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The effect of certain elements of culture on the cooperative or competitive attitude in children

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Thesis

THE EFFECT OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF CULTURE ON THE
COOPERATIVE OR COMPETITIVE ATTITUDE IN CHILDREN

Submitted by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

**LIST OF TABLES**

**LIST OF FIGURES**

I. **INTRODUCTION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose of Study</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Importance of Study</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods of Studying the Problem</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

II. **AN EXAMINATION OF THE LITERATURE DEALING WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETITION AND COOPERATION IN CHILDREN IN SOME PRIMITIVE AND PRESENT DAY CULTURES**

**COOPERATIVE CULTURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Maori of New Zealand</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Bachiga of Africa</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hopi of the U.S. Southwest</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dakota of North America</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Iroquois of North America</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sioux of North America</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**COMPETITIVE CULTURES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manus of the Admiralty Islands</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoans of the Pacific</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Yorok of North America</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pilaga of Argentina</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States Culture</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. PROCEDURE OF THE TRIAL STUDY</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasons for Selecting the Questions</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA OBTAINED FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary of Data</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suggestions for Improving the Questionnaire</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Occupations of Children's Parents at B. School</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Answers to the Question &quot;What Does Your Daddy Do?&quot;</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Answers to the Question &quot;Why Does He_______?&quot;</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Answers to the Question &quot;Does He Work Alone?&quot;</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Answers to the Question &quot;Why Do All Daddies Work?&quot;</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Answers to the Question &quot;Where Do Your Shoes, Dress,</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>or Coat Come From?&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Answers to the Question &quot;Do You Know Who Makes Them?&quot;</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Figure</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Child's Concept Formation of the Adult World Through Their Conception of Their Father's (or Mother's) Occupation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study: The purpose of this study is twofold: 1) To find out whether the culture into which a child is born has been found to impose upon him an attitude predominantly competitive or cooperative. 2) To suggest a method of studying the acquisition by young children of concepts of competition or cooperation in the adult world of our culture.

The writer became interested in this problem from an experience while visiting friends in the summer of 1949, when the question of the values young children were absorbing was raised in a dramatic way. The friends in question are in academic life and have two children, a daughter aged three, and a son aged five. As we sat on the beach at the Marine Biological Laboratory in Woods Hole, Massachusetts, watching people swim and then take a shower at a platform built on the beach near the water, the little boy said:

"Wouldn't it be nice if I could charge everyone a dime for taking a shower?"

The adults laughed (an unconscious sign to the child that his idea was one they enjoyed) and forgot the incident. Upon further thought about this matter it seemed that it was the competitive attitude of the business world that the child had reflected. He might easily have said:

"Isn't it nice that everyone can take a shower?"
That this was not a unique incident appeared when the five year old son of some other friends who are veterinarians and own a pet hospital, remarked that he always let his friend at play-school borrow his Golden Book, but henceforth he would charge him a dime to borrow it. This time the "cash nexus" that Carlyle said came between all relationships in our culture, intruded itself upon the friendship of young children. Did the obvious reaction on the part of the parents of how clever their young son had been reinforce his idea that a business transaction among friends (for that is what his idea expressed) was accepted by his parents as an obvious value?

The final vivid example of the intrusion of the competitive business world early upon childhood values, came during a desperate hunt for an apartment to live in. A cold Sunday morning found about ten searchers at a two family house whose owner had advertised an apartment for rent. A harassed woman (who felt very sorry for the shivering apartment hunters) asked them to wait their turn to see the apartment. Her young son dressed to go to Sunday school, paused on his way out, very much interested in the tense, waiting people. He asked why they were there, and many of them told him about living in crowded quarters with their parents and children. Others said how difficult it was to find a place to live that would accept children, and where the children would have a yard to play in. As his mother came down the stairs, he turned to her and said:

"Why couldn't we make everybody pay a nickel who wants to look at the apartment, mommie?"
The situation became plainer; some of our children were absorbing the business ideology. "America is known for its clever business men. Children may be listed among the cleverest."\(^1\) Obviously these children were viewing a situation as one in which they might be equally concerned with how they might help people or as one in which there was a business relationship that could be exploited. These incidents suggested that it might be possible to find out how competitive attitudes of children are related to the values of the competitive business culture in which they live.

Importance of Study: That cooperation is one of the keynote problems of our present culture is shown in a statement made at the meeting of the International Conference on Mental Hygiene held in London in the summer of 1948. Dr. T. Ferguson Rodger, professor of psychiatry, Glasgow University, told the conference, "Our only hope lies in establishing conditions which will create fresh possibilities of cooperative group life."\(^2\)

One of the most important of the attitudes interfering with cooperation is that of competition. As Dr. Horney says, "competitiveness, and the potential hostility that accompanies it, pervades all human relationships...it pervades the family situation so that as a rule the child is inoculated with this germ from the very beginning. The rivalry between father and son, mother and daughter, one child and another, is not a


\(^2\) The Oregonian, August 20, 1948.
general human phenomenon, but is the response to culturally conditioned stimuli...It must be added, however, that this rivalry itself is not biologically conditioned but is a result of given cultural conditions, and furthermore, that the family situation is not the only one to stir up rivalry, but that the competitive stimuli are active from the cradle to the grave. 1

In Dr. Kluckhohn's book on personality studies, Dr. Gillen, who writes from the point of view of an anthropologist, states that the studies of different cultures have taught us that:

1) There is a definite correlation between the socio-cultural constellation to which the child is exposed and the type of person he becomes as an adult.

2) The fact that human groups have developed so many different ways of producing so many different types of adult personalities suggests that the possibilities of planned manipulated personality development are very real. 2

Our culture is far from being an entirely competitive one. The attitude of cooperation is taught to the child in the home, in the church, and in the nursery school. But it is important to find out to what extent these cooperative ideals are being transmitted to our children as part of their value system so that we can plan intelligently for democratic education. In this planning it is also useful to investigate how much latitude there is in the development of such attitudes. The reference to other cultures can serve this purpose in large measure.


Methods of Studying the Problem: (1) Anthropological Data. In order to investigate the effects of the social system on the formation of cooperative and competitive attitudes, it was necessary to make these social systems a variable. This was accomplished by examining anthropological data on different cultures. In this examination, particular attention was paid to socio-economic conditions which might give rise to cooperative or competitive attitudes and to a comparison of these conditions with the personality of children and adults in each culture studied.

The primitive cultures examined include the Maori, the Manus, the Dakota, the Iroquois, the Samoan, the Sious, the Yorok, the Pilaga, the Bachiga, and the Hopi. The data on these cultures are presented in purely descriptive fashion by excerpts from anthropological works and summaries of data included in them. Attention is called to obvious connections between physical and social conditions and the attitudes prevalent under these conditions.

Studies were also made of modern American industrial culture. The effect of the social conditions in the United States on the cooperative and competitive attitudes of children was treated in the same manner. Because of its great complexity this society can not be treated as a unit, so the effect of the different conditions of the various classes has been taken into consideration. Davis and Havighurst in describing the differences in attitudes of children in a working-class and a middle class home say, "The sober truth is that the two houses are in two worlds, between which there is no social communication." ¹

¹ Davis and Havighurst, Father of the Man, Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1947, p. 21.
(2) Suggested method of studying effect of culture on young children:

In an endeavor to get some insight into the mechanism of the development of cooperative and competitive attitudes in our own culture, a tentative questionnaire for nursery school children was devised.

As shown in the section, Importance of Study, a clue was found indicating that children of a surprisingly young age are being indoctrinated into the competitive business aspect of our economy. Informal preliminary questioning, by the writer, of nursery school children showed that they had fairly well developed ideas about the economic system. This seemed to indicate that a planned questionnaire related to the subject would receive intelligible answers. A questionnaire was then drawn up and mimeographed. An effort was made to word the questions on it in such a way that the answers might indicate an awareness on the part of the children of either the cooperative or competitive aspects of our economic system, or both. The questionnaires were then used by four nursery school teachers in a middle class school. Eighteen children between the ages of four and five (Kindergarten group), and eighteen children between the ages of five and six, (Transition group) were questioned.

The results of the questionnaire were tabulated to show the occupational status of the children's parents, and the types of responses which the children gave.

Although the results of this questionnaire can by no means be considered definitive, they make it clear that the method is a fruitful one for studying the development of cooperative and competitive attitudes in relation to the central socio-economic facts of our culture. It is to be
hoped that such studies will be continued both by the present writer and by other students of child development.

Although the questionnaire is largely based upon the economic system because of its obvious connection with competitive attitudes, it casts light on the wider system of values being acquired by the child. The questionnaire could be extended to cover a variety of other attitudes.

Assumptions:

(1) The development of attitudes of cooperation and competition in primitive cultures throw light on development of these attitudes in modern American culture.

(2) It is possible to discover incipient attitudes of cooperation and competition in young children.

(3) Making money symbolizes the competitive aspect of the economy, whereas a conception of the joint effort of people in production would express the cooperative attitude.
CHAPTER II

AN EXAMINATION OF THE LITERATURE DEALING WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETITION AND COOPERATION IN CHILDREN IN SOME PRIMITIVE AND MODERN CULTURES.

Assuming that the primitive child starts life with the same innate capacities as the child of civilized parents, the startling differences in habit, emotional development, and mental outlook between primitive and civilized man must be laid at the door of a difference in social environment.

The comparative study of competitive and cooperative attitudes in a variety of cultures cannot give an unequivocal answer to the question: Does the culture affect competitive and cooperative attitudes? It can at best only attempt to show that in some cultures the attitudes are predominantly cooperative and in others they are predominantly competitive. This finding would seem to prove that these attitudes are culturally influenced and are not biological and innate. The conclusion holds even if the connection between the social conditions and the attitude cannot be discovered. As Margaret Mead said of Malinowski's Trobriand Island study in which the Oedipus complex was not present, "one such test case is sufficient to disprove any contention that the conflict between father and son is inevitable in terms of human nature."  

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2 Ibid., p. 913.
However, one must be careful not to generalize from observation of one primitive tribe or industrialized culture, because great variety is found in the competitive and cooperative responses in different cultures.

There are a variety of ways in which cooperation and competition are exhibited in primitive cultures. Cooperative and competitive behavior among young children on the one hand grows out of the social conditions of the society and on the other affects adult behavior as the children grow up.

Competition for the affection of the mother, as is shown later, is probably a strong determinant of sibling rivalry; a rivalry which may be carried over into other relationships. However, it is also obvious that the way in which members of society earn a living determines to a greater or lesser extent whether they will feel a competitive or cooperative relationship toward their fellow men. It is even possible that the feeling of affection or lack of affection which the parent has for the child may be influenced by factors originating in the economic conditions of our society, as Dr. Horney suggests in her book, *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*. For this reason, a description of the economy of primitive cultures is presented whenever available.

Since we have insufficient data to determine causal relationships of competitive and cooperative attitudes, we shall use purely empirical classifications, designating societies as mainly cooperative or competitive.

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1 Horney, *op. cit.*
COOPERATIVE CULTURES

The majority of the primitive cultures investigated here are cooperative. The less complicated the society the easier it is for the individual to see the social whole and evaluate his position in it.

The Maori of New Zealand.

In Dr. Mead's work on the Maori of New Zealand it is said, "Psychologically speaking, the subjective state of the Maori individual in cooperative work little resembles that of the individual in the modern industrial world. The western individual, isolated in an obscure corner of the productive process and motivated by a standardized wage, has no reason for estimating his own activity as cooperative. On the other hand, the Maori worker, by the claims of a simpler technology, is thrust into a visible cooperative setting in which he is fully aware both of the total procedure and of his subordinate function."¹

Reflections of cooperative economic situations are found in the attitudes of the individuals. In the Maori of New Zealand Dr. Bernard Mishkin finds a cooperative socio-economic system and cooperation and love among the children. Dr. Mishkin says:

The Maori children were always treated with kindness, they were neither shamed nor warned in the process of their education, but simply advised. They were spoken to by

adults as equals. Small children were allowed to sit by their elders in tribal assembly and apparently took an interest in the proceedings...They might ask questions and were answered gravely.¹

The Maori child was taught that "sympathy and good feeling were the most important things in the world."²

The Bachiga of Africa.

According to May Mandelbaum Edel, who writes in Margaret Mead's book, *Competition and Cooperation Among Primitive People*, the Bachiga child is nursed until he is three or four years old. He is petted and carried everywhere by his mother; even in sleep he is cradled next to her at night. Other adults will also indulge him, but a mother always indulges her child. "I have seen a Bachiga grin with delight when her two year old daughter called her a filthy name."³

Children in this culture are never punished; they are always consulted before decisions are made. A three year old may decide to live in a grandmother's home and no one would stop him. The child's relation to the father as well as to the mother is a close one, and this results in no jealousy between the parents. Every endeavor of the child is praised, but "all assumption of responsibility must come from the child, and always meets with extravagant approval."⁴ The child who fails is not made to suffer any humiliation. There is complete lack

¹ Ibid., p. 454.
² Ibid., p. 460.
³ Ibid., p. 148.
⁴ Ibid., p. 148.
of compulsion and the child is not urged to learn social or religious lore. Each child does his best according to his own inclination.

In character training there is no mold for the child to fit into. "Personality is treated as a fixed attribute as evident in a tiny child as in an adult."¹ There is, therefore, no effort at coercion. "Complete tolerance for individual differences, skills and interests, plus an acceptance even of widely variant behavior,"² exists. In play the children do not fall into fixed groups. Miss Edel describes their play as heterogeneous, each child carrying on individual games, one singing and hopping, one parading elaborately, one building a little mound.

The Hopi of the U.S. Southwest.

Dorothy Eggan describes the Hopi child as welcomed by the entire family, and enjoying not only his mother's but also his aunt's breast. "A convenient lap was within reach when he was sleepy and breast when he was hungry."³ The child appeared to be as happy with his mother's sister or other close relatives as he was with his mother. A wide range of emotional security was felt, as the child enjoyed the love of many adults. Sharing relatives seemed to diffuse the affections and strengthen the security. Anal training was unhurried and not associated with shame or angry feeling from adults. The Hopi parents expressed the feeling that white people expect too much of small children.

¹ Ibid., p. 149.
² Ibid., p. 149.
No mechanisms were employed to prevent thumb sucking or masturbation among the Hopi, and the child was freed from his cradle board as soon as he found it constraining. No objects were labeled in one way or another "don't touch," and the child discovered for himself that stoves are hot. The transition from breast to solid foods was also effortless and at an early age the child was given small bits of food which were chewed by various members of the family and put into his mouth. There was no urgency about weaning.

Competition among children was considered the worst of poor taste. Miss Eggan tells of the love and security which was bred by the relationship between the adult and child and of the intense feeling for the "doctor father" (one of a number of adults who gave him love) to whom the Hopi child was often "given" in illness.

The Dakota of North America.

In the Dakota tribe of American Indians, described by Jeannette Mirsky in Margaret Mead's *Competition and Cooperation Among Primitive Peoples,* we find the perfect expression of love and respect for children, with its attendant love among siblings. The child is cherished and fondled by many tender, responsive, tolerant kin. He is not denied or scolded, he may nurse as long as he desires; and since the average sized family is four, the mother is not tired with too much child bearing. (Children are usually spaced three or four years apart.)

1 Ibid., p. 227.
There is no corporal punishment for children and they are treated and talked to as grown-ups. A Dakota mother who leaves her six month old daughter for a few minutes, will gravely tell her child what her purpose for going is and assure her she will return quickly. The father holds the child of either sex in high esteem and there is no fear of the father on the part of the child. Brothers and sisters are devoted to each other and carry the same relationship all through their life.

The tribe cooperates in hunting and supplying food. Property is felt to be of no importance when compared with human relationships and property can only achieve importance when used to bring out and emphasize relationship to another human being. There is no competition or bargaining in trade, and since the ownership of property has no prestige value, giving it away has. "What are things compared to people?" is the philosophy of the Dakota.

Iroquois of North America

B.H. Quain in *Competition and Cooperation Among Primitive Peoples*, tells us the same cooperative society and type of relationships which the Dakota people enjoy is found among the Iroquois Indians of North America. Field work is done cooperatively as is the fishing for the tribe. Women have mutual aid societies, and a sick woman who cannot work receives her share of produce from the tribe in an equal manner. Small children are under the complete charge of their mothers. During infancy they are carried on cradle boards and taken into the fields while their mothers work. They are hung on a limb of a tree or given small tasks when they can walk. "An early commentator has described the
gaity with which the entire family, mother and children, planted the cornfields. Corporal punishment is never used and nothing happens in a child's life to alienate him from the kin group.

Sioux of North America.

The interesting Sioux Indian culture is presented by Dr. Erik Homburger Erikson. It is a cooperative culture, in which a pattern of mutual respect, generosity and love develops among siblings. There is almost no frustration from the beginning of life. The Sioux mother prepares her breasts for her baby by having another woman suck her breasts until they are ready to give milk in generous quantities. The baby is then nursed whenever he whimpers as the Sioux does not believe that helpless crying is good for the infant. Breast feeding may continue for as long as three to five years and real security for the child results. His security base is also broadened beyond the mother-child relationship, as he often receives nursing from other tribal women. A feeling of cooperation and free generosity is encouraged within the tribe.

COMPETITIVE CULTURES

All primitive societies do not have predominantly cooperative attitudes. We now consider cultures in which competitive attitudes are predominant.

1 Margaret Mead, op. cit., p. 272.
Manus of the Admiralty Islands.

In the Manus tribe described by Margaret Mead, there is tremendous competition between the husband and wife for the affections of the child. The child understands the situation at an early age and sides with the father against the mother. The low economic status of the depressed Manus women is a likely reason for the low esteem in which she is held by her family. Children in a family join their father in insulting their mother. Children are fought over from the time of their birth, and never know the feeling of shared emotions for their mother and father. Among females the competition is more marked than among male children, who hunt and play together. Women leave their villages at marriage to live among their husband's relatives. All other women are her enemies, and the Manus woman never makes fast friends with members of her own sex. This attitude leaves its mark on the little girls. They have no dolls and no patterns of playing with babies. Their mothers hate, and are ashamed of sexual intercourse. Rigid physical training and shame is taught to the children by the emotional reactions of the mother and the father. The parent's horror, physical shrinking and repugnance of sex is communicated to the child. Women will not remove their grass skirts in front of each other, nor will men; thus an atmosphere of fear and shame is created. The child grows up in a situation where all human relationships are commodity exchanges. The woman "is only a pawn, an occasion for financial

transactions." Life is a continuous wrangling over payments involved in the marriage. The birth of a child becomes another occasion for trade and exchange. Pregnancy, birth, betrothal, marriage and death are thought of in terms of payment.

This constant buying and selling is an obstacle to any cooperative effort, because all relations between people are looked upon as competitive transactions in which one or the other of the participants will be worsted. "Individually owned wealth is a continual spur to self-centered individualistic activity." The adults all have antagonisms. There is no casual visiting and social gatherings are merely for exchange.

Although Dr. Mead says that Manus culture is like our own in its teaching of respect for property, the Manus children do not construct an adult world in miniature as do the children of our culture. Play is not creative and the children have a "dull, uninteresting child life, unaided by the rich hints for play which a developed society has." It is as though the Manus children reject the competitive life of the adult world and wish to enjoy childhood before they become stripped of self-respect and saddled with debts as they become of age. In contrast to this competitive picture, Dr. Mead also says that for the first few years of life the children are pampered and

2 Ibid., p. 90.
3 Ibid., p. 90.
petted (as the adults compete for their affection) and become very egocentric. "Feelings of inferiority and insecurity hardly exist."¹ An easy give and take exists among the children and the roles of leader and follower are interchanged, giving each child a maximum opportunity to develop his potentialities. "In a few years their culture will have claimed them, turned their minds to commerce, tangled up their emotions in a web of shame and hostility."²

There are not sufficient data available to make clear the connection between this very discontinuous culture and the wide gap between the competition and cooperation that exist side by side in the Manus culture.

Samoans of the Pacific.

Margaret Mead's study of the Samoan culture, describes it as predominantly cooperative, with patterns of competition that differ among the sexes. Little boys learn cooperation through the necessary work of helping in the fishing procedures. The girls, on the other hand, are provided with no lessons in cooperation and while "the boys organize quickly; the girls waste hours in bickering, innocent of any technique for quick and efficient cooperation."³

The first attitude a little girl learns toward boys is one of antagonism and avoidance. Starting with taboos toward boys of her

¹ Ibid., p. 8.
² Ibid., p. 8ff.
relationship group (brothers, etc.) it spreads to all boys. From the age of six brothers and sisters never speak to each other, they go about in gangs, attack each other with sticks and stones, and show extreme hostility and competitiveness between the sexes, but not within the sex.

Children of the same sex do not compete with each other. The slowest child in school sets the pace, and parents feel ashamed if their child outstrips his companions. The child is brought up by a hierarchy of male and female adults, all of whom he can depend upon. The presence in the household of several adults, a choice of women to nurse from, and men to cuddle the child, "seems to insure the child against the development of the crippling attitudes which have been labeled Oedipus complex, Electra complex, and so on."¹

The parents' role is not in large degree stronger than the role of other adults, consequently there is not the competition among siblings for the parent's love. Less neuroticism results than in our "too intimate family organization." The children frequently go on long visits to other households, thus alleviating the child's sense of dependency at the same time that he never feels trapped.

The Yorok of North America.

Dr. Erikson tells of the life of the Yorok Indians in Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture. Brought up in an individualistic

¹ Ibid., p. 141.
culture, the Yorok pursues the acquisition of possessions. The child is taught to think about becoming rich while he eats, while he is in the bath house, and while he prays. No talking is permitted at meals so that everyone may concentrate on money and successful salmon fishing. Competition for property and wealth are introduced as early patterns to young children.

Women are depressed members of the tribe and are thought of as unclean and contaminated. Their relationship to their children is not one of prolonged love and tenderness. Children are not given the breast for the first ten days of life, a nut soup is substituted for milk. It is as though the child were being warned that his relationship with his mother was a tenuous one. Indeed, the child is weaned at six months, and this is called "forgetting the mother." The mother literally disappears for a few days. This seems to be part of a "general tendency to encourage the baby to leave the mother and her support as soon as this is possible and bearable and not return."¹ Competition between the sexes is revealed in children's fables, little boys learn to despise girls and think of them as commodities which they will purchase when they grow up.

The Pilaga of Argentina.

Charles and Zunia Henry's Study of the Pilaga Indian children

¹ Dr. Erik Homburger Erikson, in Clyde Kluckhohn, op. cit., p. 142.
shows them as violent, quarrelsome and hungry for attention. The cruel life of economic scarcity (they starve three months of the year) in the Argentine Gran Chaco is reflected in the competitive cruel attitudes among the children. "Sibling rivalry is a characteristic feature of Pilaga familial relationships."¹ There is direct hostility toward the younger sibling because of displacement.

"In all truth it may be said of a Pilaga baby that he learns to fight almost before he learns to walk;"² competition for the parents' love is not concealed and corporal sanctions and insults are the characteristic justice of the child world. Beatings have become institutionalized in inter-village boxing bouts. Lines of little girls beat each other on their arms, and the whole group retaliates if unfair beating on the face or body occurs.

United States Culture.

We now turn our attention to our contemporary American industrial culture of the twentieth century. America is a large country encompassing varied faiths, races, economic groups, and nationalities. In order to discuss the effects of the culture on competitive attitudes in American children we will concentrate mainly upon manifestations that in some degree pervade our entire society, whether Negro or white, working or


² Ibid., p. 239.
middle class. Allport states,

The nature of the struggle for survival in a competitive society tends to force every individual to seek his own most suitable level of aggression. As the saying goes, everyone must be either a boot or a door mat. One child, as he matures, finds that a constant effort to dominate his fellows is for him the most successful design for living; another finds that for him there is more satisfaction in a characteristic yielding or submission. Somewhere between the extremes of exaggerated domination and complete passivity, there lies for each normal individual a level of adaptation that fits his intimate requirements.¹

However, Dr. Ruth Benedict warns us that this is not a hereditary but a cultural situation.

Our culture regards every situation as having in it the seeds of a dominance-submission relationship. Even where dominance-submission is patently irrelevant we read in the dichotomy, assuming that in every direction there must be one personality dominating another. One the other hand some cultures, even when the situation calls for leadership, do not see it in terms of dominance-submission. To do justice to this attitude, it would be necessary to describe their political and especially their economic arrangements, for such an attitude to persist must certainly be supported by economic mechanisms that are congruent with it.²

We may be indeed grateful to W. Allison Davis and Robert S. Havighurst, authors of Father of the Men, for their status studies on American children. Their research on working and middleclass children show the degree and forms of competitive attitudes among the children of each group. They speak of an outstanding form of competition in our culture: sibling


rivalry for parental love. "Rivalry between brothers and sisters is a fundamental trait in our kind of family, which has only two persons who act as parents."¹ This competition becomes aggravated in many middle class families of two or three children.

The three Henricks children of a middle class family, included in the Davis and Havighurst studies, showed their jealousy by competing for gifts, by fighting, and by competing for attention. In another middle class family there was a chart kept for the children, which only succeeded, by its gold stars, in making the children competitive and jealous. "We actually teach our children to compete with each other.²" This competition is often an insidious, full scale, and bitter fight.³ The objective is to be the most loved by the parent, usually the mother. Thus, whatever forms the competition takes, whether jealousy of the other child’s books, toys, or hour of going to bed, the real fight is over the mother herself or the father. The feeling of loss with its accompanying competitive behavior is characteristic of the "small, tightly knit, middle class family." "The replaced first child is the true irreconcilable." If the child has been "overloved" he will find it hard to reconcile himself to sharing love with a new sibling. The second child is also drawn into competition; he fights to be as old as the first. He competes in skills,

¹ Davis and Havighurst, op. cit., p. 124.
² Ibid., p. 127.
³ Ibid., p. 121.
in games, and in possessions; he has an age inferiority.

In lower class families such competition appears to be moderated by the custom of entrusting the parental role to an older child. Usually each child thus receives his turn to act as parent-surrogate to a younger child.

That this is a cultural phenomenon rather than an inevitable, universal happening, is shown in primitive families and in some working class families. In Samoa where a child receives love and affection from several adults, and nurses from several women, the "loss" of his mother to a new baby arouses little sign of jealousy. There are Indian tribes, e.g., the Iroquois, as described above, where the child feels the security of many women and men whom he calls mother and father. In our own society, in the typical large working class American Negro or Italian-American family, the child has grandmothers and aunts who often act as his mother "so that he has two or three women who give him attention and caresses." Thus, as with the Iroquois child, his basis of security may be increased with the additional love he receives from many parent figures. The first child, who has been breast-fed longer than the middle class child, and is surrounded by affectionate adults, hardly notices the slight diminution in attention caused by the arrival of a baby brother or sister.

According to Davis and Havighurst, strict training in cleanliness and sexual control with an accompanying respect for property and

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2 Davis and Havighurst, op. cit., p. 125.
achievement gives the average middle class child a vivid sense of his "own" place in the house, of his "own" rights, and above all, of his "own" property. He jealously guards his position as well as his toys against his brother or sister.

None of this is true in the average slum family. At home the Washington children (a family studied by Davis and Havighurst) are much less individuals with rights and property, than they are members of a communal group. Owing both to their large numbers and extreme poverty, they do almost everything together... Working, playing, sharing with each other, are therefore basic traits in their personality.¹

They wait their turn for sweets and clothes and share everything generously with their brothers and sisters. The conditions which exist in the large, poverty stricken family create the need for cooperation and loyalty among the brothers and sisters that becomes far more important than competitive feelings.

Sibling competition among Negroes based upon skin color is another phenomenon of our American culture. In our society in which the white majority sets the standards (due to their earlier historic entrance), the lighter-skinned Negroes achieve more economic mobility than do their darker brothers. Thus, lighter skin becomes a desirable standard, and

the color of one's skin, which does not occupy the consciousness of colored children of other cultures (in Brazil, skin color is of no more importance than eye color) is here made an issue of prime importance.²

¹ Davis and Havighurst, op. cit., p. 19.
² Bingham Dai, in Kluckhohn, op. cit., p. 452.
E. F. Frazier's study\(^1\) shows that competition within the Negro family over skin color, destroyed the community of interests and mutual sympathies and understanding by which the family is held together. This competition occurred when the lighter members had more participation in the white world. Antagonisms grew up between siblings of different shades because of parental privileges favoring the lighter child.

John Dollard's case history\(^2\) of a lovely, bright girl with dark skin tells the story of how her personality was warped because of competition with a younger, lighter sister for her parents' affection. She often wished for her own death, and could not overcome the constant comparison of her skin color with that of others. She grew up to fear people and think them insincere when they made favorable comments on her appearance.

Competition is also caused among Negroes by standards of hair that most closely resembles that of the white majority. The case of Nellie is described by Bingham Dai in Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture. She was light complexioned and worried excessively about her hair. Nellie's younger brother and sister had beautiful hair, but Nellie and her father did not (according to the white standards which the family emulated). Her mother often told her to choose her husband by his hair.

"Think of your children," she would say. Obviously she felt that she had not done so. In this respect, Nellie and her father were in one

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1 Gordon Allport and others, "Memorandum on Research in Competition and Cooperation," Quarterly Journal of Economics, Book 1, April, 1937.

camp while the rest of the family were in the other. Nellie sensed at an early age her mother's preference for her brother and sister, with the result that she competed with them for the lost affection with its accompanying loss of security.

This striving to identify with the white majority is usually characteristic of middle class Negroes. Observations made by Davis and others would indicate that "most Negro lower class families like their children to be black, to be one of them. It is in the higher strata that the Negroes give position to the lighter skinned." The reason as given by Myrdal is that the upper strata have taken over this attitude from the white people.

Thus, we have the working class Negro with a pride in his own standards, who strives to keep his rich, diversified culture, while the middle class Negro competes within his group to climb out and assimilate with the white majority. He creates, as he does so, a family situation in which he favors his lighter children and thus creates an atmosphere that causes sibling rivalry rather than cooperation among the children.

A special way in which competition among working class children manifests itself is shown when the working class takes over the values and attitudes of the middle class to "get ahead," as individuals. Disregarding the obvious reality that everyone cannot climb out of the

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1 Davis and Havighurst, op. cit., p. 165.
2 Ibid
working class, as it is a necessary part of our economy, and faced with the choice of acting cooperatively with one's class or competitively, many working class families choose the latter course.

John Dollard's studies tell of the competitive feelings of a child in a gang who feels "better," because his father was better off than the other workers in the mill. He was constantly told that it was the "almighty dollar" that was most important and that he had to "get on" in the world. The family climbed out of the working class neighborhood, owned their house, and constantly scrimped and saved for education and old age. The children were expected to "do better" in life than their parents had, not by cooperation with their fellow workers to raise the standards of everyone, but by individual competition. The result was discontent and hatred of people, both men and women. "Tendencies to outdo others, to humiliate others, and to revenge oneself upon others can be displayed amply under the competition which leads to the securing of higher standards." ¹

The above analysis of anthropological studies shows that in general in cultures where cooperation among adults takes place in social and economic life, the children too acquire cooperative attitudes. In cultures where competition is stressed, and the economic life is a cruel one, as in the Pilaga of Argentina described earlier, the children acquire competitive attitudes.

¹ Kluckhohn, op. cit., p. 434.
CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE OF THE TRIAL STUDY

You know also that the beginning is the most important part of any work, especially in the case of young and tender things; for that is the time at which the character is being formed and the desired impression is more readily taken. --Plato.

Instincts do not make the institution, it is the institutions that make the instincts. --John Dewey.

From the experiences with friends' children reported in Chapter I, the writer felt that it would be desirable to study the relation between competitive and cooperative attitudes in children and similar aspects of the adult economic world in the American culture. It would seem wise to require that the method used provide an opportunity for children to interpret the situation presented as either competitive or cooperative.

The most striking gap in our knowledge in this field, competition and cooperation, relates to the psychology of deciding whether to aim at a goal competitively or cooperatively when both are possible. Experiments would easily be set up to study this instead of requiring the child to compete if he wants the goal object and then naively reporting how competitive he is.1

After considering several possible methods, the writer chose that of a questionnaire which could be adjusted to the above requirement. The questionnaire as finally used follows.

1 Gordon Allport and others, op. cit., p. 4.
Figure I
Child's Concept Formation of the Adult World Through Their Conception of Their Father's (or Mother's) Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Sex</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1. What does your daddy do? (What does he work at? if child doesn't understand the question).

2. Why does he ________ ? (Supply in blank space whatever child has said his father does).

3. Does he work alone?

4. Why do all daddies work?

5. Where do your shoes come from?

6. Do you know who makes them?

7. What do mothers do?

8. What would you like to do when you grow up?
The questionnaire was given to 36 pre-school children at the B. School. The children were in two groups, having two classes in each group. Their ages ranged from 4.6 to 5.6. (The ages of three children at the working class school were close to four years of age.)

B. School is a private institution in the residential section of a university town. The children who attend represent the classification that Davis and Havighurst would call the upper middle-class. Their fathers are professors and teachers, doctors, lawyers, and business men, with the majority professors and teachers. These children for the most part live in comfortable homes, have workshops in the basements, gardens to watch flowers grow in, and yards to play in. They have their own rooms and an abundance of play materials, in short the type of environment that develops the child's motor, language, and creative ability which the B. School children indeed have. They are brought to school in cars and live in a world in which families have winter and summer homes. A conversation in which three little girls take part gives the reader a glimpse of their lives. The children were seated around a table modeling with clay.

Marie, whose father is a banker, addresses Edna and Ava:

"We have a house in Duxbury, and we're going there this summer."

Edna (who in answer to question 1, "What does your daddy do?" had said, "My daddy buys money.") replies, "Well, we always go to Manchester in the summer. We have a boat."
Ava, whose father is a minister of an upper class Episcopal Church, then adds, "My grandmother has a house in Edgartown and we go there on Martha's Vineyard."

Edna then says: "Yes, that's nice, I go to Manchester, Marie goes to Duxbury, and Ava goes to Martha's Vineyard, everybody goes away in the summer."

These children live in a world where older brothers and sisters go to dancing school, take sailing lessons, and go to private preparatory schools.

The writer administered the questionnaire to ten children, and colleagues at the B. School administered twenty-six questionnaires to members of their respective classes.

**Reasons for selecting the questions.**

The question, "What does your daddy do?"

This was more or less a control question to find out how much awareness each child had of certain social phenomena as they affected him.

The remaining questions were based upon the twofold aspect of our society: cooperation and competition. In this society, the extreme division of labor actually makes men more dependent upon each other than they have ever been at any other time in history. For example a simple sweater that one wears may consist of wool from sheep raised in Australia, transported in English ships to a New England spinning mill where a large number of people will cooperate in producing yarn for utilization by a knitting mill. Cooperation of dyers, designers, salespeople, transportation workers, is all necessary before the garment comes to the hands of
the consumer. A glance at the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the books we read, etc., would help to pierce the myth that we can be "independent" of our fellow men. The situation is objectively one of the greatest cooperation, not only between individuals of widely different skills, but between nations with different specialties. On the other hand, it is equally true in our society that the different sweater companies, etc., are in violent competition with each other, and that the actual number of sweaters that come to the market are determined more by this competition than by the needs of society for sweaters. The workers in this industry are to some extent competing with one another for an inadequate number of jobs, but are also cooperating to make the sweater together, and cooperating in their unions in order to raise their collective standard of living. The entire situation of production and labor is heavily laden with both cooperative and competitive overtones. If the children stress one or another of these aspects, it is to be presumed that they may be presenting the values of the culture as they have assimilated them.

The question, "Why does your daddy work?" was included because it was the stimulus in the case of one child of five years, whose father was a doctor, to say: "Daddy works to take care of sick people and make them well."

In the case of another child, the answer to the same question was, "Daddy works to make money, and lots of daddies do it to keep on their jobs."
These two responses show that indeed this question gave the child the possibility of stressing either the cooperative or competitive aspect of work.

The presentation of the questionnaire to children of varying preschool ages also gave a possibility of solving a problem raised by Davis and Havighurst:

No one has been able to discover exactly how and when and with what cultural and personal results, young children in America are inducted into our version of human culture and society.¹

The results of the questionnaire at the E. School showed that at four years most children did not answer, "Why does your daddy work?" But at five years they all had a concept that was similar, "He works for money."

Preliminary results with this question indicated that most children would answer that their fathers worked for money, thus stressing the individualistic, competitive aspect of work. It was thought that this response might possibly have been elicited because of the personal nature of the question, "Why does your daddy work?" Since so many families are preoccupied with the very real problem of earning money, it is perhaps to be expected that the child would respond in this fashion. It was suggested by Mrs. Hood at the E. School where the test was given that the question, "Why do all daddies work?" being more general would take the emphasis off the urgency of the particular family situation and would provide more opportunity for the cooperative type of response.

¹ Davis and Havighurst, op. cit., p. 25.
The question, "Does he work alone?" was intended to investigate the feelings of isolation described by Margaret Mead, in which the cooperative aspects of our culture are not understood as they are understood in primitive or possibly socialist cultures.

Psychologically speaking, the subjective state of the Maori individual in cooperative work little resembles that of the modern industrial worker. The western individual, isolated in an obscure corner of the productive process, and motivated by a standardized wage, has no reason for estimating his own activity as cooperative. On the other hand, the Maori worker, by the claims of a simpler technology, is thrust into a visible cooperative setting in which he is fully aware both of the total procedure and of his subordinate function...In a society in which the means of production are privately owned and the operators in production are not the receivers of its fruit, the cooperative outlook displayed in the performance of work and the 'instinct of workmanship' will be at a low ebb.1

The fact that our cooperative production may not be a part of the consciousness of our adult world led to the question of what concepts were communicated to the child. Thus, the questions, "Where do your shoes come from?" and "Do you know who makes them?" were intended to discover whether the child is aware of the great cooperative productive effort which goes into the manufacturing of his necessities or whether this great pageant of production is hidden from him behind a mask of the commodity relation and the retail store.

The children's answers varied from the answer of most middle class children that their clothes "just came from a store," to the answer of two out of three children at a working class nursery school, "from a

1 Margaret Mead, op. cit., p. 447.
An attempt was made to find out the children's concept of women's work in our culture. There is a great disparity between the positions open to women and to men in our society. Most of the professions and the managerial positions in industry are virtually closed to women, while the rate of pay in those that are open usually does not equal that of men doing the same work. A great many people, both men and women, believe that women's talents are quite adequately used in housework; in fact, it is only a little over a decade since Germany proposed relegation of women to the kitchen as a major part of its political program.

In an effort to find out whether pre-school children had already formed an opinion on this vital social matter, and what they thought the latitude was for women's work, the following questions were asked of fifteen of the children (which group included seven girls and eight boys): "What do mothers do?" and "What would you like to do when you grow up?"

The answers were that mothers wash dishes, cook, clean, and sew; all the girls wished to be mothers when they grew up. The weaknesses of these questions will be discussed later under Suggestions to Improve the Questionnaire.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA OBTAINED FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL QUESTIONNAIRE

The tables in this section summarize the results of the questionnaires. There was not a wide variety of responses to the questions, so the complete answers of all children are not given, although sample answers are quoted in full. Whenever an unusual answer to a question was given it is quoted and discussed.

Table 1 shows the occupations of the children's fathers as given in the school records. It indicates a fairly typical middle class distribution, although rather heavily weighted in favor of teachers and professors.

**TABLE 1**

**OCCUPATIONS OF CHILDREN'S PARENTS AT B. SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teachers and Professors</th>
<th>Doctors</th>
<th>Miscellaneous Professions *</th>
<th>Businessmen</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age 1-5</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten group</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age 5-6</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* One mother, a divorcée, was a housewife.
TABLE 2
ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "WHAT DOES YOUR DADDY DO?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number of children who accurately named fathers occupation</th>
<th>Number of children who said &quot;he just works.&quot;</th>
<th>Number of children who said &quot;I don't know.&quot;</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5-8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two of the five-year olds had a concept of their fathers' work that included more than his job. Jean said:

"He buys baby clothes—he works—he works for my mummy and helps her. He is a lawyer the rest of the time."

Deana said:

"He's an architect—he hammers and things with tools—he helps mummy a little bit—sometimes he goes to do his hair."

A child whose mother is divorced from her husband stated:

"She cleans the house. She dusts and she cooks every meal and washes. All my daddy does is come here sometimes to see us."
TABLE 3

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "WHY DOES HE ?"
(THE TEACHER WHO TESTED THE CHILD FILLED IN THE BLANK WITH THE OCCUPATION OF THE FATHER AS GIVEN BY THE CHILD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 4-5</th>
<th>Kindergarten group</th>
<th>Number of children who answered &quot;to make money&quot;.</th>
<th>Number of children who answered &quot;he likes to, or wants to&quot;</th>
<th>Number of children who gave no answer</th>
<th>Number of children whose answer suggested service or cooperation as the reason for working</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 5-6</td>
<td>Transition group</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Two children suggested service as a reason for their father's work, Edith said:

"Daddy works because he's a doctor—he takes care of sick people and makes them well."

Priscilla said:

"He teaches boys science because they're learning."

Of the group that said their father's worked to get money, one child, John, whose father works for Boy Scouts of America, said:

"He works to get lots and lots of money."
David said: "he wants to earn money to keep himself alive."

Liz, whose father is a physicist, said: "because he wants to get money, of course."

Of the Kindergarten group, 55 per cent of the children did not answer the question of why their fathers worked. Thirty-three per cent said their father worked for money, $\frac{5}{7}$ per cent said their father works because he likes to work, and $\frac{5}{8}$ per cent gave the type of service he performs as the answer.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answers to the Question &quot;Does He Work Alone?&quot;</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Answers that indicate working in cooperation with other people</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age 4-5</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transition group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The average answer of the children who said their daddy did not work alone was, "He works with lots of people." One child in the transition group suggested service as the motivating factor in her father's working with people. She said, "No, he doesn't work alone, he takes care of patients." Another transition child suggested that thousands of people worked for, not with, his father. "No, he doesn't work alone, he has Tony. You couldn't write down all of them because there are thousands." A minister's daughter was surprised at my question. "No, he doesn't work alone; isn't there a lot of priests in the church, Silly?"

The child of divorced parents whose mother is at home said, "No, she doesn't work alone, we help her."

**TABLE 5**

ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "WHY DO ALL DADDIES WORK?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 4-5 Kindergarten Group</th>
<th>Children who said &quot;to make money&quot;</th>
<th>Children who said &quot;I don't know&quot;</th>
<th>Children who said &quot;because he likes to&quot; or, &quot;he likes to&quot;</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 5-6 Transition Group</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Other answers were, "Everybody works," "He works in school," and "Mummies work because they have to do everything." (The last answer was from the child of the divorced parents.

The majority of children fell into the first category, who thought fathers worked "to make money." Only one transition child and nine kindergarten children did not give any answer. Two children thought fathers like to work.

Mary, whose father is a doctor, said, "Fathers work to earn a living and lots of daddies do it because they want to keep on their jobs." Anne, the minister's daughter, said, "Because if you don't work you can't live—you have no money and nobody would do anything for you."

Susan, whose father is a professor, said simply, "Money, money."

Many of the children's answers stressed the need of money to "live."

**TABLE 6**

**ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "WHERE DO YOUR SHOES, DRESS, OR COAT COME FROM?"**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Children whose answers indicated that shoes and clothes came from a store</th>
<th>Children who did not know or who did not grasp the concept of what was asked</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age 4-5</td>
<td>Kindergarten Group</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5-6</td>
<td>Transition Group</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Of the children in the second category, Edith, whose father is a doctor, answered, "Money for shoes comes from the hospital." The majority of the children knew that shoes, and clothing, were purchased in a store.

**TABLE 7**

**ANSWERS TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU KNOW WHO MAKES THEM?"
(Shoes, Clothes, etc.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age 4-5 Kindergarten group</th>
<th>Children who did not know, or did not answer</th>
<th>Children who thought their shoes or clothes originated in the store in which they had been purchased</th>
<th>Children who had the concept of factory production*</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age 5-6 Transition group</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Of this group, two children qualified their answer by saying:

"people in the factory make them."

The responses to this question showed that only a small fraction of the children tested have an idea that people are involved in making the clothes that the children wear. The majority of the children did not see beyond the store that the clothes were purchased in.

Fifteen of the thirty-six children were asked the questions:
"What do Mothers do? And what would you like to do when you grow up?"

All the answers with the exception of one fell into the category that mothers wash dishes, cook, clean, sew. One child mentioned household tasks and added, "a teacher or a doctor." The weaknesses of these questions became obvious to the writer too late. The concept sought was of women's work in our culture and how much latitude the children felt was possible for women in our culture, and the term mothers ruled out women without children, or unmarried women.

Seven of the fifteen children questioned about what they would like to do when they grew up, were little girls, and all answered that they wished to be mothers and cook and sew.

Summary of Data.

Although the questionnaire was tentative and the questions experimental the data collected shows that in this group of middle class families, children of pre-school age do not conceptualize that commodities are made by people—"They just come from the store."

Even when the fathers of the children were professors and doctors, and might have been imbued with the ideal that they were working to discover the truth, or for the good of humanity, their children said only that they work for money.

Suggestions for Improving the Questionnaire.

The questions, "Where do your shoes come from?" and "Do you know who makes them?" should be modified, or questions should be added to determine whether those children who are aware of the existence of the factory system are also aware of the cooperative nature of the work involved.
Since the results from a particular school in which the children are relatively homogeneous in their background seem to be consistent, it may not be necessary to take very large samples from a given school. It would, however, be very important to test as many different schools as possible in order to determine the responses from the widest possible cross-section of the population. It would be interesting to give a similar questionnaire to children of working class backgrounds, and to children in primitive cultures.

Having found from the questionnaire that the children tested are almost unanimous in seeing only the money aspect of the productive process, one is tempted to speculate on the origin of this response. It is fairly apparent from common experience that the average parent, when quizzed by the child about why he works, may casually reply, "I work to make money for you and mommie."

It should be remarked that in addition to giving a one-sided picture of society, this response represents an inculcation of values which is fraught with certain dangers.

In America one defines his security in terms of friends or money or both...it is well known that there has been an increasing tendency among North Americans to grasp at the straw of money, thus families train their children in these values. It now seems apparent that our culture is in such a state of flux and change that any system of child training which attempts to inculcate in the individual a personal security supported entirely by the tottering pillars of our current patterns of property is highly likely to lead the individual so trained to serious maladjustments and hopeless helplessness.¹

¹ Dr. John Gillen, in Kluckhohn, op. cit.
The last questions, "What do mothers do?" and "What would you like to be when you grow up?" should be revised to tap the children's concept of what they conceptualize the work of women to be in our society. The question might be, "What do women do?" The question, "What would you like to be when you grow up?" might be especially directed to little girls to discover whether they feel professions and positions in addition to motherhood are desirable. In a period when a growing number of women wish to enter professions and trades it would be interesting to find out what the young child's ideas about the position of women are and how and when these ideas are acquired.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

"Instincts do not make the institution, it is the institutions that make the Instincts." John Dewey

The foregoing study is concerned with two aspects of the problem of cooperation and competition. (1) Cooperation and competition among children in primitive cultures in connection with social and economic conditions of their culture. (2) The investigation of young children's acquisition of concepts of cooperation and competition from the adult world of our culture.

(1) It is found that in societies in which there is marked antagonism between husband and wife, such as in the Manus culture, there is great competition for the child's affections. "Self-centered, individualistic activity" in the ego-centered child is a result of this competition.

In the Samoan culture, young boys learn cooperation through the need to learn to fish in groups and to cooperate to perform tasks together. Competition is more marked among the little girls who do not have the opportunity for cooperation and thus react in a more aggressive way to each other. It is also observed that there is more sibling rivalry in cultures (such as our own) where a tightly knit family group has only two adults from whom the children gain love and security.
Cultures in which households consist of many adults with more than one woman from whom a child may nurse, and more than one man to call father (as in the Iroquois) produce siblings who are less competitive and who have a greater group identification with its larger basis for security and cooperation.

Among the Pilaga of Argentina, a cruel competitive struggle for survival in a barren environment is reflected in the competitive attitudes among the children. Cruel beatings are institutionalized in inter-village competitive bouts among the children.

Our own culture, which combines cooperation and competition, appears to inculcate some values of individualistic goals of acquisition, or as Margaret Mead puts it, "individually owned wealth is a continual spur to self-centered individualistic activity." Although many children will reject these values, as values of cooperation are stressed in the home, the school, and the church, the competition of adults appears to permeate the concepts of children. Dr. Horney calls the competitive attitude a "germ", which is caught early in life. We may ponder whether the early absorption of competitive attitudes will prove more tenacious than later evaluations.

(2) The data obtained from giving the questionnaire to thirty-six children of a middle class professional and business background, suggests the concepts they have of the work of adults. The majority of the children had a fair idea of what their father's work is. The five year old group had more concept of why their fathers work than the four year olds did. The question of why all adults work was
almost unanimously answered by, "for money." This answer is in a
sense right, but is only one aspect of the work of adults. The ques-
tion, "Does your daddy work alone?", did not bring forth a concept of
the cooperative aspect of adults work.

Suggestions for Increasing Cooperative Attitudes

Sibling competition in our society is considered by the author-
ities quoted, to be a result of scarcity of adult love, "rivalry be-
tween siblings is a fundamental trait in our kind of family, which has
only two persons who act as parents."¹ Although the outward manifes-
tations may be competition among brothers and sisters over possessions
or skills, the underlying factor is a race for love and security.

Arguing, showing off, etc. is spurred by "competition for prestige and
love from their parents."²

The mother who has an abundance of love may well allay the kind
of insecurity on the part of her children that leads to competition
among them, besides her love giving him the sense of security that is
necessary to the child before he can explore other relationships.

A greater consciousness of the values our children are absorbing
could lead to a continual reexamination of what attitudes we may un-
consciously encourage in them, and what experiences they encounter
that result in competitive and cooperative behavior. Group partici-
ipation in nursery schools, household corners that provide the basis

¹ Devir and Havighurst, Father of the Man, Boston, Houghton
Mifflin, 1947, p. 131.

² Ibid.
interaction, cooperative block-building, may provide the experiences that are the basis for cooperative attitudes in children.

We might encourage children to help each other in dressing, in toileting, in learning situations, rather than putting emphasis upon teacher help. We might also examine the incentives given a child for performing household tasks. The little boy described earlier who charges his friends ten cents when they borrow his Golden Book, receives payment for each job he does at home. A "cash nexus" is then the only relationship that he is beginning to value.

Perhaps more children's books describing the work of adults in our culture would lead to children's concepts of the work of adults as cooperative to supply the needs of society, and more than the concepts of individualistic acquisition on money. Simple portrayals of the industrial culture we live in would lead to a more realistic understanding of our cultures. A book about a shoe factory, a toy factory, or a cookie factory, could be understandable and made interesting. "Where do Your Toys Come From?" could be as intriguing a story and made as understandable as the complicated story of Pilot Small manipulating the intricate gadgets of his airplane. (I have frequently stumbled over the pronunciation of aileron, and could not explain it to the children at my first reading of the story).

Since one of the purposes of education in a democracy should be to counteract rather than reenforce undesirable attitudes which are acquired outside the school, the books and games which are used should be carefully inspected to see that they foster cooperative rather than competitive attitudes. Stories about Negroes that show them only in the role
of *Little Black Sambo*, an oddly dressed and atypical character, or *The Twin Kids*, in which the Negro woman is a stereotyped "mammy", who carries a basket of wash on her head, tend to set the Negroes apart from the white people, and make the Negro people ashamed or resentful. For the child this means the stories about children and adults are for the most part portrayed by white people and not interchanged with parts taken by Negro, Chinese, or people of other nationalities, thus the patterns of standards are set very early.

A glance at children's literature will show that the roles for women are also stereotyped and not given the latitude that would be desirable in a democracy. The doctor, the pilot, the engineer, etc., are not roles given to both sexes, but only to the male sex. The inadequate results of the questionnaire on the place of women in our culture, also gave some hint that the child is at an early age given a narrow view of the role of woman. If we become cognizant that we cannot, without serious psychological consequences, mold either men or women into set molds, but instead recognize that there are individual differences in aspirations, regardless of sex, and if children knew from stories, etc, that all roads were open to them, whether of tractor driving or medicine, they might not be indoctrinated with the idea that women belong only in the kitchen. The basis for competitive, masculine strivings in our culture may be laid early in the nursery school years as the child's ideas are acquired and constantly reinforced that the roles that he or she admired are reserved in songs and stories for the opposite sex.
Only one child of the thirteen questioned at the B. School said "teacher and doctor", in addition to cooking, washing, and cleaning, as the answer to "What do most mother's do?" The inadequacies of this question has earlier been discussed.

The results of the studies all together show a strong influence of the cultural milieu and the resultant behavior of the children in a cooperative or competitive way. In a somewhat less marked fashion, it is fairly definite that the more competitive adult worlds react to give more competitive children. It is indicated by the trial study that in our culture, somewhere between four and five years of age, middle class children may acquire a highly abstract picture of our economy which is competitive and based almost entirely on the cash transaction.
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. An extension of the questionnaire to further test the child's concepts of the adult world.

2. Revisions of questions 5 and 6 to tap the knowledge of whether the child knows that people in a factory produce the things he uses and enjoys.

3. Testing wider strata of the population.

4. Testing different countries having different economic systems, a representative sample would be: England, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, China, and the U.S.S.R.

5. The addition of questions to determine whether the child is absorbing competitive or cooperative values.

6. An examination of children's literature to determine the values they teach children.

7. An examination of commercial games to determine what values they teach children.

8. Interviews with parents to find out where children absorb their ideas.

9. Research on areas that would give young children cooperative experiences.

10. The use of a questionnaire to determine children's attitudes on the position of women in a given cultural setting.

11. Research on children's literature to determine the roles given to boys and girls, men and women, in stories.
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BIBLIOGRAPHY (Continued)


