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The Integration of Military Adolescents in a Civilian High School

Terri L. Eide

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THE INTEGRATION OF MILITARY ADOLESCENTS
IN A CIVILIAN HIGH SCHOOL

by

Terri L. Eide
Bachelor of Arts, University of North Dakota, 1997

A Thesis
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty
of the
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In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of
Master of Arts

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May
1999
This thesis, submitted by Terri L. Eide in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota, has been read by the faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done and is hereby approved.

(Chairperson)

This thesis meets the standards for appearance, conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

Dean of the Graduate School  

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Title The Integration of Military Adolescents in a Civilian High School

Department Sociology

Degree Master of Arts

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This study identifies those factors that affect the integration of military and civilian adolescents in a public high school. The convenience sample includes 85 students from military families and 129 students from civilian families. They range in age 13 to 18 years of age. Subjects completed a questionnaire about their sense of belonging to the school environment, individual attachment to the school and others, and peer group association. The analysis revealed that adolescents from military families experience a slightly lower level of integration within the public high school studied than students from civilian families. Additionally, race, as well as military status, is an important contributor to students' sense of belonging and to their level of individual attachment to the school and to others. Suggestions are made to improve the school environment for military students and for other minority students.
To my daughters, Jill and Tara, whose lives as military teenagers are the inspiration for this project.
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Adolescent Development

Adolescence is a time of great physical and emotional change; change that occurs at both the individual and social level. On the individual level, adolescents must acquire their own self-identity and define who they are as a separate entity. They must deal with cognitive maturation, social role redefinition, school transitions and the emergence of their sexuality. On the social level, adolescents must define who they are within the larger society and where they belong (Newman & Newman, 1991). In a sense, where they belong and how they adapt to such role identification is a cognitive problem. This problem is somewhat difficult for many adolescents to resolve as society does not provide clear rules or guidelines as to where adolescents actually fit into society. Thus, the transition from childhood into adulthood often leads adolescents to struggle with exactly where they fit in, what social roles to assume and how to achieve these roles.

Research in the area of adolescent development shows that most adolescents master the tasks of self identity and social identification and make a relatively successful transition into adulthood. However, some experts estimate that as many as 20 percent of all adolescents are troubled and must cope with environmental situations which put their future at risk. For example, the Adolescent Health Survey found adolescence to be filled with anxiety, distress and demands that put a significant number of youths at risk for
emotional, social, and health related problems (Blum, Harris, Resnick & Rosenwinkel, 1989). Adolescent development relies heavily on social interaction as well as on individual reactions to those interactions. Therefore, as adolescents experience life circumstances, they too will also experience constraints and social factors which help define who they are.

While there is an abundance of information available about adolescents and their transitional experiences in general, specific information about youth in military families is limited. The extant research on the military has focused primarily on the military member, the family as a group, or both. Few researchers have examined or given voice to the 354,233 adolescents, between the ages of 13 and 18 who are members of military families (DMDC Database, 1995). Unlike their civilian counterparts, adolescents who have an active duty parent are faced with an array of challenges including family relocation, absence of the military family member and other demands unique to a military lifestyle.

Recently, researchers have begun to explore the socialization patterns of military adolescents and compared it to that of their civilian peers (Orthner, Bowen, & Giddings 1989). They found that relocating and making new friends is the harder for military adolescents than for their civilian counterparts. Hunter (1978) determined that the experience of an "unstable" military lifestyle can leave the adolescent with an impoverished sense of self-esteem and trust in their capacity for autonomy. However, other studies reveal that the demands of growing up within a military family often have a positive or no effect on the development of the adolescent (Fenzel & Blyth, 1986). At
this time, however, no studies have evaluated the relative integration of military adolescents within the public school community. Specifically, military adolescents, civilian adolescents, and the relationship between the two groups and the perceptions each carries about the other have been ignored.

Research suggests that for most adolescents the individual’s self-opinion is largely determined by what others think of him or her (Rosenberg, 1979). Hence, the peer group to which one belongs or does not belong becomes a prime focus of the adolescent’s social life. Although the family and school play important roles in the socialization process of the adolescent, the formal and informal groups one belongs to establishes not only how the adolescent feels as an individual, but how others perceive him or her. The peer group is viewed as a “way station” between relinquishing childhood dependence on parents and adult self-definition, achievement, and autonomy (Rosenberg, 1979). Hence, the groups to which one belongs is partially dependent on the adolescent’s perceptions of themselves, and is also determined by the perceptions of those around them.

This study compliments present research through its focus on the integration of the adolescents within the school community, but more importantly, on the level of integration for the military adolescent.

This thesis examines the relative integration of the military adolescent within a medium size Midwestern Public high school. Therefore, this study contributes to the literature through the investigation of how the normal developmental tasks of adolescence and the specific challenges that face youths who live in military families
relates to their well-being. Investigation into the social relationships between military
and nonmilitary adolescents within the school community will provide an understanding
of the perceptions of each group toward one another and how this affects the relative
integration of the military student into the community. In short, I examine what it means
to be a military adolescent in a public school environment, through the exploration of the
relative integration of the military adolescent into the civilian school community.

Chapter II of this thesis presents a review of the literature. It addresses adolescent
development, the effect of military family life on the military adolescent, and the
importance of social interaction and group association. It further provides a theoretical
framework from which to interpret the findings of the study. Chapter III is dedicated to
research methods. It includes the operationalization of variables, sampling, data
collection and sampling technique and procedures on participants in this study. Chapter
IV provides a description of the results of this study. The final chapter is a discussion of
the results, limitations of this study, and provides suggestions for future research.
CHAPTER II
THEORY AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews theory and literature that is pertinent to this research project.

First, I present literature that pertains to the development of adolescents' sense of self.

Second, literature on the military family, including the military adolescent, is reviewed; this allows us to see the unique demands which face the military family and the specific demands placed on the military adolescent. Third, literature on group association and the importance of peer group affiliation during adolescence is reviewed so that we can understand why adolescents form specific groups and what this means for the individual and the group. Finally, the theoretical framework for this study is applied to the relative integration of the military adolescent in school.

Adolescent Development

The social science research on the development of the adolescent has been done mostly by psychologists. Several themes regarding the social interaction of adolescents and how this effects an adolescent's development are evident in this literature. From a psychological viewpoint, adolescence is a time when what were once unquestioned self-truths become problematic self-hypotheses and the search for truth about one's self begins. Eric Ericson (1990) argues that "adolescents are often preoccupied with what they appear to be in the eyes of other people and with the question of how to connect earlier roles and skills with their new idealized views of themselves and others" (p. 64).
Ericson’s viewpoint, like that of other psychologists, is a micro approach to the questions surrounding development of the adolescent. From this perspective, the focus is on the cognitive functions of the adolescent.

In contrast to the psychological perspective on adolescent development of self, sociologists argue that development of the self is based on social interaction. According to George Herbert Mead (1934), the self emerges from social interaction. He contends that the self is “essentially a social structure, and it arises in social experience” (p. 67). Like Mead, Charles Horton Cooley (1918) argues that the self is a social product and it is defined and developed in social interaction:

No society exists independently of individuals, and no individual exists apart from society. The individual and society are simply the distributive and collective aspects of the same thing. The self is a social product; it is defined and developed in social interaction (pp. 91-92).

Thus, from a sociological perspective, the development of self is a product of communication and social interaction, which includes the vital interaction between the individual and society.

It is evident that a major task of adolescence is to define who they are. To do this, the adolescent must turn inward and evaluate his or her own self-image. Pertinent questions must be asked of oneself like “What am I like?” “How good am I?” “What should I or might I become?” “On what basis should I judge myself?” (Rosenberg, 1979). As adolescents struggle to define who they are and where they belong, their social identity and the level of acceptance by others becomes extremely important. Rosenberg suggests that there are three reasons why adolescence is a time of heightened self-awareness and self-image. First, late adolescence is a time of major decisions about life
choices; however, during this time the adolescent has not yet acquired the intellectual ability needed to assume such roles because of the lack of cognitive ability and maturity. Second, it is during this period that an unusual and rapid gross physical development takes place. Internal physiological changes take place, which cause adolescents to deal with how they feel about themselves, particularly after the onset of puberty. Finally, adolescence is a period of unusual status ambiguity. Society does have a clear set of role expectations for the adolescent. This forces the adolescent to vacillate between the expectations held for a child and the expectations held for an adult. Thus, he or she is unclear about which role to assume. In short, adolescence is a time of evaluation, a time of decision making, a time of commitment, a time of carving out a place in the world (p. 241-255).

Growing up is not easy; many social, biological and psychological factors influence the adolescent and his or her development. Several themes, which address these factors, consistently emerge in the literature on adolescent development. The first is the importance of body image. Adolescents seem to be overly conscious of their bodies and extremely sensitive about the image that body projects to others (Offer, 1986). Moreover, several studies on adolescent development suggest that the meaning of one’s body image differ somewhat for each sex (Rosenberg, 1979; Santrock, 1990). Girls are generally more concerned with the social approval of their appearance, whereas boys tend to emphasize physical competence or what they can do with their bodies as a means of influencing their environment. Girls also tend to express greater dissatisfaction with their bodies, mostly because physical attractiveness is more important for females in our
culture. As the child becomes an adolescent, self-perception about his or her body changes. Rosenberg (1979) found that when asked, “What is best about yourself?” Thirty-two percent of the youngest respondents, but only 8 percent of the oldest, cited a physical characteristic as the “best thing” about him or herself.

A second important theme in the literature on adolescent development is the influence of parents and significant others on the development of the adolescent. These individuals continue to have an influence on the adolescent’s development (Hanson & Maynard, 1973). It is clear that adolescents see themselves from the viewpoint of others and are heavily influenced by what they think (Rosenberg, 1979). For example, the majority of American adolescents feel positive about their parents (Norman & Harris, 1981) and therefore, the parent’s opinion of the adolescent effects their sense of self.

The third important theme in the literature on adolescence is peer group association. This has been established as one of the most influential factors, because peer group standards and values contribute directly to adolescent identity formation (Rosenberg, 1979). It is noted throughout the literature that peer groups provide a means of social comparison and a source of information outside the family. For example, in a study of adolescents, Offer, Ostrov, Howard and Atkinson (1984) discovered that adolescents are often described in terms of the friends they have, the company they keep, and the values they hold. Thus, as adolescents associate with certain peer groups they also create a social self.

It is important to note that, despite their developmental struggles, adolescents carry with them a sense of who they are and what makes them different from everyone
else. As they cling to this identity and deal with challenges to it, the world around them directly influences that development (Hansen & Maynard, 1973). Thus, as this developmental process occurs, the individual becomes both a subject and an object to themselves and to others (Mead, 1934). Here, it is important to focus on what constitutes one’s social identity. Several influential factors, including personal experience, attitudes, values and one’s environment, all contribute significantly to how adolescents’ sense of belonging. For adolescents then, development of who they are is complicated by an increased awareness of self. Because of this increased awareness, adolescents not only become aware of who they really are, but who they think they are ideally. Adolescents, therefore, judge themselves on an image of ideal self (Rosenberg, 1979).

The adolescent’s development is directly linked to groups, experiences and social interactions with others in their environment. Therefore, how others perceive an adolescent is equally as important as how the adolescent views him or her self. This is a major theme in the early work of Emile Durkheim. Durkheim believed that individuals do not exist by themselves autonomously and, therefore, are not separate from society. For Durkheim, the connectiveness between the individual and society is social integration (Durkheim, 1947). Thus, the adolescents view who they are internally, and what they perceive as others’ views of them are equally important to their self-esteem.

**The Military Family and The Military Adolescent**

Most of the literature on military families focuses on the family as a unit. More specifically, it deals with issues surrounding the “military lifestyle.” This is most likely because the government publishes the majority of the literature on military families. This
literature addresses overall family issues such as the military way of life. It also offers tips on adjustments to the family’s new location, daycare activities and information for the active duty member. For example, the following informational packets are distributed to military families:


Other titles like **Helping Your Spouse Adjust** and **Welcome to Your New Home** (Military Resource Center, 1997) focus on issues which concern the overall family or spousal relationships. However, these resources do not specifically address the issue of adolescent development nor concerns specific to the adolescent. A limited number of articles in the literature place an emphasis on issues relevant to children, but few examine the military adolescent. When the focus does turn to teen issues, it often dealt with problem areas like drug abuse and sexual activity (Clawson & Janis, 1991), mobility or attachment (Center for Work and Family, 1987), or the differences between military and non-military lifestyles (Kohen, 1984).

In a departure from this pattern, Henry Watanaba (1985) conducted a study on the self-image of the military adolescent. He found that the self-image of the military adolescent is as good as that of the nonmilitary adolescent and in some areas, the military adolescent exceeds the established norms of their nonmilitary counterparts. Thus, Watanaba concludes that the military adolescent is able to develop a healthy self-image, despite growing up in an environment filled with additional demands and adjustments unique to the military lifestyle. In another project, The Center for Work and Family at
the University of Georgia (1987) conducted a research project sponsored by the Office of Family Matters USAF entitled *Youth in Transition*. This project examined the needs, problems and satisfactions of military adolescents. They found that Air Force youth have many strengths. For example, they are more likely to be academic achievers and involved in sports and recreational activities than civilian youths. Moreover, 93 percent of these youth are satisfied with growing up in a military family. However, the findings also revealed that the same youth experience stress in moving, leaving friends and making new friends. Jon Shaw (1979) examined the effects of constant mobility on the adolescent and found that frequent family moves, which is typical in a military family, leaves the adolescent with a negative self-descriptive profile. For example, the average high school graduate from a military family attends nine schools prior to graduation (Strickland, 1970). The average military adolescent moves 5.8 times and 75 percent of military adolescents experience a period of father or mother absence (Darnauer, 1976). These statistics illustrate some of the stressors that adolescents face as a member of the military family.

Other studies on the effects of relocation on the military adolescent have been inconclusive in their findings. These studies found that the effects of mobility may be positive or negative, depending on how the individual defines the situation and more importantly, how strongly the individual in the military family has identified with the military community (Gabower, 1960; McKain, 1973; Pedersen & Sullivan, 1964). These findings address a key question for this study. If identification within the military community is important to the individual, their adjustment and their sense of belonging,
might not their connection to the civilian community be just as important? For the adolescent who attends a public school system, their sense of belonging may be essential for their individual well being.

J. A. Kohen (1984) and Morten G. Ender (1997) have addressed differences between military and civilian lifestyles. For example, Kohen (1984) reveals three characteristics unique to the military family including irregular work schedules, mobility and isolation from the civilian community. He further notes that military family members are often isolated in terms of support networks, church and community organizations. Kohen’s research is related to a key concern in this study. If military family members are isolated from community organizations, what does this mean for the military adolescent who is forced to attend school in the public school system instead of within the military community?

Additional factors which influence the military family are outlined in an essay by Ender (1997). They include geographic mobility, family separation, and a masculine dominated culture. Ender argues that because of such constraints the military family member is met with a set of increased demands. As members of military families, adolescents also face these increased demands; demands which effect their social, emotional and personal status, and place greater pressure on them during an already stressful time of development.

In summary, the literature reveals that the military family is different from the civilian family in many ways. Furthermore, military adolescents face additional constraints on their lifestyle than civilian adolescents. As military teens relocate during
their school years, they face the challenge of making new friends and becoming members of new groups. Without these necessary support networks adolescent development is made more difficult. The extent of that difficulty is examined in this study.

Group Association

During adolescence, most adolescents are affiliated with two different kinds of groups. Adolescents are often members of a formal group such as an athletic team or the student council and they are also members of informal groups. Informal peer groups exist when several adolescents interact with one another on an ongoing basis and share values, goals and activities. Most informal peer group relationships in adolescence can be categorized in one of three ways: the crowd, the clique, or individual friendships. (Santrock, 1990). The largest of the three categories is the crowd. In a crowd the members meet because of their mutual interest in activities, not because they are mutually attracted to one another. Therefore, an interest in football brings people together to form a crowd. In contrast to crowds, members of cliques and friendships are attracted to one another on the basis of similar interests and social ideas. In comparison to the crowd, cliques are generally smaller in size, usually 10 or fewer people, involve greater intimacy among members, and have more group cohesion. Thus, a meeting of students in the hallway of the school is a clique. Friendships are more similar to cliques than they are to crowds. Because they are small in number, they have the highest level of intimacy and cohesion. However, because they are small in number they are also highly unstable (Simmel, 1950).
The exact nature of cliques and crowds depends on the geographical region of the country where the adolescent lives. This is most likely due to the mixing of cultures found in differing areas of the country and urban and rural areas (Atwater, 1988). For instance, in the midwestern town examined in this study, where the student resides differentiates the group to which the adolescent belongs. For example, “Towner” is a term used to identify those who live within the city limits and “Baser” refers to students who are from military families who may or may not reside on the nearby Air Force base. “Manvillian” is reserved for students who attend the city high school but live in a nearby rural community. Involvement in extracurricular activities, both positive and negative in nature, also defines the groups with which one is associated. For instance, as a “jock,” one participates in sports. A “doper” smokes pot or experiments with drugs and is a member of the drug subculture. Hawkins (1979) argues that adolescents who grow up in America must usually decide on which culture to go with; to be a “doper” or a “jock” is a personal decision. Thus, to be a doper or a jock it is an achieved status. In contrast, to be “Towner,” or a “Baser,” or a “Manvillian” is determined by the student’s place of residence. Because this is something over which they have no control, it is an ascribed status.

The literature reveals that most adolescents identify with some sort of group. One may be part of formal group through one’s membership in a sports team or one may be part of a small group by having one close friend. What group one belongs to, or is associated with, can be a matter of individual choice or it can be due to factors beyond their control like place of residence or military family status. Thus, the group the
adolescent belongs to and how they become associated with these groups may vary. What must be remembered is that all groups are important in the adolescent’s development of self.

Social Integration and Isolation

The literature reviewed in this chapter suggests that factors associated with adolescent development and military life may indeed effect the degree of integration within certain groups and one’s ascribed statuses. Whether that relationship is positive or negative in nature will be determined by this study. As previously mentioned, adolescence is a proving ground for many social and family behaviors that are important to the individual’s entrance into various social groups. The general literature on isolation and integration suggests that individuals come together to form groups because of some common cause, either accidentally or to achieve some vague and temporary goal. For example, adolescents with little in common often develop a feeling of mutual identification because of a particular shared event or situation. Athletics, community activities, and other mutual interests all are examples of things which pull adolescents together to form a group.

Social groups are key to the adolescent’s personal and social development. Adolescents need groups to establish their individual identity and sense of social belonging. Thus, when adolescents are apart of a group and have a sense of belonging, they also develop emotionally and socially. A study conducted by David Offer (1986) showed that adolescents are peer-group oriented and that adolescents affirm high moral values. He found that 88 percent of teenagers stated that being with other people gives
them a good feeling. Ninety-two percent stated that they liked to help a friend whenever they can. These findings suggest that adolescents are highly social beings, and that group association is important. The findings also suggest that adolescents may not be the self-centered individuals that many adults believe.

Morris Rosenberg (1989) examined self-esteem and social integration with a focus on individual integration. Rosenberg suggests that individual integration can be defined in different ways. Individual integration may be expressed through beliefs, attitudes, and values in interpersonal interaction, or in various kinds of social behavior (p. 242). Thus, an adolescent’s integration into groups is not solely about being a physical part of a group. It is also about having an emotional attachment to a reference group, which may effect the individual’s social behavior.

When assessing the level of isolation and integration of the military adolescent into the civilian world several considerations are important. First, the influence of peer groups and adjustment to new peer group association are central. Second, how the individual perceives himself or herself within differing situations and environments, and how the adolescent sees himself or herself in the eyes of others are also key issues. Finally, the perceptions of others and the amount of acceptance by others effects the adolescent’s identity, social roles and overall social interaction.

Theoretical Framework

This study uses a combination of two theoretical perspectives to examine the social integration of the military adolescent within the public school system. Because the study deals with the perceptions, interactions and self-identification of military and
civilian high school students, a symbolic interaction approach is appropriate. However, because the primary research question deals with the integration of military adolescents into the public school community a functional perspective is used specifically to address the concept of integration. In the section that follows I will present my research question in conjunction with these theoretical issues.

Symbolic Interactionism

A symbolic interactionist would claim that how we interpret events is far more important than the events themselves. Hence, what makes our experiences “real” is the symbolic meanings we attach to them. Symbolic interaction tells us that a lot of what people call “society” is not as powerful as they think. Social interactions go smoothly because most people share common meanings about what society should be like. In short, people continue to act in ways that fit together with agreements they have made about how society ought to be (Blumer, 1969; Goffman, 1959).

Erving Goffman (1959) used the idea of the social construction of reality to emphasize the concept of self-presentation in his book The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life. Goffman views the self as an actor on the stage, with the audience being those persons with whom he or she interacts. Thus, according to Goffman, adolescents present an image of self to themselves and to others. As adolescents interact with others their self-identity and self awareness is determined.

In their book, The Social Construction of Reality, Berger and Luckman (1966) view the formation of the self as the result of the socialization process. Hence, one’s self-image is determined by the reactions of others to the social actions in which one is
engaged. Therefore, according to Berger and Luckman (1966), adolescents cannot be understood apart from their social groups and the roles they sustain within those groups. As they put it, “The reality of everyday life further presents itself to me as an intersubjective world, a world that I share with others” (p. 63). Therefore, how the individual perceives himself or herself is determined by the social interactions that one has with others.

Moreover, Berger and Luckman (1967), Goffman (1959) and Blumer (1969) argue that the self is more accurately described as a product of social influence than as a product of individual achievement. Because adolescents are social beings, they identify who they are and where they belong through their social interactions, group associations and group memberships.

Structural Functionalism

Social integration is one of the central concepts used by Durkheim (1964) in his study of suicide. Durkheim defines social integration as the extent to which individuals are linked to and feel allegiance to the social groups to which they are attached. He believes that individuals do not exist by themselves and are, therefore, not separate from society. Durkheim (1964) also notes that social integration serves several key functions for the individual and for society. The first is that social integration connects individuals to society by ensuring a high degree of attachment to commonly held values and beliefs and thus forms bonds between the individual and the group. Second, social integration acts as a check against individualism by imposing restraints on needs and wants and by focusing interests outside the self. Finally, social integration serves connective functions
in so far as it propels individuals into the wider society by creating links to larger social groups and by promoting the perception that they are part of a larger social world (p. 209)

Mechanical solidarity, Durkheim's (1947) idea of a process that keeps society together, focuses on how individuals bond based upon agreed common values, agreed upon customs, and traditions. This type of social unity is demonstrated in the school community where students tend to have similar viewpoints and follow established rules. Because they share similar viewpoints, a student should, therefore, feel a sense of cohesion to others. However, those who do not have similar viewpoints, customs, or cultural backgrounds may not feel this sense of cohesion with the dominant group. Thus, the adolescent who does not share key characteristics of a specified community will probably not form a bond with the dominant group in that community. This lack of social cohesiveness will ultimately effect the adolescent's sense of identity and ideas about where she or he belongs.

If we synthesize these two approaches, we see that according to the Symbolic Interactionist perspective, people create and share common meanings. Thus, as we interpret the world around us, we construct a common reality that helps define who we are. According to the Structural Functional perspective, we experience social integration when we become members of specific social groups in which we come to share meanings. Taken together, these perspectives help us understand how our connectiveness to others helps identify who they are as individuals and where we fit into society.
Application of the Theoretical Framework

The present study uses a quantitative methods approach and consists of one primary research question. The general research question is: What is the level of integration of military adolescents within a public school system? Put another way, how do military adolescents compare to their civilian counterparts? Do military adolescents have a lower sense of belonging within the public school system? If so, what factors may contribute to this sense of belonging and how does that effect the individual and the school community as a whole?

To address the research question, I have formulated two hypotheses. The first hypothesis is that students from military families have a lower sense of belonging than do civilian students. The literature on integration suggests that membership to a group provides the individual with a better sense of self (Offer, 1986; Rosenberg, 1989). However, prior research has been inconclusive in its findings specific to the military adolescent. For example, Kohen (1984) found that military adolescents have a lower sense of belonging than do their civilian counterparts, Watanaba (1985) and The Center for Work and Family (1987) suggest that military adolescents overall seem well integrated into the civilian community and fair just as well or better than their civilian counterparts.

The second hypothesis is that where a student resides effects their sense of belonging and the groups to which they belong. The literature suggests that adolescents associate with various types of groups, some which are ascribed and others which are
achieved (Atwater, 1988). Hawkins (1988) found that the groups to which the adolescent
is associated with might in fact be due to where the adolescent resides.

These research hypotheses will be tested using data collected from a survey in a
medium size midwestern high school. The next chapter describes the methods used in
this study in more detail.
CHAPTER III

METHODS

According to Creswell (1994), the term quantitative refers to the traditional, positivist or empiricist paradigm. The quantitative researcher views reality as objective; something that exists independently of the researcher. According to Creswell:

The quantitative approach allows the researcher to inquire into a social or human problem, based on testing a theory composed of variables, measured with numbers, and analyzed with statistical procedures, in order to determine whether the predictive generalizations of the theory hold true (p. 2).

This study uses methods that are consistent with the objectives established by Creswell to assess the relative integration of military adolescents within the public school system.

In this chapter, I provide a statement of my research question and hypotheses. It includes the conceptualization and operationalization of variables, a discussion of the sampling method, questionnaire design, data collection procedure and coding issues. The chapter concludes with a description of the subjects and the community in which “Central High” is located.

Research Question and Hypotheses

The primary research question for this study focuses on the relative integration of the military adolescent within the civilian school community. I want to know how military adolescents perceive themselves and how this perception effects the individual’s sense of self and the individual’s sense of belonging. I also want to know how military adolescents fare when compared to their civilian counterparts within the public school
Thus, the primary goal of collecting these data is to assess the relative integration of the military adolescents within the local high school.

For the purpose of this study, I have defined integration as one’s perception of his or her acceptance. I have designed two scales to measure integration based on items that measure one’s sense of belonging to the school community, one’s individual attachment to others and where one fits into that environment.

The first integration scale measures the degree of “belonging”. It was created by using items 10a-10f on the questionnaire (see Appendix A). The scale items address how adolescents feel about their overall school environment. Questions focus on student and student relationships, teacher and student relationships, and how fully the adolescent feels accepted into the school community by others. This belonging scale provides one indicator of how fully integrated into the school system students’ feel.

A second scale further addresses the level of integration into the school community and the individual’s perceptions of how well they are connected to others in the school by looking at their degree of attachment. This attachment scale uses items 11a-11k on the questionnaire (see Appendix A). The attachment scale includes questions that address the adolescent’s feelings about how he or she, as an individual, fits into the school community, how fully others accept him or her, and his or her ability to form friendships. To create numeric values for the belonging and attachment scales, I added up the respondent’s scores and then determined cutting points for the categories of high, moderate and low belonging and for high, moderate and low attachment. Two other survey items also address integration. Specifically, these items measure participation in
school activities and academic achievement. For example, item 9 asks students about their participation in school activities, like sports, band and student government. Item 11a addresses academic achievement and how students perceive where they fit in with others academically. This item is also part of the attachment scale.

Two hypotheses are tested in this thesis. Hypothesis one is students from military families have a lower sense of belonging to the school community than civilian students. This hypothesis is tested primarily by the belonging scale and the attachment scale. However, control variables like length of time within the school system, grade, and race are used to further clarify the findings. The second hypothesis is where a student resides effects their sense of belonging within the public school and determines the groups to which they belong. The second hypothesis is tested by specific questionnaire items like the size of peer network (item 15) and “where do your friends live?” (item 16) which allows to determine who associates with whom and the size of the group of friends with which one is associated. The analyses incorporates demographic variables, grade, race, gender and years in the school system to further identify factors which effect the individual’s overall integration into the school community. Because we are looking at sense of belonging, individual attachment and peer group association, it is reasonable to assume that factors, which affect such variables may also effect one’s self-esteem. To better understand the adolescent’s self-esteem, students were asked “in general, how do you feel about yourself?” (item 14e). Scores ranged from 1 to 5 on a 10 point Likert scale with 1 being “very happy” and 10 being “very sad.” All of the variables with which the analyses began were theoretically relevant. However, when some bivariate and
multivariate analyses were completed some of these variables were not statistically
significant. Therefore, they are not elaborated on in the next chapter.

Sampling Method

Two samples were drawn for this study. The first was a convenience sample that
was used to select military and civilian adolescents attending Central High School in the
fall of 1998. Civilian students are defined as those students who do not have a parent of
active duty status. Military students are defined as those students who are currently part
in a military family where one or both of the parents are of active military duty status in
the United States Air Force. There were approximately 200 students from military
families and 1300 civilian students enrolled at Central High at the time that the sample
was drawn. Because all high school students are required to take an English class at each
grade level, a sample of English classes was drawn at each grade level during various
time periods throughout the day. School officials selected the English classes on the
basis of which teachers were willing to have their classes participate in the study. This
could, of course, introduce a bias into the sample as we have no way of knowing whether
the students in these classes were significantly different from those who did not have a
chance to participate.

After the sample of 154 students was obtained, it was discovered that very few
adolescents from military families were included through this selection method. The
initial sample included 129 civilian students and only 25 military students. Therefore, a
second purposive sample of students from military families was drawn from the high
school roster with the help of school administrators. This sample was drawn from the
population of students from military families enrolled in grades 9-12 at Central High School who had an address on the Air Force base. Although using the student’s air base address was the most effective means to identify this population, it also introduced a possible bias as military students with non-base addresses were not in the selection pool. Therefore, they are likely underrepresented in this study. School administrators took the list of military adolescents and randomly selected students until they had selected 60 students who were not already in the first sample. The final sample used in this study includes 129 adolescents from civilian families and 85 students from military families, for a total sample of 214 adolescents from Central High School.

Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire used in this study was a modified version of an instrument used in a governmental research study on the strengths and vulnerabilities of military adolescents. The instrument was designed by researchers at Marywood University (1997) and was more comprehensive than necessary for my purposes. The questions I selected from the Marywood survey were determined by my hypotheses. Other questions were of my own design. The final questionnaire includes five sections: section one contains eight items to gather demographic information. Section two, deals with participation in school and extra-curricular activities. A six item 4-point Likert scale which identifies one’s sense of belonging within the school community and an 11 item 4-point Likert scale on individual attachment which measures the individual’s perception of how well they fit into the school community. Section three contains two items which define dating habits, a five item 10-point Likert scale about personal feelings, one item
which identifies the groups to which one belongs, and one item on the size of the student’s peer group network. Section four provides three modified Bogardus scales which measure social distance between military students, civilian students, and students of different racial and ethnic backgrounds. The last section contains an open-end question which identifies the areas within the school which students feel need improvement. The questionnaire used to collect data for this study is located in Appendix A.

Data Collection Procedure

Because this project used minors, public school board approval was obtained during the summer of 1998. University IRB approval was also sought and obtained in the fall of 1998. Notification about the approved research project was sent to all parents of Central High student through the student newsletter in October of 1998 (see Appendix B). Through this announcement, parents were informed about the project and could, therefore, contact the school to keep their children from participating. All subjects were also briefed about the project and asked to sign a personnel assent form before they participated in the research study (see Appendix C). All appropriate measures were taken to ensure the confidentiality of all subjects involved in this research project. Participation in this survey was voluntary and subjects could withdraw from the study at anytime. All students took the survey during class periods. However, the military and civilian students included in the first sample took the survey in their English classroom and the military students in the second sample were pulled out of class and took the survey in the school auditorium. Data collection began and ended in November of 1998, when the 214
military and civilian adolescents who agreed to participate in this study completed the questionnaire.

Data Preparation Procedures

SPSS for windows was used for data management and all analyses. The data were examined for coding errors and cleaned. I then ran frequencies to determine whether any variables required recoding to eliminate problems with empty cells in my analyses and to determine cutting points for my scales. The range of values for the belonging scale ran from 6 to 20. Cutting points were determined by breaking the scores into thirds. This allowed me to create categories of high, moderate and low belonging. The range of values on the attachment scale ran from 13 to 44. Again, cutting points were determined, by dividing the scores into three groups and categories of high moderate and low were determined. After the scales were created and variables recoded, crosstabulations of bivariate tables were created to get a sense of the data. These preliminary analyses helped shape the analysis reported in the next chapter.

Participant and Community Demographic Information

Central High is located is a small Midwestern town with a population of 50,160 (United States Bureau of the Census, 1997). The high school is populated by students who reside within the city limits, those from the nearby Air Force Base, and by students who live in the rural towns within 20 miles of the city.

Table 1 shows the demographic information for the 214 participants in this study. It reveals that approximately 60 percent were from civilian families and 40 percent were from military families. When divided by grade, the table shows that subjects were fairly
evenly distributed across grade levels. The overall sample included slightly more females (60%) than males (40%). Consistent with the part of the country where the data were gathered, 80 percent of the participants are white. This was expected as approximately 95 percent of the area is made up of Caucasians (United States Bureau of the Census, 1996).

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographics</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent in Military</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9th</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10th</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11th</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12th</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/No Response</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER IV
RESULTS

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the relationship between key independent variables and dependent variables. The independent variables of interest include: parent in the military, number of years in the school system, and where the student resides. The key dependent variables are sense of belonging within the school community, individual attachment and peer group association. I first examine these relationships through bivariate crosstabulations. Then I introduce the control variables, race and grade level, to further explicate the relationship between these variables. Through these analyses, I will gain insight into factors that determine students’ level of acceptance in high school.

Integration or Isolation

To examine the first hypothesis, that military adolescents have a lower sense of belonging within the school system than do their civilian counterparts, I compare military and civilian adolescents’ sense of belonging within the school community. Does being a “baser,” a student who resides on the Air Force base, a “towner,” a student who resides within the city limits, or a “Manvillian,” a student from out-of-town, but not on base, negatively affect a students’ sense of belonging and acceptance or are other factors more important? This is the question that I answer in this section.
Adolescents' Self-Esteem

Though not reported in a table, the majority of military and civilian students reported feeling good about themselves. Indeed, 93 percent of military and 91 percent of civilian students reported feeling “very good” about themselves. The remaining 7 percent of non-military and 9 percent of civilian students reported feeling “good” about themselves and none reported feeling “bad” or “very bad” about themselves. Thus, military and civilian adolescents are similar, and no statistical significant differences were found.

Sense of Belonging within the School Community

As shown in Table 2, one’s sense of belonging within the school was significantly related to whether the adolescent was from a military family or a civilian family. The gamma coefficient from this relationship is -.238. Thus, it is fair to say that a weak negative relationship exists between family type and a sense of belonging within the school community. The table shows that adolescents from military families have a slightly lower sense of belonging within the school community than do their civilian counterparts. This may be due to the fact that military adolescents more frequently relocate (Strickland, 1970), and that military family members are often isolated in terms support networks within the community (Kohen, 1984). Hence, when the military adolescent enters a new school system, she or he feels a lower sense of belonging than does the civilian student who does not have to deal with the additional constraints experienced by the military family member (Ender, 1997).
Table 2 shows that adolescents from a military family tend to be evenly divided into the low, moderate, and high categories when asked about their sense of belonging within the school community. However, when asked the same questions, half of the civilian students report a high sense of belonging within the school community. Indeed 15 percent more of the civilian students than military students reported high sense of belonging. Thus, it appears that military adolescents feel a lower sense of belonging to the school than do their civilian counterparts. As mentioned above, this may be due to frequent relocations, or additional demands placed on the military adolescent as a member of a military family and a lack of support from the civilian community.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sense of Belonging</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Non-Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to Nachmias and Nachmias (1996), elaboration usually involves the introduction of other variables to determine the links between the independent and dependent variables or to specify the conditions under which the association takes place. Therefore, in order to further examine the relationship between family type and sense of
belonging within the school community other factors such as grade level and number of years within the school system are introduced.

There is a significant negative relationship displayed between sense of belonging and family type in Table 2. When the variable of grade is added to the crosstabulation it shows differences between military and non-military students see Table 3. Though not statistically significant it appears that civilian students in grades 9 and 12 report the highest sense of belonging. This may be because younger students are trying to establish their sense of belonging when they first enter the school system while the older students have established their sense of belonging over time. The association is weaker for students in the middle grades. This may reflect a transition period for students in grades 10 and 11. Although it is high when they enter, their sense of belonging decreases after they find that being a “freshman” is a low status position. However, when they are seniors and their status climbs accordingly, they establish a greater sense of belonging within the school community. Interestingly, the pattern for military adolescents is different. About half of the military students who first enter the school system (9th grade) report a high sense of belonging within the school. However, their high sense of belonging decreases over time. For military adolescents in grade 10, 32 percent report a high sense of belonging, but by the time they reach 11th grade only 28 percent report a high sense of belonging. When a military adolescent reaches the 12th grade only 21 percent report a high sense of belonging. Clearly, something occurs within the high school years for military adolescents’ which lowers their sense of belonging.
Table 3

Sense of Belonging by Military Status by Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Sense of Belonging</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Non-Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further investigation shows that the number of years within the school system strengthens the relationship significantly. As reported in Table 4, the gamma coefficients ranged from -.290 to .610 for the relationships. Thirty-six percent of the students from military families who have been in the school system for less than two years reported a high sense of belonging within the school community. In contrast, twice as many (72%) civilian students in the school system for the same amount of time reported a high sense of belonging. This is suggestive of the military student's lack of adaptability or
acceptance (Kohen, 1984). Moreover, something happens to all adolescents’ sense of belonging over time. A strong positive relationship (gamma.610) exists for military students who have been in the school system for 8 years or more. A larger percentage of military students’ report a high sense of belonging than did the civilian students who have been in the school system for the same 8 year time period. As the table shows, 75 percent of military students versus 45 percent of non-military students had high sense of belonging after eight years in the school system.

Table 4 shows that at less than two years in the school system, military kids are equally likely to feel a low, medium or high level of belonging, whereas non-military students are much more likely (72%) to feel a high sense of belonging. By the time students have been in the school system for 3-7 years, things change for the non-military students. These kids are less integrated, although they are more likely to report high belonging than military kids, who are still fairly evenly distributed. However, by the 8th year in the school, we see a dramatic change. Fully 75 percent of military adolescents report high sense of belonging and none report a low sense of belonging. In contrast 45 percent of non-military kids have a high sense of belonging, 31 percent report moderate belonging and 24 percent report low belonging. The question is, what happens after seven years in the school that military adolescents feel an increased sense of belonging and non-military kids feel a decreased sense of belonging? Could it be that military students feel a greater sense of ownership within the school due to the stability of an 8 year placement that doesn’t require starting over in a new school system?
### Table 4

**Sense of Belonging by Military Status by Years in School System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years School System</th>
<th>Sense of Belonging</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Non-Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&lt;2 years</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-7 years</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8+ years</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma <2 years -.528
Gamma 3-7 years -.290
Gamma 8+ years .610

Another way to examine belonging is through questions about where the student fits in compared to others and their relationships with others. Items 11a, 10a and 10e help to further examine one's sense of belonging. When examining academic achievement, using item 11a, "compared with other kids at Central High, I do well in school," it was found that military adolescents perceive themselves as almost equal to their civilian counterparts on the basis of academic achievement. However, when comparing military to non-military students the findings presented in Tables 5, 6, and 7 show statistically significant difference between the two groups on specific questions related to one's sense of belonging and their relationships with others. Military and
civillian students have different perceptions when asked about themselves and teachers
(item 10a "students get along with teacher") or themselves and other students (item 10e
"no matter where a student is from they are welcome").

There is a significant moderate relationship between how military and civilian
students perceive the relationship between students and teachers. Table 5 shows military
youths are less likely than civilian students to say students and teachers got along.
Seventy-eight percent of military students and 89 percent of non-military students agreed
with this statement. None of the civilian students and only 3 percent of the military
students strongly disagreed with the statement. These perceptions could, therefore, effect
a student's sense of belonging. When the control variable race was added into the
crosstabulation in Table 5, no significant differences were found. Thus, military status,
not race, effects student perceptions about student-teacher relationships.

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student/Teacher Relationship</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Non-Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Significance Level <.05
When military and non-military students were asked to use Likert scale responses to the scale item "No matter where a student is from they are welcomed by others," a significant difference in opinion between the two groups was revealed. As shown in Table 6, almost half (48%) of military students disagree or strongly disagree with this statement compared to 25 percent of civilian students. Interestingly, military students were nearly divided on this question as 52 percent strongly agree or agree and 48 percent disagree or strongly disagree. In contrast, 3 out of 4 non-military students strongly agree or agree on this issue. This suggests that factors other than military family status may effect whether students feel welcome in the high school community.

Table 6

Welcome Others by Military Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welcome</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Non-Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma -.329
Significance Level <.01

To further investigate the student’s perception of how fully others welcome them, race was added as a control variable to this crosstabulation. Table 7 shows that for non-white students, a sense of how welcomed into the school community they are is lower
than for white students. The table reveals a strong negative relationship for non-white students and their sense of being welcomed and a moderate negative relationship for white students and their sense of being welcomed into the school community. Table 7 also shows that non-white students feel less accepted regardless of their military status than do their white counterparts. However, it is important to note that the majority of non-white students who attend Central High School are from military families. Therefore, the strength of the relationship could be due to the adolescent’s race. These findings might be expected, as nearly 81 percent of the total population of the school is white. Therefore, non-white students are likely to have a harder time finding groups that

Table 7

Welcome by Others by Military Status by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Non-Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-White</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>White</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma Non-White -.507
Gamma White -.295
Significance Level <.05
accept them and have a lower sense of acceptance than their white counterparts as a result. This finding illustrates that a low sense of belonging does not depend directly on military status, but reveals the importance of race.

As another measure of belonging, students were asked how they felt the overall student population got along (item 10c). Military and non-military students reported similar answers, with the majority reporting that students do get along together at Central High. However, when I controlled for race some differences were revealed (see Table 8). The crosstabulation produces a significant moderate negative relationship on the perceptions of how students get along with each other within the school community by race. Although the majority of students perceive students as getting along, race appears to make a difference. The table shows that non-white students are more likely to disagree or strongly disagree (30%) that students get along well with each other than do white students, as only 17 percent of the latter disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. Therefore, there is additional evidence that race effects one’s sense of belonging within the school community.

Individual Attachment

Individual attachment has been defined as the student’s perceptions of personal connection to the school and others. To measure individual attachment to the school environment, students responded to 11 items (11a-11k) on a 4 point Likert scale. When military and non-military youth were compared on the individual attachment scale military youth reported a slightly lower sense of attachment than did their civilian counterparts. These findings correspond with military student’s overall lower sense of
Table 8

Students Get Along by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Non-White</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma -.385
Significance Level <.05

belonging to the school community. However, there is not a significant relationship between one's individual attachment and family type. When grade is added as a control variable, the picture becomes clearer.

Table 9 shows the relationship between family type, attachment and grade. The gamma coefficients ranged from .051 to -.626, with 9th graders from both military and non-military families reporting the highest attachment. This may be directly related to attempts by younger students trying to establish their attachment when they first enter the school system. However, seniors from both groups also report slightly higher individual attachment, with 60 percent of military adolescents and 71 percent of non-military adolescents reporting high attachment. These findings are consistent with reports in Table 2 on 12th grader's sense of belonging.
Table 9

Attachment Scale by Military Status by Grade

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Attachment</th>
<th>Military</th>
<th>Non-Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>92%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>45%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma 9th -.626 Significant Level<.05
Gamma 10th .051 NS
Gamma 11 -.273 NS
Gamma 12 -.139 NS

The association is weaker for both military and non-military students in their middle years. Indeed, military and non-military students are more similar in attachment levels in 10th and 11th grade. This finding corresponds to the middle grades findings in Table 2 on 10th and 11th graders overall sense of belonging. It may again reflect the results of some sort of transitional period of attachment and detachment to the school. Interestingly, for both military and non-military students alike, most report a high level of
attachment at each grade level. This suggests that even though some military students have a low sense of belonging that most feel attached to their school.

To elaborate on the findings in Table 7, race was added as a control variable. While not shown in a table, no significant differences were found between attachment, military status and race. Thus, race does not seem to affect an individual's attachment even though it does affect one's sense of belonging within the school (see Table 7). However, one's sense of belonging and one's individual attachment vary significantly according to grade level.

While not reported in a table, military and non-military students are similarly involved in school activities. Moreover, where a student resides makes no difference in their level of participation in school activities, students who lived out of town participated in about the same number of activities as those who lived in town.

In short, the analysis in this section does provide support for the first hypothesis. Military adolescents seem to have a lower sense of belonging at Central High when compared to civilian adolescents at least in terms of the measures used in this study. When asked specifically about teacher-student relationships fewer military students than non-military students felt that students get along with teachers. Additionally, non-white students perceive that they are not accepted as well fully as their white counterparts. In both of the above situations, race proved to be a significant explanatory factor. Non-white students perceive a lower sense of acceptance by teachers and by other students. Thus, race and military status can make the adolescent a double minority and make him or her feel less fully integrated than other students.
Group Association

This part of the analysis addresses the second hypothesis that where a student resides will effect the size of peer group networks within the public school and determine the groups to which they belong. I will present analyses that allow the examination of the effects of peer group size and area of residence on measure of group association and dating habits.

Size of Peer Group Network

While not reported in a table, the size of peer group network did not produce a significant relationship with military or non-military status. The groups reported similar network patterns, with the majority of each group indicating membership to either a large or moderate size group. However, Table 10 shows that when we examine race and size of peer group network, there is a significant positive relationship. Non-white students more often reported being part of a large (49%) or medium size group (42%) than white students (32% and 42% respectively). Indeed, 25 percent of white students were members of a small group, verses 7 percent of non-white students. It could be that non-white students find it easier to associate with a larger group than a smaller group, because larger groups are less intimate and require less emotional involvement. The result is that non-whites may have many acquaintances and few close bonds or friendships. It could be that because non-whites tend to be in the military, those in the military frequently relocate, that it is easier to be part of a larger, less intimate group so the cost of the move is not as great.
Table 10

Size Group by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Non-White</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Large Group</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium Group</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Group</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Group</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma.329
Significance Level <.05

Where My Friends Live

To further address the groups to which students belong, the analysis now turns to where one’s friends reside versus where the student resides. Table 11 shows a moderate significant positive relationship between where one’s friends live and where the student resides. For the students who live in town, 89 percent reported that their friends also live in town. The students who live outside of town, but not at the air base, also report that the majority of their friends live in town (82%). However, 65 percent of those living on base report that their friends also reside on base and only 4% live outside of town. This finding suggests that students tend to have friends who live in town unless they reside on base. It also shows that students who live in town are equally likely to have friends from base or from outside of town. None of the students who live out of town reported friends from the base. Interestingly, students from town reported that a low percentage (5%) of
their friends are from base, but 31 percent of students from base report that their friends reside in town. Clearly, the perceptions of who one’s friends are differs between students from town and those from the base.

Table 11

**Friends Live by Where I Live**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friends Live</th>
<th>I Live in</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>Out-of-Town</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-Town</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Lambda.444  
Significance Level <.01

To elaborate on the findings reported in Table 11, race was used as an independent variable to predict where a student’s friends reside. The findings in Table 12 reveal a significant negative relationship (gamma -.512) between race and where a student’s friends reside. Table 12 shows that most of the non-white students (51%) report that their friends live on base. Moreover, the majority of white students’ (74%) report that their friends live in town. These findings might be expected since the majority of non-white students live on base and the majority of white students live in town. Moreover, as reported in Table 11, students tend to have friends who live close to them.
Table 12

Where Friends Live by Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Friends Live</th>
<th>Non-White</th>
<th>White</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Town</td>
<td>42% 17</td>
<td>74% 127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Base</td>
<td>51% 21</td>
<td>21% 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Out-of-Town</td>
<td>7% 3</td>
<td>5% 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Percent</td>
<td>100% 41</td>
<td>100% 173</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gamma -.512
Significance Level <.01

To further address the groups to which students belong, the analysis examines dating habits. Specifically, I turn to where people reside and where the people they tend to date reside. Item 13 on the survey, which measures who students tend to date, produced findings similar to those presented in Table 11. It revealed that students from town tend to date students who also live in town, out-of-town students tend to date students from town and the students who live on base date those who also live on base.

Taken together, these findings support the second hypotheses. Where a student resides does effect the size of peer group networks and helps to determine the groups to which they belong. The size of the peer group network was not significantly different for military and non-military students. However, race and size of peer group network were significantly different. Non-white students reported associating with larger groups more often than did white students. Additionally, students reported having friends and dating those who live near them. Non-white students typically have friends who live on base...
and white students tend to have friends who live in town. Again, it should be noted that the majority of non-white students who attend Central High and from military families and reside on the base. Interestingly, students from out-of-town do not report having any friends who live at the base.

Summary

In short, this study reveals that military adolescents have a slightly lower sense of belonging within the school community than do their civilian counterparts. The 9th grade and 12th grade students regardless of military status report the lowest sense of belonging. Additionally, the longer a student stays in the same school system one’s sense of belonging within the school environment increases. On examination, military and civilian youth report similar findings on how they perceive themselves academically and the two groups are were found to be similar in their level of participation in school activities, regardless of where they reside.

Differences were found between the two groups when asked specific questions about teacher and student relationships and level of acceptance from others. Military students tend to disagree with the two statements more so than civilian students. However, minority students report the lowest sense of belonging within the school.

When measuring one’s sense of individual attachment again military youth reported a lower level of attachment than did civilian students. However, younger students felt a highest sense of attachment when compared to older students. Moreover, non-white students reported the lowest sense of attachment.
The results show that indeed where a student resides directly effects who their friends are and who they date. Race is a factor when examining the size of peer group network; with non-white students reporting being a part of a larger group rather than a smaller group and their overall level of acceptance within the school community. The results contained in this chapter support the research hypotheses.
CHAPTER V
DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to determine the relative integration of military and civilian adolescents in a public high school. The findings support the two hypotheses that were tested and are consistent with much of the limited literature on military adolescents. This final chapter continues with a review of key findings. It then turns to a discussion of some limitations of the study, implications of the findings for the school system and makes suggestions for future research.

Contributions to Existing Research

Adolescents’ Self-esteem

The findings reveal that the military adolescent’s self-esteem is as good as or equal to that of civilian adolescents. This finding is consistent with the literature (Watanaba, 1985). No differences were found when comparing military and non-military adolescents’ self-esteem at Central High School. Indeed, the vast majority of military (93%) and non-military adolescents (91%) report feeling good about themselves.

Sense of Belonging

The findings suggest that military adolescents have a slightly lower sense of belonging to the school environment than their civilian counterparts (32% versus 22%). This may be a direct result of several factors established in the literature. According to (Kohen, 1984), differences between military and civilian lifestyles like irregular work
schedules, mobility and isolation from the civilian community, influence the military adolescent’s sense of belonging. Ender (1997) addresses additional factors such as family separation and increased demands placed on the military family which could also contribute to the lower sense of belonging reported by military adolescents in this study. If military adolescents are isolated from community organizations, face increased demands of the military lifestyle and experience frequent relocations, it should be expected that they might feel a lower sense of belonging within the public school and perhaps, in the community as a whole. These findings support the first hypothesis in this study, that military adolescents do have a lower sense of belonging within the public school community than civilian adolescents.

My research shows that grade level and number of years in the school system also contribute to one’s overall sense of belonging. The highest sense of belonging is reported by military adolescents (49%) and non-military adolescents (63%) in grade nine. The most interesting finding here is that the sense of belonging for the military adolescent is lower for those in grades ten through twelve; only 21 percent of the latter report a high sense of belonging. Something happens after the first years in high school which causes a decreased sense of belonging for the military adolescent. What happens, however, is not clear.

According to symbolic interactionists, adolescents cannot be understood apart from their social groups and the roles they sustain within those groups (Berger & Luckman, 1966). Structural functionalists like Durkheim (1964) define social integration as the extent to which individuals are linked to and feel allegiance to the social groups to
which they are attached. Thus, the groups in which the military adolescent belongs within the public school may account for their reported sense of belonging by grade level. Because they relocate frequently, the military adolescent becomes accustomed to making adjustments to new schools. They have expectations and ideas about the groups to which they would like to belong when they enter a new school. However, if they are not accepted into a new school by others, they may become confused about where they fit in. Clearly, this could negatively affect one’s sense of belonging. As Durkheim (1964) noted in his work on integration, if one does not feel “linked to” or an “allegiance to” their new found group, their overall sense of belonging will be weaker than if they do feel this link. Moreover, continued perceptions that they are not accepted should cause their sense of belonging to decrease over time. The results of this study show that the military adolescent’s sense of belonging was tied to grade level. The military adolescents in grade 12 reported the lowest sense of belonging while those in ninth grade tended to report a high sense of belonging. This finding directly reflects the theoretical idea proposed by Durkheim.

When asked specific questions about teacher and student relationships and how welcomed into the school community students feel, the findings show that military youths are less likely than civilian youths to have a positive response. There was a significant relationship between military and civilian student status and the relationships they reported between themselves and their teachers. Eighty-nine percent of civilian students report that teachers and students get along at Central High and 78 percent of military students agreed. This difference may be caused by military adolescents’
perception that teachers relate differently to military students than they do to civilian students. When military and non-military students were asked “no matter where a student is from they are welcomed by others,” there was also a significant difference in opinion. Almost half of the military students disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement while only 25 percent of non-military adolescents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. This finding helps clarify the previously reported differences of the military adolescent’s sense of belonging. If military adolescents do not feel that others welcome them, they would not feel linked to the school environment. This finding is consistent with previous research that suggests that military adolescents have a difficult time adjusting to new situations, especially if they perceive that they are not welcome nor accepted by others (Shaw, 1979).

Further investigation into students’ sense of belonging revealed that for students at Central High, race was a significant factor. At Central High indeed race and military status make the student a double minority. Data analysis revealed that over half (56%) of non-white military students disagree or strongly disagree with the statement “no matter where a student is from they are accepted by others” whereas none of the non-white civilian students, disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Furthermore, most of the white civilian students (74%) overwhelmingly agree with the statement “no matter where a student is from they are accepted by others” and 56 percent of white military students agreed with the same statement. Thus, non-white students who are from military families were most likely to disagree that others welcome them. Differences were also found between non-white and white students when they were asked “do students at
Central High get along?” The findings show that for non-white students 30 percent disagree or strongly disagree with the statement. However, only 17 percent of white students disagree or strongly disagree with the same statement. Here again, non-white students’ perceptions about relationships within the school community are different than white students’ perceptions. Therefore, race and military status effect students’ overall sense of belonging within the school community.

Individual Attachment

Military and non-military adolescents’ individual attachment to the school and to others was used as an indicator of overall integration into the public school community. Although there was not a statistically significant difference between military and non-military student’s individual attachment, when grade was added to the analysis as a control variable, statistically significant differences emerged. The results show that for all grade levels military students have a slightly lower individual attachment score than civilian students. This is most apparent at grades nine and twelve. Ninety-two percent of non-military youth in grade nine report a high individual attachment compared to 78 percent of military students. Additionally, 71 percent of non-military seniors report a high sense of belonging compared to 60 percent of military seniors. However, differences between the two groups were not as pronounced for adolescents in the middle grades.

To provide additional explanation for these findings on individual attachment, race was added as a control variable. No significant differences were found. Although,
important when evaluating one's sense of belonging within the school, race does not appear relevant to one's sense of individual attachment.

**Participation in Activities**

Adolescent participation in school activities is also tied to attachment. The findings revealed no differences between military and non-military students' level of participation in school held activities. Although this finding is consistent with the literature (Center for Work and Family, 1987) it was not expected, because the students from base are not provided with transportation to and from extracurricular school activities by the school. Therefore, if a military student wants to participate in school activities, the responsibility is left up to the family to provide transportation. Thus, this reflects efforts by military family members to help their children establish some sort of individual attachment to the school community.

**Group Association**

To test the second hypothesis of this study, where a student resides will effect their sense of belonging within the public school and the groups to which they belong, students were asked questions about size of their peer group, who their friends are and where their friends live.

The findings on size of peer group network show that military and non-military students are similar, as the majority of both groups reported being a part of a large or moderate size group. However, when race is added as a control variable, significant differences were found. Twenty-five percent of the white students report being a member of a small size group verses only 7 percent of non-white students. It appears that non-
that none of their friends live on base. Clearly, most students who live in town and students who live on base tend to associate with, and define as their friends, those who live near them. This is not true for those who live out-of-town as their friends are from town.

Further analysis of this relationship revealed that race is a significant factor. Fifty-one percent of non-white students report that their friends live on base and 74 percent of white students reported that their friends live in town. This is most likely because the majority of non-white students (33%) live on the base and the majority (81%) of white students live in town. This finding is also an illustration of the double minority status of military families at this high school. Taken together, these findings support the second hypothesis.

Limitations

There are several limitations of this study. First, there is the issue of generalizability. Because of the small number of military adolescents included in this study and the predominantly white population within the local school, the research findings in this study can not be generalized to the larger population of all military adolescents or to other more diverse areas of the country. Recall that 81 percent of the students at Central High are white and the community is located in a small midwestern town. The racial homogeneity of the population could create very different levels of acceptance for racial minorities than if they relocated to a more racially heterogeneous community. Therefore, care should be taken about generalizing to military students in other communities.
Second, because of the small number of cases (214), there are several areas in which the variables had to be collapsed to avoid empty cells. For example, there were very few non-white students and very few students who resided out-of-town, but not at the air base.

Yet another limitation to the study is related to those already presented. It is related to the sampling technique. School officials decided which English classes would be selected for the study based on their perceptions of which teachers would be most likely to participate. Therefore, their perceptions of who would participate could bias the sample in unknown ways. Also, the need to draw a second sample of military students on the basis of having a base address excluded military students who elsewhere. Thus, we have no way of knowing whether the military students who reside off base are different in significant ways from those who live on base.

Implications

Several ideas to better the overall integration of military and non-white students emerged in this study. First, to provide a smoother transition into the school community, a sponsorship program, much like the one now in place for active duty members, could be developed. In-coming students could be paired with a current student sponsor to help the military student adjust to their new school environment and to establish peer group networks. This may also help in with the integration of the non-white student as most are of military status. Second, implementing cultural diversity programs or classes within the school would help those not accustomed to different cultures to better understand, accept and welcome those who are different than themselves into the school community.
Finally, teachers and other school officials should be encouraged to participate in school programs which address the unique situations of the military family and the needs of the non-white student in a predominantly white community.

As stated throughout the literature, adolescents look to significant others for advice and direction in their lives. Thus, if parents of both military and non-military adolescents accept those different than themselves, their children are also likely to accept others who are different into their school community and peer groups. Also, military and non-military parents should collaborate with school officials in the development of policies and procedures to address student activities and the overall school community.

Future Research

Additional research is still needed to understand military adolescents' experiences and adjustments to new communities. At this time very few studies have been directed exclusively toward military adolescents. Therefore, future research should consider a number of factors. First, the sample should include a large number of both military and civilian adolescents for a comparative study. The respondents should also include students from various ethnic backgrounds.

Second, the sample should include military adolescents who not only reside in military housing, but also those who live in the community. We need to determine whether military adolescents who live in the community are better integrated because they reside within the civilian community or whether they reside in the civilian community because they are better able to adjust than their counterparts on base.
Third, the rank of the military parent should be considered as this could answer questions about the differences between military and non-military students. For example, are adolescents whose parent is an officer more likely to be accepted than the adolescent whose parent is enlisted? If so, the level of integration could be based on prestige, socio-economic status or other unidentified factors rather than simply military status. This would also help us make sense of differences between military adolescents. Are officer’s kids different from enlisted member’s kids?

A fourth research question is about the influence of race. In this study race was a contributor to the integration of the military adolescent. The findings revealed that military adolescents of color reported a lower level of integration when compared to both their military and their civilian counterparts. Is the low level of integration a result of primarily military status or race? Or are both important factors to be considered?

A final research question is how the variables examined in this study are related to adolescents’ self esteem. Does a strong sense of belonging contribute to a higher level of self-esteem? These are all questions that await answers from researchers.
APPENDICES
Directions: Please read each question carefully and answer all questions in the way that best reflects your feelings. Answer the following questions as accurately and as honestly as you can.

Section 1: These questions are about you and your family.

1. How old were you on your last birthday? 

2. Are you? ___Male ___Female

3. What grade are you in? ___9th ___10th ___11th ___12th

4. Where do you live?
   ___In Grand Forks
   ___Outside of Grand Forks in another town
   ___At the Grand Forks Air Base

5. What race do you consider yourself?
   ___White
   ___Black
   ___Hispanic
   ___Native American
   ___Asian
   ___Other (please write in) ____________________________________________
6. Are either of your parents currently in the military?  
   ___yes  
   ___no  

7. Have you attended any other high school other than Central?  
   ___Yes, I have attended _____(number) other high schools.  
   ___No  

8. How long have you attended school in Grand Forks?  
   _____(total Years)  

Section 2: The following questions are about your experiences and how you feel.  

9. Please mark all of the school activities that you are in now at Central.  
   ___Athletic Teams in school  
   ___Band or Chorus  
   ___Student Government  
   ___School clubs or Honor societies  
   ___Sports teams or programs outside of school  
   ___Other write in ____________________________________________________  
   ___ I am not in any activities  

10. Which of the following best describes how you feel about each of the following statements.  
    a. Students get along well with teachers at Central:  
       ___ Strongly agree   ___Agree   ___Disagree   ___Strongly disagree  
    b. There is real school spirit at Central:  
       ___ Strongly agree   ___Agree   ___Disagree   ___Strongly disagree
c. Students seem to get along well together at Central:

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

d. All students are treated equal by teachers at Central:

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

e. No matter where a student is from they are welcome by others at Central:

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

f. No matter what color skin a student has they are treated well by others at Central:

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

11. Please mark how much you agree or disagree with the following statements.

a. Compared to other kids at Central, I do well in school.

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

b. Compared with other kids at Central, I fit in.

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

c. I feel school activities help me to be accepted by others.

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

d. I feel alone.

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

e. I have a lot of friends from school.

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree

f. I am well liked by the kids at Central.

___ Strongly agree  ___Agree  ___Disagree  ___Strongly disagree
g. I do not have any friends at Central.
   ___ Strongly agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly disagree

h. I have really good friends at Central.
   ___ Strongly agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly disagree

i. Many students at Central think they are too good for me.
   ___ Strongly agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly disagree

j. Most of my classmates at Central are supportive.
   ___ Strongly agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly disagree

k. Central does a good job of making students feel welcome.
   ___ Strongly agree ___Agree ___Disagree ___Strongly disagree

Section 3: This set of questions is about your relationships and friends.

12. What is your present dating status?
   ___I do not date (skip to question 14)
   ___Not currently dating anyone
   ___Casually date more than one person
   ___Casually date one person
   ___Seriously dating only one person

13. The people I date usually:
   ___Live in town
   ___Live outside of town, but not on base
   ___Live in base housing
14. Please circle the number which best explains how you feel.

a. How easy is it for you to make new friends?

Very Easy
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Very Hard
   10

b. How hard is it for you to leave old friends when you move?

Very Easy
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Very Hard
   10

c. When I first started school at Central I felt:

Very Good
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Very Sad
   10

d. Now when I go to school at Central I feel:

Very Good
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Very Sad
   10

e. In general, how do you feel about yourself?

Very Good
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Very bad
   10

15. Which of the following best describes you and your friends?

___ We are a part of a crowd or large group

___ We are a part of a medium size group

___ We are a part of a smaller group

___ I tend to avoid interacting with other people

16. Which of the following best describes your friends?

___ Most of them live in Grand Forks

___ Most of them live on base

___ Most of them live outside of town, but not on base
Section 4: Please give me your first reaction to the following questions – Circle the number which best describes how you feel.

17. Would you personally feel comfortable having a student of a different race than yourself....

a. Talk to you in the “commons area” during your break.

Very comfortable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

b. As a partner in a class project?

Very comfortable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

c. As a friend?

Very comfortable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

d. As a close friend?

Very comfortable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

e. As a date to a school function?

Very comfortable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

f. As a person I would seriously date?

Very comfortable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

18. Would you personally feel comfortable having a student who lives on the base...

a. Talk to you in the “commons area” during your break.

Very comfortable  1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10
b. As a partner in a class project?

Very comfortable

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Not at all comfortable

19. Would you personally feel comfortable having a student who lives in Grand Forks...

a. Talk to you in the “commons area” during your break?

Very comfortable

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Not at all comfortable

b. As a partner in a class project?

Very comfortable

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Not at all comfortable

c. As a friend?

Very comfortable

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |

Not at all comfortable
d. As a close friend?

Very comfortable

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Not at all comfortable

e. As a date to a school function?

Very comfortable

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Not at all comfortable

f. As a person I would seriously date?

Very comfortable

1  2  3  4  5  6  7  8  9  10

Not at all comfortable

Section 5: Please answer the following question in your own words. Remember NO ONE will know how you answer the question.

20. What would you like to see happen at Central to make you feel more comfortable and make your school a better place?
Please use this space and the back of this page for any additional comments you may have:

Thank You.... for your time and help with my project!
Dear Parents or Guardian:

Terri Eide, a graduate student, at the University of North Dakota will conduct a research project at Central High School this fall. The purpose of this study is to better understand how adolescents interact with their peers and what we, as adults, can do to enhance the social relationships between youths and improve their school environment. Your child may be asked to complete a survey concerning their social behavior, relationships with peers and their involvement in school and leisure activities. The survey takes about 20 minutes to complete and will be conducted during school hours. A copy of the survey is available for your examination upon request to Terri Eide at the Sociology Department of the University of North Dakota or you may request a copy from Mr. Jeff Schatz.

The information collected in this study will be kept confidential. In order to protect confidentiality, names will not be included on the surveys. All study materials will be kept in a locked file cabinet. At the conclusion of this project, all surveys and consent forms will be destroyed. Your child’s participation in this study is voluntary and will not affect you or your family’s current or future relations with the public school system. The agreement by your child to participate in this study is voluntary; he or she is free to withdraw from the study at any time.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may call me at 777-4002, my advisor, Dr. Kathleen Tiemann at 777-2188 or the principal of Central High, Mr. Jeff Schatz at 746-2375.

Thank You,

Terri Eide
APPENDIX C

Assent Statement by Participant

My name is Terri Eide I am a graduate student in sociology at the University of North Dakota. I am doing a research project and I would greatly appreciate your help. Enclosed you will find a survey which includes questions about you, your thoughts and feelings. This information is completely confidential, no one will know who you are or how you answer the following questions. It is important that you answer the following questions as honestly as you can. Take your time, and think about each question carefully. The survey should take about 20 minutes to complete. If you have any questions about the survey, please raise your hand and I will be happy to help you. This study gives you the opportunity to tell us how you feel about your school. As a result of hearing your opinions we hope to make your school environment a better place. Again, I want to thank you for your contribution to my research by completing this survey. If you agree to participate in the research study stated above, please complete the consent form below. Your decision to participate in this study is completely voluntary; therefore, if you do not want to continue you may stop answering the questions at any time.

I have read the above information. **I AGREE to participate.**

Your Name (print): _____________________________________

Your Signature: _________________________________________

If you have any questions or concerns you may contact me at anytime:

Terri Eide at 777-4002 or Kathy Tiemann at 777-2188
REFERENCES


Defense Manpower Data Center: Department of Defense Washington, DC.


