable to judge the conduct of their sons or to guide them using norms that were valid when they were young. Mead (1951) observed that American parents and educators are bringing up unknown children to an unknown world; they can predict their children's needs by remembering their own; they cannot find the answers to their children's questions by looking into their own hearts.

Gesell, Ilg and Ames (1956), after an exhaustive research, summed up their findings about the problems at home of boys aged 15 to 16:

Fifteen feels that he does not have enough freedom -- and suffers from restraint. This tends to make him argumentative and remote with both parents. A cycle comes to full term at sixteen. Even with a discouraging record of turbulent interpersonal behavior in the past, there is a smoothing out of former tensions and of the superficial conflicts with parents and siblings. Arguments with father may also approach an adult level. Conformity may, however, be only on the surface. Though

fewer arguments occur, some adolescents feel that the family does not understand them and that points of view are very different.

Turning from the problems at home to the problems of the adolescent in the realm of self, many investigators have tried to determine, first of all, what are the needs of the adolescent. Need is the center and instigator of behavior. When a need is unfulfilled the individual is in a state of disequilibrium and is driven to activity to either fulfill the need or find a substitute for it. When a need is fulfilled the individual regains equilibrium, a state towards which normally functioning organisms strive.

Horrocks and Weinberg (1963) made a normative study of adolescents at various age levels to find out the psychological needs of young boys. The most enduring needs during adolescence for the population studies were: (1) to conform to approved behavior, values, and standards designated by reference individuals or groups seen as important (parents, teachers, peers); (2) to be special recipient of unqualified and deep expressions of affection, and (3) to work hard, endeavor, and to attain worthy goals.

A symptomatic manifestation of the adolescent's needs are his wishes and desires which have not been implemented because of circumstances beyond the wisher's control. Several authors have assumed as a working hypothesis that an individual's wishes are an index to his general pattern of personality organization and it may well be that the characteristic wishes of adolescents offer an index to the generalized pattern of adolescence.

Cobb (1954) studied the wishes of his subjects by means of a questionnaire that contained items such as "I wish I were \_\_\_\_\_; I wish more than anything than \_\_\_\_\_." He concluded from his study that when the statement is restricted by strong self reference wishes tend to be more introverted than when the reference is general. In the former case, wishes for looks, stature, age, identity, and smartness are prominent; in the latter these tend to be absorbed in the more general and less introverted categories of personal achievement and personal-social relations, while general welfare on the one hand, and material possessions on the other, become prominent.

Washburne (1932) found that wishes are closely related

to age and tend to change with increase in age. In his -- study, wishes for adventure, play and thrills have a noticeable drop among boys after thirteen. Wishes for success -- show increases with age.

While wishes give an indication of the interests which attract adolescents, the study of their fears, worries, and anxieties contribute to give a more accurate picture of his personality. Fears and worries lead the individual to elicit certain acts and to avoid others.

Fear is one of the most pronounced emotions experienced by man and has always played an important role in his conduct. Fears of animals and other concrete things in the immediate environment appear to decrease as the child develops. With growth into adolescence, fears of a social nature come to be very important. However, a study by Hicks and Hays (1938) shows that fifteen percent of a group of 250 junior high school students reported that they were afraid of something. This indicates that many childhood fears persist into adolescence. Older boys become much concerned over social approval, failure in school, fear from being disliked, and other fears pertaining to their relations with their peers. According to Harrocks (1962) the fears of adolescence may be roughly classified into three general groups: (1) fear of material things. These include many of the early childhood fears; (2) fears relating to the self. These include death, failure in school, personal inadequacy, popularity, and the like; and (3) fears involving social relations. These include embarrassment, social events, meeting people, parties, dates, and so forth.

Similarly, Aneglino and Dollins (1956) classified the express fears of a group of young people aged 9 to 18 as follows: safety, school, personal appearance, natural phenomena, economic and political, health, social relations, personal conduct, and supernatural. Fears regarding personal safety are a phenomenon of the pre-adolescent rather than the adolescent period. Upper-class boys were more -- worried about getting hurt, delinquency, and accidents; -- lower-class boys were more worried about money.

A number of studies have dealt with the worries of -- adolescents. Growth into adolescence is accompanied by -- anxieties on the part of many boys, connected with appearance, popularity, and inadequacies related to their sex -- role. Lunger and Page (1939) dealt with such worries by --

means of an "inventory" of 78 items administered to a group of students. Sex differences were found to be negligible with respect to both the incidence and intensity of worries. Roughly about one-half expressed some concern over such items as general religious problems, physical defects, -- familial obligations, inability to make friends, and vocational success.

Another interesting aspect of the psychology of the adolescent is the study of his attitudes and ideals. Since the adolescent is continuously subjected to new experiences, since his knowledge is growing and expanding, and since he is leaving childhood and nearing adulthood, it is inevitable that significant changes in attitudes and ideals will take place. There can be no doubt that an individual's attitudes and ideals are an expression of his personality.

The acceptable attitudes, good values, and lofty ideals of an individual make him appear as of "good character". Unfortunately, the term "character" is elusive in meaning and its interpretation varies widely from person to person. Washburne (1931) speaking of character writes:

There is neither a general accepted definition, nor general tacit agreement as to the criterion by which character, or any character trait, can be evaluated. Among existing criteria are integration of personality, morality, and strength.

Martin (1954) observes that values and attitudes are inculcated first, through the learning of behavior by imitation and reinforcement, and second, by the definition of values reached inductively from behavior. More recently Berkowitz (1964) studies two affective attitudes that should be developed in young people: the striving for success and the moral sense. It seems, according to this author, that the development of those attitudes depends on large measure on the culture and social level and on the example set by parents. Berkowitz has shown that one can not speak of a spontaneous need of "self-actualization" - which could lead towards creativity and moral sense. If the parents and educators want to bring up the adolescents to be effective and law-abiding citizens they have to incorporate moral values in their training.

Ausubel (1954) in discussing changes in values during adolescence notes that values and goals are still acquired

by intellectual satellization, that is, as by-products of subservience to others on whom the individual is dependent such as parents, teachers, adult group leaders, and representatives of the church.

Religion is another important factor not only for the development of the adolescent's personality, but also for the structure of society. It is generally accepted that youth should receive religious instruction and that it -- should be provided with the opportunities to participate in religious organizations. On the other hand, there are others who believe that religious training is harmful and that youth should be allowed to accept or reject religion without any sort of guidance or help. Although religion frequently seems to be more a formal profession than a -- passionate personal concern, it is for many the keystone to a philosophy of life. Allport and his collaborators - (1948) found, for example, that 68 per cent of Harvard -- students and 82 per cent of Radcliffe students answered - Yes to the question: "Do you feel that you require some - form of religious orientation or belief in order to achieve a fully mature philosophy of life?".

The typical adolescent of high school and early college age is "religious", at least to the extent of assenting to a number of religious beliefs and taking part in - religious observances. A large proportion of young people profess a religious faith and a belief in the necessity of religion in life. However, when confronted with the popular question "What is religion?" the adolescent may give any number of strange and incoherent answers. That is to be expected. Religion goes beyond a mere definition to - be mechanically learned. Studies have been made of the - development of religious feelings in adolescents from --- young people's diaries, letters, and poems. These, together with results from questionnaires, have given valuable material relative to the development of the religious self.

Kuhlen and Arnold (1944) administered a questionnaire to a large group of children and adolescents. The questionnaire listed 52 statements representing various religious beliefs. It is evident from the results that significant changes appear in the religious beliefs of the - children as they reach adolescence and grow into maturity. The responses to a number of statements provide evidence for the assumption that a greater tolerance toward different religious beliefs and practices appear with increased



maturity of the growing individual. Another sign of maturity and of increased sophistication accompanying adolescence is a diminished prevalence of superstitious beliefs, as shown in a study by Lundeen and Caldwell (1930).

Religious beliefs and attitudes professed by persons at the high school and college levels persist, in the case of most individuals, into later years. Nelson (1956), in 1950, applied several scales for the measurement of religious attitudes to about 900 persons who had responded as college students to the same scales in 1936. Eighty-six per cent of the persons showed little or no shift in attitude, or a shift toward more favorable attitudes.

The personality of the adolescent has also been studied by means of projective techniques. Outstanding among others for its mass of data is the work by Ames et al. (1961) in which the adolescents' records of the Rorschach test are tabulated and interpreted. The fifteen-year-old is described by the authors as displaying new sensitivities, resistances, and suspicions that frequently make him in his relations with others not only argumentative, but even hostile and belligerent. Sixteen, as reflected in the Rorschach responses, is certainly more energetic, more expansive, and undoubtedly finds life more exciting than he did at 15. The amount of intellectual and emotional expansion that occurs at this age, though it provides greater possibility for difficulty, also gives him greater reserve to solve difficulties when they occur.

Since this paper is concerned particularly with boys of age 15 to 16, it will be useful to sum up this review of the research done on the subject with some of the data collected by Schnell (1952). The author includes in the chart of characteristics of adolescents at different age levels the findings of extensive research in this field. In regard to the problems in the realm of self she says:

The adolescent of 15 and 16 continue to show some of the preadolescent fears, but fears and worries are mainly social and concern examinations, auto accidents, disease, money supply, appearance at home, hurt feelings, lack of success, and making bad impressions. The reactions to these fears continue to be forms of rigidity and running away. Anger is aroused mainly because material objects fail to function properly and is responded to with talk, restlessness, and vio-

exercise. Anxiety to attain the type of behavior for one's socio-economic status, or of that of a status to which one aspires to rise, is a powerful drive for developing the necessary attitudes, appreciations, - and relationships.

Similar findings are reported by Gesell, Ilq, and Ames (1956). As far as personal wishes are concerned the authors found that the most common wishes of boys of 15 and 16 were for peace and for general betterment. Personal happiness is more often wished for than the happiness of others.

### III. PROBLEMS OF THE BOY IN THE HOME

Among the various factors which contribute to the formation of the boy's character and to his adjustment to the society in which he lives, the boy's family or home is one of the most important. This is why the present study attempts to discover, in so far as this is possible by the method used, the influence that home situations have in the Ecuadorean adolescent. It is important, above all, to obtain information about the general structure of the family. The questionnaire attempts to find out the degree of cohesiveness of the Ecuadorean family and its possible financial difficulties.

Table One gathers the results of the answers which refer to the possibility that the adolescent's difficulties might have been produced by a broken home, be it in the sense that parents are separated or divorced, or in the sense that either one of them is dead.

TABLE 1. Cohesiveness in the families  
of 550 Ecuadorean adolescents

Percentages			
	Yes	No	No answer
Father alive	95.1	4.9	---
Mother alive	96.6	3.4	---
Separated or divorced	7.8	87.1	6.1

The findings indicate that the great majority of adolescents enjoy a proper family environment for their development.

In answer to another question, the boys give further signs of the sound constitution of their families when only 5.5 per cent of them state that their mothers are gainfully employed (some of them because they are widows). For nine out of ten boys their mothers have no other concern but to take care of the home.

The financial situation is closely linked with the cohesiveness of the family. The entire character of the home, its cultural level, as well as the boy's social, recreational, and educational opportunities are largely determined by the economic status of the family. Because of the intimate relation between money at the parents' disposal and the granting or deprivation of many of the adolescents' wishes, one of the questions attempted to discover the general economic condition of the home by asking "Do financial troubles frequently create difficulties at home?" To this question 58.5 per cent replied in the negative and 51.5 per cent in the affirmative.

That half of the families in the sample present financial difficulties is not important for this study. But it is interesting to know that half of the boys are concerned about the financial condition of their families. It is indicative also of the personal involvement of the high school boy in the financial situation of his home the fact that no boy failed to answer this question.

Whatever the financial difficulties are, these do not seem to influence the boy in the sense that he should have to make up for them in one way or another. The answers to the questionnaire indicate that 81.3 per cent of the group do not feel overloaded with duties in or about their home. It is interesting to note that in the American sample only 6.6 per cent felt they were overloaded with duties, against 13.5 per cent in the Ecuadorean sample. The implications of this difference seems obvious: in the Ecuadorean family the boy feels less free to ignore the family routine since it is expected of him that he will cooperate in some of the domestic chores. The daily work in an Ecuadorean house is more complex than in America simply because the use of certain modern conveniences are not as widely used for preparing the meals or for storing perishable goods which the Ecuadorean boy will be asked to secure at the nearest store. These daily errands are apt to consume a part of the boy's free time, and this is why some of them complain of being overloaded.

The introductory questions studied so far give a general picture of the home background from which comes the population of the students furnishing the information. It can be noted that the family structure is by and large a healthy one and that, even though there are financial difficulties these do not seem to present a serious problem

for the adolescent's normal development.

Getting closer into the family situation, Table 2 offers valuable data about the adolescent's reaction or general attitude towards his home.

TABLE 2. General reaction of Ecuadorean and American boys to home and parents

	Ecuadorean		American	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feel happy at home	83.0	15.5	90.4	9.3
Too much discipline	43.9	52.4	10.2	86.3
Have enough freedom	46.9	42.5	69.8	27.3
Want more freedom	49.5	41.5	41.8	23.6
Parents too much concerned about what the boys do	76.5	22.2	37.8	58.3

The first question tried to get the general feeling of the boys in regard to their home: Are you usually happy at home? To such a question 83.0 per cent answered "Yes", 15.5 per cent said "No", and a few (5.5 per cent) were either undecided or gave no answer. Table 2 shows that the results in the American population are substantially the same.

Then they were asked whether they thought there was too much discipline at home. The question is an important one for the understanding of the boy's problems at home - because he is likely to feel that an overbearing discipline is unfair, insofar as it hinders his initiative and thwarts his personality. The picture that emerges from the answers as they appear on Table 2, is not quite encouraging and - certainly it is confusing. The Ecuadorean boys at large do not seem to be able to make up their minds about their situation at home in regard to discipline, whereas the American adolescents offer a much more definite picture. Almost half of the boys (43.9 per cent) think they are under too much discipline, while a little over one half (52.4

per cent) state that they are not. They seem to accept a disciplinary situation imposed by the mores of the country when, again, almost half of them feel that they are allowed as much freedom as any other boy of their age. But, on the other hand, in nearly the same proportion they want more social liberties. It seems as if these adolescents do not know exactly how much discipline and how much freedom they should have.

Some light is shed in this situation when the answers to the two questions are analyzed separately. Of the boys who said that they did not have enough freedom, 62.5 per cent argued for more freedom, while 37.5 per cent accepted their plight without further complaint. Of those who reported that they enjoyed as much liberty as the average boy, 23.4 per cent were still unsatisfied with what they had, while 76.6 per cent said that they did not desire more. The questionnaire did not have a specific question to find out whether those demands for freedom were frankly and vocally expressed or were rather manifested in a feeling of inner discomfort.

Perhaps it is one of the clearest instances in which the natural rebellion of the age is felt, even though the boy does not find a reason for his behavior. In this area, however, there is a striking difference with the attitudes of the American boys. Table 2 shows that 37.8 per cent of the subjects of the American sample think that they are too much under the watchful eye of their parents, and 10.2 per cent complain of too much discipline at home. It is in this area that the two cultures differ radically. Child-rearing practices in America tend to promote the independence of children at an earlier age than in other Western cultures (Boehm, 1957). In Ecuador, parents maintain the European tradition according to which freedom is largely curtailed for high school boys who are rather educated to accept parental control.

The answers given by the boys are not to be taken as an objective statement of whether the parents are actually hindering the process of personality development in the adolescents. They are an indication of how the boys feel about the matter and to what extent they find this to be one of their problems. However, since it cannot be assumed that the majority of the adolescents in the present group are wrong in judging the objective situation, it is safe to infer from the findings that most of the parents

are oversolicitous about their sons. Are they with such behavior (even if culturally determined) interfering with the boys' development toward adulthood? It has to be judged by the effects.

When the subjects of the group were asked to report their feelings on specific points of discipline, their answers did not seem to reveal a deep tension between them and their parents. Replying to the question, Do you feel your parents treat you as a young man your age should be treated?, 50.0 per cent say that they are well treated -- frequently, 28.4 per cent are well treated occasionally, - and 21.8 per cent respond negatively. This means that three out of four boys feel that their parents treat them as they should be treated. In other words, they feel that their parents are not interfering, as far as it is possible, -- with their growing need of independence.

Another demand of the increasing maturity of the adolescent is to be permitted to assume some responsibilities to establish himself in his relations with others in his expanding environment. To give the subjects an opportunity to express their reactions in this regard, the following question was asked: Do your parents give you opportunities to share responsibilities? By way of reply almost one fifth of the boys (18.5 per cent) complain that they are not given such opportunities. But much more encouraging is the fact that 78.1 per cent state that their parents take this interest in them.

To sound out the adolescent's general attitude toward his parents they were asked whether they felt so proud of them and they would like their friends to meet them. To this inquiry 78.0 per cent indicated doubt. The findings of these questions are summarized in Table 3 compared with the findings of Fleegle for the American population..

TABLE 3. Specific reactions of Ecuadorean and American adolescents to their parents

	Ecuadorean		American	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Feel proud of parents	78.0	6.9	87.5	6.4
Feel treated as a young man	50.0	21.8	74.0	14.0
Shares in home responsibilities	78.1	18.5	61.4	30.7

The similarity of the percentages in both samples is remarkable. However, a few comments are in order. American parents treat their sons as men more consistently than Ecuadorean parents (another example of the cultural differences in educational ideals, as pointed out above), but do not seem to give them as much responsibilities as their Ecuadorean counterparts, probably because in Ecuador the family structure is more closely knit than in America, and consequently the sharing of different responsibilities has a greater part in it.

This is an important finding because even though an adolescent in his striving for independence wants to assume too early an adult role, it is well to remember that he is still a child, though it is often a deadly insult to imply this to him. As a child it is important for his proper development that he have a sense of security, of belonging, and of being wanted. The boy desires to be recognized and trusted. The home and his parents are there to offer him support, security, and shelter when he needs them. The adolescent should feel free to explore the adult world, secure in the knowledge that in time of need he has somewhere to turn. That is the important psychological function of the home and so it seems to be understood by most of the Ecuadorean parents.

To get yet, another indication of parental treatment the questionnaire asked the boys to check whether they regarded their parents' attitudes towards them as "strict", "lenient", or "medium". In response to this inquiry, 27.7 per cent indicate that they regard their parents as consistently strict, 26.5 per cent as lenient. The majority, 46.1 per cent, look upon their parents as sometimes strict and sometimes lenient.

All this seems to indicate that even if the Ecuadorean adolescent, as any other adolescent, resents the discipline at home but does not consider it an overexacting imposition to which he has to submit. It is interesting to note that in the added remarks to the questions no boy complained of being dominated by parental regulations. On the contrary, some, after stating that the discipline at their homes is strict, do not hesitate to add: "That's the way it should be."

In view of the fact that the parent-son relationship is never static but dynamic, it is necessary that everything in that relationship be adjusted to the change that



is taking place in the personality of the adolescent. -- When the young boys reach adolescence the pressures upon their parents are greater than when they were children. The adolescents strive towards a more independent existence, even though their real life is one of dependence; they ask for more economic and social freedom and they -- have sometimes such unreasonable demands that their parents think they must curb them. On the other hand, the parents insist on new demands from the adolescent; since he is no longer a child they expect him to behave according to his age and to try to conform to an adult pattern of conduct. Thus, there must be a very fine balance in the interaction of psychological forces at work in a family situation.

The results of this interaction in the parent-son relationship, as felt and expressed by the Ecuadorean adolescents of the present study, is summarized in Table 4.

TABLE 4. Frequency with which Ecuadorean adolescents experience internal conflicts resulting from parents' expectations

=====

Type of reaction	Yes	Occ.† 1/Mo	
Think parents demand too much	18.8%		75.4%
Feel parents try to impose their ideas and customs	36.2%	34.8%	29.0%
Obey parental regulations	85.7%		14.2%
Feel angry at father	25.9%	40.7%	32.5%
Are afraid of father	28.8%		59.4%

† Occ. = Occasionally

According to these findings nearly two out of ten boys (18.8 per cent) feel that their parents make excessive demands on them, and 14.2 per cent actually ignore those demands. By far, the majority of the adolescents do not -- show any signs of tensions or conflict with their parents in this respect.

But, this is not the whole picture. To the question whether they thought their parents tried to impose on them

their own ideas and customs, almost three fourths of the boys (71.9 per cent) replied that their parents did act - in such a way at least occasionally. In other words, the boys do not feel that their parents are harsh in their -- commands and exacting in their regulations, but still they feel at a distance from them because they cannot understand or are not willing to accept their parents' ideas. This - situation necessarily leads to psychological separation - between parents and sons. The relationships at home seem to be base largely on some sort of legal basis and external obedience to regulations, whereas a personal dialogue and mutual understanding are ordinarily lacking.

As a matter of fact, the boys obey those parental regulations which pertain strictly to the external order and whose non observance is easily checked, such as being back on time when allowed out at night. The reactions of the boys are entirely different when the parents try to regulate the personal decisions of their sons. To the question If your parents don't approve of your friends, do you stop going with them?, nearly half of the boys (45.9 per cent) answered negatively, 27.8 per cent said that they complied sometimes, and 26.3 per cent gave an affirmative reply. These results indicate that the vast majority of the adolescents are not willing to accept their parents' ideas in the choice of friends. Maybe the parents are actually wrong or prejudiced in their disapproval. At any rate, it is well to keep in mind that the adolescent has his own opinions - and that he is not likely to accept the advice of his parents in matters that he thinks are his own private concern. The same attitude is probably maintained in many - other individual areas not touched by the present investigation.

Is all this, just a product of the adolescent's hypersensitivity and suspiciousness that lead him to see in every adult, specially in those nearest to him, a potential enemy of his personality and self-determination? Perhaps it is. The results analyzed showed that when the questions refer to situations easily observable (such as discipline, demands, share of responsibilities) the replies indicate a rather satisfactory home situation. When the boy is asked, however, to express his views on something more intangible or difficult to detect, at least for an adolescent mind, such as whether the parents have old-fashioned ideas that they try to impose on them, the answers tend to put parents on an unfavorable light.

Even though the boy's appreciation of his parents attitudes might be subjective, the fact is that it has a tremendous impact in the way a boy approaches his parents. To the question Are you ever angry at your father?, more than one out of four boys (25.9 per cent) said that they were angry frequently, four out of ten (40.7 per cent) were angry occasionally, and 32.5 per cent that they were never or rarely angry at them (see Table 4). This means that a good majority of the adolescents resent their fathers at least sometimes.

This anger is a normal emotional expression of the adolescent ( and of any other person for that matter) when he thinks that things go wrong. In the group studied it does not seem to have a harmful and lasting effect in the boy's personality because 59.4 per cent state that they are not afraid of their fathers. However, 23.8 per cent do seem to be afraid, and 12.6 per cent are uncertain. The picture is not disheartening but it is not encouraging either.

This unfortunate situation of fear of the father explains the adolescent's lack of confidence in him. To the question Do you discuss your difficulties and personal problems with your father?, 57.2 per cent of the boys answer negatively, while only 13.4 per cent say that they discuss their problems frequently, and 19.5 per cent that they do so occasionally. To a parallel question referring to the mother, 42.7 per cent replied negatively, 29.2 per cent stated that they consulted with their mothers occasionally, and 25.8 per cent, frequently. Table 5 presents the frequencies with which Ecuadorean and American boys consult with their parents, and the results to the next two questions to be analyzed about whether they thought their parents understood their difficulties and personal problems.

TABLE 5. Frequency with which Ecuadorean and American boys discuss their personal problems with their parents, and are understood by them

Question	Ecuadorean			American		
	Yes	Occ. <sup>1</sup>	No	Yes	Occ.	No
Discuss difficulties with Father?	12.0	25.5	62.5	14.3	28.2	48.9
With mother?	25.8	36.1	38.0	27.7	32.0	36.3
Feel your father understands you?	52.4	12.6	15.8	51.5		26.4

Question	Ecuadorean			American		
	Yes	Occ.	No	Yes	Occ.	No
Feel your mother understands ?	55.0		15.7	67.8		17.3

It is worth noting that the number of adolescents who discuss their problems with their mothers, at least on occasions is 24.4 per cent larger than the number of those who discuss with their fathers. This would seem somewhat surprising, since one would expect the boy entering into manhood to seek a closer contact with his father. However, the results agree with the findings of Jonson (1952) who in a study on the conceptions of parents held by adolescents, found that the subjects of his study considered -- the father as the provider, while the mother's role was regarded as one of moral and behavioral guide, source of affection, and housekeeper.

A comparison with the results obtained by Fleege in his group, as it can be seen in Table 5, leads to the conclusion that lack of confidence in parents (and, incidentally, the tendency to consult with mothers more often -- than with fathers) is one of the traits of youth's personality, a spontaneous trend of the boy towards keeping his problems to himself.

Nor is this situation the result of a failure from the part of the parents. To the question of whether the boys thought that their fathers and mothers understood -- their problems (see Table 5) more than half of the boys replied affirmatively to both questions.

It is interesting to point out the number of boys -- who were unable to give a "yes" or "no" answer. To the question of whether they thought their fathers understood their problems, 28.0 per cent were undecided; to the same question referring the mother, 25.6 per cent were undecided. This would indicate that boys are not quite able to judge objectively in an interpersonal situation. They are easily carried away by conflicting feelings.

The rather vague and naive answers they give to the next question: What do you feel are the reasons for being misunderstood? further confirms this conclusion. Although the question called for a reply of the essay type, the ma-

majority of reasons given could be classified under the headings that appear in Table 6.

TABLE 6. Reasons why parents misunderstand their sons

Rank	Reason given	Per cent
1.	Parents don't know the boy, don't know the difficulties of his age.....	26.5
2.	Parents are old-fashioned and narrow-minded.	22.3
3.	Boy's own fault, doesn't like to talk, difficulty in expressing himself, etc.....	17.1
4.	Lack of mutual confidence.....	13.9
5.	Parents lack experience, talent, patience...	13.4
6.	Parents are unconcerned about the boy's problems.....	6.9

A brief analysis of Table 6 shows that more than seven out of ten boys place the blame of being misunderstood on the parents, stating that the parents do not know the boy well enough, that they do not know the things he has to face, the circumstances under which he acts that are completely different from those of the days when parents were young, that they are unconcerned about the boy's problems, that they lack experience to guide them. Fewer than two out of ten (17.1 per cent) place the blame on the boy himself, stating that the boy is not frank enough with his parents, or simply saying that "It's the boy own fault."

These reasons give a cross-section view of the modern adolescent's opinion as to why parents misunderstood him; but in presenting his reasons in such a summary way we lose much of the individuality of the response and a certain amount of meaning. Here is a sampling of these opinions:

They didn't have the liberties we enjoy now.  
Because parents expect their sons to be perfect and this isn't possible always.  
Fathers are always busy and just care about their work.

Because we think we're grown-ups and know everything. It is not that we aren't understood: we think differently from our parents and we feel they don't understand us. They've old-fashioned ideas about things and circumstances. Maybe they were never young.

It is particularly interesting to point out the similarities between the replies of the subjects of the Ecuadorean sample and those of the American sample in view of the fact that the question proposed did not provide a --- number of answers to be checked, but rather gave boys an opportunity to speak their own minds.

The results obtained by Fleege (1945, p.84, Table4) are shown in Table 7 in abridged form, because the author divides each of his six headings into various subheadings and these, in the present study, were inapplicable for -- purposes of comparison.

TABLE 7. Reasons why parents misunderstand their sons, according to the opinion of a group of American adolescents (Abridged)

=====	
Reason	Per cent
1. Parents do not know the boy well enough, the difficulties he has to face, his wants, etc...	30.3
2. Boy is not confidential or frank enough with his parents.....	29.1
3. Parents are from a different age and old-fashioned.....	26.5
4. Boys feel they are different, have different ideas, different points of view than parents...	17.4
5. Parents are not chummy enough, not interested.	14.8
6. Miscellaneous: boy's own fault, difficulty in expressing himself, misinterpret boy's actions	8.5

It is striking to observe that answers closely fall into the same categories as in Table 6. As it can be seen in a glance at both Tables, the frequencies with which appear the different reasons for being misunderstood are -- substantially parallel in both the Ecuadorean and the American sample.

It would be safe to conclude that it is not necessarily the parents' fault if the boys feel misunderstood. In the personality of the adolescent himself, whether Ecuadorean or American, there seems to exist a barrier of prejudices (intellectual or emotional) which makes it difficult for him to understand the adult world, hence he feels misunderstood. It would appear also that many of those barriers are made up of the unsurmountable differences in age and education between the two generations. This makes it hard and tazing for both parties the parent-son relationship.

Since, because of the personality makeup of the adolescent and his reduced capacity for understanding complex situations, it cannot be expected from him to make the first move, it is up to his parents to take the initiative of going over that barrier to open the communication channels - which the boy needs.

The finding that the boys are anxious to seek guidance and experience the need to talk to someone about -- their intimate problems is further confirmed by the fact that at the end of the questionnaire most of them added remarks showing their enthusiasm for having an opportunity to reveal themselves. Some clearly manifested their wish that adults, their parents in particular, could have access to their answers in order to better help and guide them. Here are some of their remarks:

This questionnaire gave me a chance to unbulden myself. Parents and teachers should see this to know the psychology of young people.

Hope this helps to remedy some of our problems.

There are many other problems which I'd like to discuss with someone.

It is encouraging for a young man to know that somebody cares about him.

A boy should be interviewed personally to talk about his problems.

It is not, therefore, that the adolescent wants to be alone and that he rejects any advice or counsel. He demands (and he has every right to it) to be understood and not to be forced to live in world prematurely adult. He demands guidance, but guidance should not be such that it interferes with the individual development of his personality.

It is to be noted, incidentally, that the parents -- (the fathers specially) of the Ecuadorean adolescents do not seem to be aware of the opportunity they have of providing their sons with a solid basis for the adolescent's search of identity. As Erikson (1950) observes, the adolescence is characterized by a search for a new sense of continuity and sameness manifested in its strivings to -- conform to what they consider worthwhile ideals. This -- carries the danger of role diffusion if there is an over-identification, to the point of apparent complete loss of identity, with the heroes of cliques and crowds. It is -- the responsibility of the fathers to be so near their sons, in psychological contact, that they become accessible images to identify with.

It is heartening to know that the example of a dedicated and responsible life seems to be given by the Ecuadorean fathers, as it will be noted in the next chapter. This is good and sound; but the Ecuadorean boys feel that they also need a personal encounter with their fathers, -- in which the keynote should be the mutual understanding -- and a rich exchange of experiences.

It was mentioned above that, the main source of tension at home seems to be a lack of dialogue between parents and sons, and that the first step to remedy the situation must be taken by the parents. The situation is -- particularly trying because, as Gesell notes (1956), it -- is typical of boys aged 15 to 16 to feel they suffer from restraint. This tends to make them argumentative and remote with both parents. Or, as Erikson (1950, p.228) writes "Adolescents have to refight many of the battles of earlier years, even though to do so they must artificially -- appoint perfectly well-meaning people to play the roles of enemies." The data of the present study tend to confirm these observations and make them valid for the adolescents of Ecuador.

It does not seem, therefore, that Ecuadorean adolescents are suffering under an undue parental protection or that Ecuadorean parents insist in maintaining an unhealthy distance from their sons. The conflicting situation seems to be universal. These conclusions should make parents aware of their duty to guide their sons with due regard to their relative independence and to the privacy of their -- growing personalities.



To test the adolescent's appraisal of parental guidance the following question was asked: Do you approve - of the way your parents try to guide you? To this question an overwhelming majority (85.3 per cent) answered - "yes", while only 44.8 per cent said "no", and 9.7 per cent were undecided. The answer to this question would seem to carry considerable weight, for their opinion in this matter determines by and large the effect which parental guidance is likely to have on the adolescents. If the boy disapproves of his parents' methods, little of what they say or do, will have any lasting effect upon his attitude or conduct.

A general picture of what the boy thinks of his home situation is given by the replies to the next two questions Have your dealings with your father usually been satisfactory? and Have your dealings with your mother usually been satisfactory? The results of both the Ecuadorean and American sample are shown in Table 8.

TABLE 8. General appraisal of the relations with parents by Ecuadorean and American boys

	Satisfactory		Unsatisfactory		Undecided	
	Ecuad.	Amer.	Ecuad.	Amer.	Ec.	Amer.
Dealings with father	81.2%	82.5%	7.2%	8.0%	8.5%	7.4%
Dealings with mother	82.9%	88.8%	6.1%	5.1%	9.7%	4.3%

As it was noted previously, boy's relations with his mother are usually more satisfactory than with his father. Perhaps this is because, as the boys themselves state, they feel more inclined to confide in their mothers than in -- their fathers.

The questionnaire presented one last question to find out whether the boys were usually satisfied or not at home. The replies shows that 13.2 per cent of the boys are unsatisfied with the home environment and manifest signs of maladjustment to the home situation. The other 86.5 per cent are fairly well adjusted. This is to say that even though the adolescent in regard to his home experiences - certain problems which have been studied in detail, those problems are not so serious as to hinder the happiness and normal development of the adolescent.

Just because parent-child conflicts increase during adolescence, its significance should not be exaggerated nor the many positive aspects of this relationship should be ignored. As Jersild (1946) writes:

Friction in various forms is almost inevitable in the home is peopled by real persons. The normal home has its quota of bickering and disagreement. One of the functions of a good home is to serve as a place where husbands, wives, and children can become annoyed with each other without suffering dire consequences. The more solid the affection between members of the family the more will each feel free to be himself.

While the adolescent is beginning to live more independently, his parents and his home continue to be of great importance in his life. He needs security which the home affords. It is important to him to be able to count on his parents as persons who regard him with disinterested affection and in whom he can confide without fear of ridicule or betrayal. He needs the home as a base of operations that is stable when other things are changing. He also needs the home as a place where he can relax and give way occasionally to complaints and childish behavior which he would not allow himself to display in his relations with his peers or with adults outside the home.

#### IV. PROBLEMS OF THE BOY IN THE REALM OF SELF

The image of the Ecuadorean adolescent that appears so far is that of a personality fairly well adjusted to his environment, experiencing, however, certain problems whose source and reason he cannot quite explain or understand. It does not seem that his problems are the product of parental misunderstanding or lack of guidance, and yet he resents them deeply. Or is it that he is unsatisfied with himself and projects his puzzlement to those near him? A hint of this complex inner life of the adolescent appeared when he was found anxious to seek guidance and yet unwilling, at the same time, to reveal his innermost thoughts to others. It is as if behind that protective veil of a poised image there would lurk a restless world of doubts, worries and fears. In fact, many of them expressed, at the end of the questionnaire, a feeling of relief for being able to unburden their problems. It is these struggles that go on within the boy's innermost self which this chapter intends to analyze.

By putting forth questions relative to various inner reactions this study attempts to get an insight into the complex variety of difficulties the adolescent experiences in his efforts at making adjustments to his growing self.

To get an overview of how the adolescent feels to his life in general he was asked: Is your life at present happy? To this question 64.5 percent answered in the affirmative, 19.5 per cent in the negative, while 13.4 per cent were uncertain of their general reaction.

Two other questions which called forth a general appraisal of his own life were: Are you satisfied with your health? and Do you feel satisfied with your character? - To the former question, 79.2 per cent answered affirmatively, 15.8 per cent negatively, and 5.0 per cent were uncertain. To the latter question, 50.0 per cent stated that they were satisfied with their character, while 30.4 per cent said that they were not, and 19.5 per cent were undecided. The results are shown in Table 9, compared with the results obtained by Fleege in the American group.

TABLE 9. General appraisal of themselves by Ecuadorean and American adolescents

Questions	Ecuadorean		American	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Satisfied with your life?	64.5%	19.5%	77.6%	19.6%
Satisfied with your health?	79.2%	15.8%	81.2%	15.7%
Satisfied with your character?	50.0%	30.4%	63.5%	27.2%

The rather high percentage of boys who are dissatisfied with their characters (and this is true in both samples) seems to be a sign of the unstable situation of the adolescent and, perhaps, of his desire to improve. The general picture emerging from both samples is one of healthy optimism. It is impossible to ignore the possibility that some of the boys are deceiving themselves in their appreciations, but it is important to know that they do not tend to overestimate their problems or to feel sorry for themselves.

The next series of questions allow a closer look into the inner world of the adolescent. His answers will reveal to what extent the conflicts he meets with in his attempts at adjustment make him discouraged, create fears, and cause him to worry.

One of the first problems the boy has to face with in his process of adjustment to the world is to find it too complicated, with danger of retreating to his own little world. In fact, 40.5 per cent of the Ecuadorean adolescents think, at least occasionally, that life is too complicated to understand what it is all about, 33.2 per cent say that they feel that way frequently, and 26.2 per cent are apparently well adjusted to life.

This finding is important for the understanding the adolescents, because it gives an idea of the degree of puzzlement and even discouragement they sometimes fall into. It is not at all odd that if life appears to them as difficult to be understood they will feel a depressing effect that somewhat blunts their energies, making it hard for them to open up to the adult world.

How do they look upon their responsibilities in this world? In regard to this question there is a remarkable difference in the reactions of Ecuadorean and American adolescents. In the American sample 33.9 per cent of the boys fear the responsibilities of adulthood, but 56.7 per cent do not. In the Ecuadorean group the two positions are almost equally distributed: 45.7 per cent show certain fear of the future, 49.7 per cent are either uncertain or unwilling to respond, while 45.1 per cent do not feel any fear.

The reason for this difference could be that Ecuadorean boys see less opportunities for them in the future, because they know that the history of their country is -- characterized by uncertainty and instability both politically and economically. Or again, the difference of attitudes in both samples could reflect the deep changes operated in the world in the past two decades in the economic and social structures. The contemporary world is not that of 1945 (when Fleege's study was published); youth of today, above all, is not sure of finding a place in the changing complexity of society.

This constitutes a problem in the education of adolescents, for they do not seem to be ready to shoulder the responsibilities of the adult world in which they will soon be living. Perhaps this is one consequence of the family and school situation that does not give the adolescent -- much opportunity to test his capacities.

In answer to the question What do you fear most?, the fear of failure and future responsibilities are mentioned by 51.3 per cent of the boys. Other items such as death of parents, accidents, sin and punishment appear in a very few questionnaires. This means that the boy is acutely aware of his shortcomings and that the experience of his failures at school has weakened the confidence in himself.

It seems contradictory that in answer to another question Do you feel you have self-confidence? two thirds of the boys (66.9 per cent) replied affirmatively, while the other third replied in the negative or did not know. If the majority of adolescents state that they have confidence in themselves, how can it be explained that they are afraid of the future? Perhaps in this apparent contradiction is to be found a deep insight into the mind of the adolescent

they are afraid of failure as any other human being but - they know that, with effort and perseverance, they will - be able to succeed. In many of them this is probably a - sort of wishful thinking.

On the other hand, that fear of the future could very well refer to its mentioned uncertainty. The adolescents know that they can succeed if they are provided with an opportunity. The idealism of youth appears clearly in these findings: the boy knows he can get ahead in the world, although he does not know exactly when and how. He is afraid of the future responsibilities but he feels that in his process of growing up he will find in himself new capabilities to face new problems. Perhaps the self-confidence of the adolescent is optimistic and with little foundation in reality; his expanding consciousness, however, will provide him with the exact measure of what he can do and the amount of effort that he has to display.

Table 10 summarizes the feelings of Ecuadorean and American adolescents in regard to the future.

TABLE 10. Attitudes of Ecuadorean and American adolescents in regard to the future

Attitude	Ecuadorean	American
Hopeful, enthusiastic	54.3%	69.2%
Worried, doubtful	37.4%	25.5%
Indifferent, resigned	8.4%	5.8%

The distribution of the way the adolescent most frequently feels about his future is substantially the same in the Ecuadorean and American samples. Most of the boys are hopeful and enthusiastic. The difference in percentages, however, indicates once more what was said above: Ecuadorean adolescents are less inclined than their American counterparts to have a bright image of their future.

This general optimism of the boy is not the result of his actual accomplishments, nor of his certainty about vocational plans; it is rather the result of his confidence in the development of his personal capabilities.

Another area of the relationships of the boy with -- himself. To what extent do conflict with reality and consequent doubts and worries cause the adolescent to become introverted or moody? The following question tried to -- find out: Do you ever get into moods when you can't seem to cheer up? To this question, eight out of ten boys -- (84.5 per cent) replied "yes", while only 15.2 per cent -- replied "no". This manifests the difficult and changing character of the boy, and consequently the insecurity he experiences in regard to himself. He seems to be so painfully aware of the physical and mental changes that go on within him, that it is hard for him to maintain a balance.

This is further confirmed by the answers to another question: Have you ever worried about whether you were normal or not?, that gives information which the adolescent is least likely to speak about to others. Nearly one third of the boys (30.0 per cent) are frequently worried about -- this difficulty. For the other two thirds the thought of being abnormal has never entered their minds at all or only in a passing manner.

It would seem, from a glance at Table 11, that in this area the Ecuadorean boys are more problematic than the American boys.

TABLE 11. Frequency with which Ecuadorean and American adolescents experience personality difficulties

Item	Ecuadorean			American		
	F	O	R	F	O	R
Moodiness	41.5	50.0	8.5	19.4	55.7	24.9
Fear of being abnormal	30.0	33.1	36.9	6.3	17.4	75.6

Key: F= Frequently; O= Occasionally; R= Rarely

The adolescent of Ecuador seems to be more given to mood changes and to introspection, making him more aloof in his relationships with adult people and, therefore, -- more difficult to be reached by counselors or teachers. This does not mean necessarily that Ecuadorean adolescents are mentally less healthy than American boys, but that they

worry about themselves more easily, and that they tend -- more to introversion, which is in accord with the observations of many who have had contact with adolescents in -- both countries.

These personal problems have a depressing effect upon the adolescent. His moodiness, his own difficulties in - making adjustments to changes going on within him, and his ever deepening sense of inadequacy render him only too ready to fasten his attention on the idea of being "different" from other boys of his age. This self-consciousness, together with his hungry longing for social approval and his desire to achieve, focuses his attention on himself in a way that can be dangerous. Thus the boy becomes introspective, fall into habits of studying his own failures, dissects his motives, and as a result is impressed with a sense of his own inadequacy. The emotional overtones of this - excessive concern about himself probably explains his fear of not being normal.

This picture becomes more enlightening after a look at Table 11 in which some of the difficulties that worry the adolescent are specified.

TABLE 11. Frequency with which certain worries appear in the Ecuadorean adolescent

Item	F	O	R
Feels self-conscious about own faults	11.4	44.8	42.4
Feels as if he lacks will power	12.8	37.7	50.0
Feels sad or depressed	17.1	39.4	42.0

Key: F = Frequently; O = Occasionally; R = Rarely

The results of this Table indicate that the consciousness of their own faults, the feeling of a lack of will power, and a reaction of sadness are experiences that trouble one half of the adolescents. Happily this experience is - not felt frequently, but, in the majority of cases, in an occasional way.

The question that naturally comes to mind is: What causes this feeling in the adolescent boy? The answers - given by the Ecuadorean subjects are recorded in Table 12.



TABLE 12. Alleged causes for feelings of sadness and depression according to a sample of Ecuadorean boys

Rank	Cause	Per cent
1.	Personality difficulties, defects of character, feelings of inadequacy.....	29.4
2.	No answer, or "I don't know".....	15.1
3.	Troubles in the home, arguments, parental attitude.....	12.9
4.	Difficulties in studies and school.....	12.8
5.	Girl-friend troubles.....	11.5
6.	Sex worries.....	9.7
7.	Boredom, loneliness.....	6.5

Almost one third of the boys attribute their feelings of sadness and depression to their own personalities, that is, to the way they react towards the environment. They seem to be quite aware of the fact that their own instability is the cause of their periods of sadness.

This insight is the healthy result of Ecuadorean adolescents' introspection. In the American sample, the -- highest percentage (22.6 per cent) answered with "I don't know" or gave no answer, whereas personality difficulties are listed ninth (5.1 per cent). This is why Fleege (p. 320) concludes that practically all the subjects of his study "failed to grasp the underlying reason: their own instability."

To be sure, difficulties at home and in the school -- area burden for many of the Ecuadorean boys, but these -- can be objective difficulties. It is a sign of Ecuadorean boys' sincerity towards themselves and the questionnaire that they did not try to camouflage reality Blaming others or circumstances for a painful problem which is within -- them.

If the adolescent has certain problems with himself, it is necessary for him to have at the same time a solution for them, in order to achieve the integration of his personality. This solution must be found first in the realm of the subjective and then in the help and guidance -- that he receives from others.

Above all, it is important for the boy to have powerful ideals to feel the void he feels within because of -- his own inadequacy, and at the same time provide definite guiding lines for his conduct. The adolescent is characteristically a hero worshipper and pursuer of ideals. -- Generally he looks for someone whom he can look up to, -- someone whom he can admire, imitate, and follow. The thought of his ideal carries with it a desire to achieve and furnishes the motives to transform this desire into action.

In answer to a question on this matter, 58.2 per cent of the boys replied that they had an ideal or hero to imitate, while 35.1 per cent replied that they did not have one, and 6.7 per cent were uncertain.

To the next question Who is your ideal or hero?, most of the answers mentioned some specific individual by name or by profession: an architect, a doctor, a scientist. -- Very few of them simply stated: "One who knows how to succeed in life", "A man of character with his feet on the -- ground", "A famous man who'll be remembered", "A lucky -- man".

Table 13 presents the findings on the boys' ideals, both in the Ecuadorean and American samples.

TABLE 13. Persons mentioned by Ecuadorean and American boys as their ideals or heroes

Ecuadorean Group			American Group		
Rank	Ideal or Hero	Per cent	Rank	Ideal or Hero	Per cent
1.	A famous doctor, engineer, scientist, etc.	25.3	1.(5) <sup>1</sup>	A certain athlete	27.9
2.	My father	25.0	2.(2)	My father	10.9
3.	A historical -- character (Balfour Kennedy)	18.1	3.(4)	Christ	6.6
4.	Christ	12.5	4.(6)	A certain Saint	6.2
5.	A certain athlete (Pelé, Larrea)	7.9	5.(1)	A great engineer, doctor, lawyer, etc.	6.0
6.	A certain Saint	4.5	6.(8)	A certain movie star	3.7
7.	My big brother, uncle	4.5	7.(3)	A certain historical character	3.4

Ecuadorean Group				American Group			
Rank	Ideal or Hero	Per cent		Rank	Ideal or Hero	Per cent	
4.	A movie character	2.3		3.(7)	My big brother	1.9	
9.	A certain teacher	1.1		9.(9)	A certain teacher	1.8	

<sup>1</sup>The number in parentheses refer to the rank order in the Ecuadorean sample, for purposes of comparison.

The most striking fact in this Table is the rank difference in the choice of an athlete hero. In the American sample it tops the list, whereas in the Ecuadorean group it is in the fifth place. The explanation might be that in Ecuador sports do not occupy an important place in the cultural life of the country. Even for the boys, it appears that a professional soccer player (or any other athlete) is hardly considered a success by the country social standards. The difference could also mean that in their choice of ideals the Ecuadorean boys are more realistic and serious-minded than the American adolescents.

The most interesting finding, however, is that in both samples fathers were mentioned as ideals or heroes in the second place. This is more worth noting in the Ecuadorean group, where one out of four boys (25.3 per cent) chose their fathers as an ideal. It can only be speculated that this must be a closely guarded secret in the adolescent's mind. In their conversations with friends and relatives they hardly show any other interest than in movie and sport characters. Yet, when they can safely be sincere and express their feelings without fear of social pressures, they let come up to the surface the admiration and esteem they have towards their fathers.

Almost the same can be said of the choice of Christ in the fourth place (third in the American sample) by 12.5 per cent of the boys. This seems to manifest that youth is much more serious and concerned about the important values in life than this apparent carelessness would lead to suspect. Hence the urgent need that someone endowed with authority and patience, be able to share in the innermost thoughts of young people to help them in their process of personality integration.

Do boys have someone with whom they can talk over - their intimate problems confidentially? The answers to this question show that 70.2 per cent have someone in -- whom they do or think they could confide. Almost one -- fourth of the boys (23.6 per cent) say that they have none to whom they might go for help in their intimate difficulties.

Those who stated that they had a confidant were asked to indicate whether or not they had ever consulted this person; if they had not, they were asked to give an explanation. To the first question 77.6 per cent say that they have consulted with their trusted friend. Some of these, -- 31.1 per cent, say "only occasionally". However, 21.3 per cent of those who feel that they have someone whom they could consult have never gone to him with their problems.

It would be meaningless to try to tabulate the explanations given for not having sought guidance because there were too many boys who did not answer, and because the reasons given were so varied that they defied classification. Perhaps it is interesting to know some of their replies:

I'm afraid my problems will puzzle them and they will not be able to find an answer. I might be bawled out.  
I prefer not to talk about my things.  
They can't understand me.  
I'm afraid these things only happen to me.  
I think I would be ignored.

This characteristic of being so shy in the expression of their own problems and the little decision in seeking help and counsel from other persons, is not typical of the Ecuadorian adolescents but of youth at large. Table 14 -- compares the findings in the two adolescent populations.

TABLE 14. Problems of personal counsel in Ecuadorian and American adolescents

Questions	Ecuadorian			American		
	Y	O	N	Y	O	N
Have you someone to talk to?	70.2	23.6	23.6	68.8		26.4
Have you consulted this person?	31.1	46.5	21.3	46.0	40.4	12.1

Key: Y = Yes; O = Occasionally; N = No, never

The high percentage of boys who in both samples respond affirmatively to the question of whether they have someone to talk to, seems to indicate simply a statement of a fact: there are people to whom the adolescents could go to. But this fact does not have a vital resonance in the boy's mind. He cannot deny that there are people from whom he could seek guidance, but this does not seem to -- constitute an invitation, in the personal and subjective level, to actually consider those people as able and willing to help him. Hence, it would be safe to conclude -- that the boy wants to be helped, because he finds himself unable to solve his own confused problems, but he does not take the risk of giving expression to his difficulties because he fears that they may reveal his total worthlessness.

Another question in this matter reads: To whom do you most frequently go to get advice and talk over things intimately? Table 15 summarizes the responses.

TABLE 15. Sources of personal counsel for Ecuadorean adolescents

Rank	Source of counsel	Per cent
1.	Priest, spiritual director.....	37.1
2.	Friends.....	27.3
3.	Mother.....	15.1
4.	Father.....	10.6
5.	Big brothers, other relatives.....	10.4

Only one fourth of the boys (25.7 per cent) go to -- their parents (more frequently to their mothers) when they want personal advice. A slightly higher percentage (27.3 per cent) prefers to go to friends (either their own age or older). The priest and spiritual director comes first, -- with 37.1 per cent naming him as their most frequent consultant. This of course is only true of the Catholic --- school boys; boys from other schools either do not have a confidant or they go more frequently to their friends.

The Catholic high schools are in a privileged position to have a beneficial and lasting influence in the education of the adolescent personality, because they have the ins-

titution of the Spiritual Counselor. Unfortunately, it would seem from the findings of the present study, that it is only that in most cases; an institution. If the Spiritual Counselor would take his role wholeheartedly, the boys would go to him more often, and he would be in a position to give them a profound orientation in these difficult years of adolescence. Problems with parents could be minimized this way, since a proper guidance would teach the boy to overcome the fears and prejudices which are in the way of a confident communication. The boy would learn that it is not dangerous to communicate personally and efficiently with adult world.

One last question was addressed to the boys, which can be considered as a sort of a summary question: what the boys consider to be the biggest personal problem, that is to say, the problem that worries or troubles him most. The answers to this questionnaire are presented in Table 16 -- compared with the answers given by American boys.

TABLE 16. Biggest personal problem of Ecuadorean and American adolescents

Ecuadorean			American		
Rank	Problem	Per cent	Rank	Problem	Per cent
1.	Difficulties at school	29.2	1.	Purity, breaking a habit, impure thoughts	20.6
2.	Girls, girl-friend troubles	18.0	2.	Vocation: deciding on future	17.1
3.	Sex problems: masturbation, unspecified	12.0	3.	Difficulties at school, studies	11.4
4.	Vocation: deciding on future	11.2	4.	Girls, girl-friend troubles	3.6
5.	Problems at home: parents' behavior, misunderstood	9.2	5.	problems at home	3.6
6.	Personal problems: character	6.4	6.	Religious difficulties: doubts, etc.	2.7
7.	Health, illness, money	4.0	7.	Health, illness	2.1
8.	Religious doubts	3.2	8.	Personal problems	1.7

While only one boy in the Ecuadorean group stated -- that he had no "biggest problem" at all, and 6.1 per cent - gave no answer or replied with "I don't know", the highest percentage (30.2 per cent) in the American sample gave -- such a reply. This seems to confirm a finding noted above: Ecuadorean boys appear to have a sharper insight into their own inner lives than do American boys in Fleege's study. This is further manifested in the finding that personal - problems, such as difficulties of character, anger, laziness are ranked last (with 1.7 per cent) in the American group, whereas these problems are in the sixth place (with 6.4 per cent) in the Ecuadorean group. Because of their introspectiveness and tendency to self-analysis, Ecuadorean adolescents are more likely to consider themselves their "biggest" problem.

Problems related with sex (Fleege insists in calling them "problems of purity" - at his own risk) are top ranking in the American sample (20.6 per cent), while the same occupy a third place among the problems of Ecuadorean boys, in a percentage half as low (12.0 per cent). This seems - to point to a healthier attitude in sexual education in -- the more recent times. The boys do not appear to be so -- much obsessed by the sinfulness of "bad thoughts" and masturbation. They undoubtedly have these problems, but they are inclined to pay more attention to their problems of dealing with other people and to the very actual problem of - succeeding in their studies, (first in rank in the Ecuadorean group, with 29.2 per cent).

It is also a healthy sign of their maturing personalities that 18.0 per cent mentioned girls as their biggest problem. There is no way of telling for sure which kind of problem, girls constitute for them. Some of the boys cared to add: "I love a girl and she doesn't love me", "I don't know how to talk to my girl-friend", "I can't keep girls out of my mind". Naive remarks which wonderfully -- uncover the painful indecision of the adolescent faced -- with a personal relationship and his search for identity in order to be a man and be able to love. That this is a -- real preoccupation for them is further confirmed by the - fact that most of the boys who appended their free comments at the end of the questionnaire said that the problems of love and of boy-girl relationship should be dealt with so that the problem inventory would be complete. -- Which, of course, is true and it must be the subject of a - another study on the psychology of Ecuadorean adolescents.

## V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

At the end of this study, a feeling prevails that it has only touched an enormous field of investigation in the mind of the Ecuadorean adolescent, and that much is left to know and to do in order that parents and educators have an objective guiding line for the better understanding of youth.

Naturally, there is nothing in these findings that is new or that has not been said before. Many of the Ecuadorean parents and educators are, perhaps, aware of the problems of adolescents as they have been presented in this study. The contribution of the chosen method of investigation rests on the fact that it allowed the boys to speak for themselves, without imposing them any preconceived categories. If results are largely in agreement with common sense observations, they just helped to confirmed hypotheses and to try to do something effective to guide adolescents boys. As one of them said in his own naive and straightforward way: "We know our problems very well. -- Why don't you rather ask our parents and teachers? They don't know what we're like." When helping the boys with the problems presented here, educators will know that they are on the right track.

In general, the image of the Ecuadorean adolescent appears sound. In spite of his problems and blunt responses there is a desire to be better, to reach an adulthood in which he can be efficient and useful for his family and country. This would seem to do with the prejudice (so widely diffused by the mass media) that youth does not accept any boundaries of restraint and, that youth's blind rebelliousness carries them to destroy every social and moral value. High school population of the present study projects a very different image, as it is to be seen in their choice of ideals and in the problems that worry them most.

In regard to the relationships of the adolescents at home, it is interesting to know that the boy generally -- feels happy at home and that his parents are interested in him, to the point that a good percentage of the boys chose their fathers as their ideals to imitate (even if some ad-



ded frankly: "With certain reservations!"). Frequently - boy tends to interpret that interest as an excessive interference in his individual life and, therefore, he tends to reject parental confidence under the pretext of not -- being understood. In the present study there are no elements to find out whether this feeling responds to an objective reality or not. It would seem, judging from certain remarks, that parents do not have enough time for -- their sons, or that they are somewhat afraid of entering into the world of their adolescent sons, who, on the other hand, are particularly sensitive and apt to consider any advices from the frown-ups as an invasion of their personal privacy. This is why the boy is inclined to think of his parents' views as old-fashioned and some of their commands as unreasonable. The inevitably close contacts that go with living together in the home are liable to prove a source of further problems for him in the form of conflicts with his parents as well as with other members of the family.

Another observation that comes from an overview of - the findings of this study is the general sameness of problem trends among American and Ecuadorean adolescents (even though the samples were taken thirty years apart). Practically all have a tendency to feel misunderstood, to worry about their future, to be anxious over their schoolwork, and to feel rather uncertain about their own status. This sameness in the problems gives some confidence that the - investigations on the psychology of the adolescent carried out in America are also valid as an orientation for the understanding and education of the Ecuadorean boys.

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