

Microcopy Resolution Test Chart (NBS 1963-A) showing patterns of lines and numerical values for resolution testing.

Resolution values (in cycles per millimeter) are indicated next to the corresponding line patterns:

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PREFACE

In recent years America and the world have been shocked by the assassination of three of America's most attractive socio-political leaders: President John F. Kennedy, Martin Luther King, and Senator Robert Kennedy. Meanwhile, like a fever thermometer, the statistics on crime have risen. The cities have been riven by race riots and the national convention of the Democratic party presented shocking spectacles of provocation and brutal response. American campuses have suffered repeated partial and complete breakdowns. It is little wonder under such circumstances that journalists, foreign observers, columnists and social scientists have undertaken the new profession of pontificating about the forms, causes, and effects of competition and violence in America.

The present study was designed to explore the possibility that the underlying cause of all this social unrest lies in the linkage of competition and aggression in American character. To this end it was first necessary to review a sample of the vast literature by Americans and non-Americans on American characteristics, exploring at some length the various evidence on the occurrence of competition and violence.

Having established the theoretical linkage of these variables, a study to test it empirically was formulated with respect to samples of American and non-American graduate students at the University of

Minnesota. In order to develop manageable samples without making an impossible task for the interpretation of ambiguous findings, the samples of non-Americans were drawn from one Eastern, and one European area. Six hypotheses were advanced.

1. Americans are more highly competitive than are the nationals of either India or northern Europe.
2. Americans are more prone to aggression than are the nationals of either India or northern Europe.
3. Non-Americans perceive Americans as highly competitive.
4. Non-Americans perceive Americans as more highly competitive than Americans perceive themselves.
5. Non-Americans perceive Americans as highly aggressive.
6. Non-Americans perceive Americans as more highly aggressive than Americans perceive themselves.

The data to test these hypotheses were obtained by means of a self-administered questionnaire. Four scales were designed to measure: competition, aggression, perception of competition, and perception of aggression. These scales were pretested for reliability and validity. The two major devices for testing the findings were: The Pearson product-moment correlation, and the T test.

The underlying theoretical relation assumed to hold between competition and aggression was borne out for all sample groups, though strong indications were present that the relation may be more complex than originally assumed. Three of the specific hypotheses were borne out; the remaining three were either ambiguously confirmed or refuted.

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CHAPTER I

IS THERE AN AMERICAN CHARACTER?

The conventional wisdom¹ of sociologists maintains that human characteristics at a national level constitutes too broad a pursuit to be scientific. Such conventional wisdom tends to equate social science with an examination of phenomena at such a grass roots level as to set aside problems of considerable moment.

The Problem of Violence in America

An example of the kind of problem of major social import which tends to be set aside by the overly narrow definition of social science, is the occurrence in a society of an unusually high level of violent behavior. Americans in the past have been inclined to view themselves as an unusually peace loving people. Early in their history they drew a bold imaginary line (called the Monroe Doctrine) around the entire hemisphere. It seems to have been the intention of the sponsors to keep the endless wars of the European continent confined to Europe leaving people in the New World free to go their own pacific way.

¹
This happy phrase is borrowed from J.K. Galbraith's, The Affluent Society, New York: The New American Library, 1958, p. 18.

However, America has found herself in the 20th century not only operating at the center of the world wars, but sustaining many forms of violent behavior at home. Her recent dramatic series of political murders, the violence that has ravaged many campuses, the rise in her crime rate has shaken the older stereotypes. Increasing numbers of Americans have tended to join those foreign observers who have insisted that violence may be one of the national characteristics of Americans.

If it is true that national characteristics can be established, if it is possible that certain forms of violence are peculiar to American characteristics, the study of national character cannot be carelessly thrust aside. It is important to investigate it if for no other reason than that many persons believe it exists. And the problem of violence remains.

Under the assumption that sociologists need to function as analysts and interpreters of contemporary society, it is held that one of the distinctive issues of our time - nationalism and national characteristics - cannot be ignored. If the investigation must proceed with poorly refined instruments and imprecise variables, are these circumstances any less propitious than those of most inquiries involving human subjects? The alternative to proceeding under these conditions is to do nothing. But to do nothing is to emulate the ostrich with its

head in the sand. To do nothing is to ignore one of the most fundamental issues of the age. To fail to confront such a vital issue is to add ammunition to the belts of the skeptics who argue that sociologists spend much time and money in belaboring the obvious while evading many problems which would seem most crucial for society.

To be sure, we can attack the utility of the notion on methodological grounds, but as Riesman has noted:

Although scientific criticisms have been leveled at the ambiguity of the national character concept, something would be lost if this area of inquiry were abandoned altogether.²

On a stronger note Martindale has suggested that:

Despite repeated approaches, a sociology of national character remains to be developed. If sociologists are to address themselves to the critical problems of our age it is unavoidable.³

Furthermore, in spite of the shortcomings of the concept it remains a fact that foreigners do make generalizations about the characteristics of Americans, and more important, often act on the basis of these generalizations. As Thomas so aptly phrases

2

David Riesman, "Some Questions About the Study of American Character in the Twentieth Century", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 370, March, 1967, p. 36.

3

Don Martindale, "The Sociology of National Character", The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Vol. 370, March, 1967, p. 35.

4
it, "if men define situations as real they are real in their consequences."⁴ Basically the same information is conveyed in the remarks of Freymond who was writing with specific reference to international understanding: "Men act on the basis of the images in their minds of the situations to which they address themselves."⁵

As Others See Us

There is an American way of speaking, feeling, acting, discussing and behaving, and it is found just as much in the descendants of the last-wave emigrants as in the descendants of the 100 percent founders of the country.^{5A}

A resume of the perceptions of observers of American society from diverse points of the globe is instructive for the consistency revealed therein. While conflicting opinions may be discerned, the same generalizations continue to issue forth from so many different directions that Americans can hardly afford to ignore them. For whether or not the perceptions are

⁴ William I. Thomas and Dorothy S. Thomas, The Child in America, New York: Knopf, 1928, p. 572.

⁵ Jacques Freymond, "from Switzerland", As Others See Us, Franz M. Joseph (ed.). Princeton University Press; Princeton, New Jersey, 1959, p. 94.

^{5A} Andre Siegfried, Nations Have Souls, G.P. Putman's Sons: New York, 1952, p. 162.

an accurate description of what Americans believe to be reality, the perception of that reality is still crucial. Further, for those remarks which carry a condemnatory flavor it is especially critical that this nation does not continue to disregard them. It may be that some of the severest criticisms are based on misconceptions, but if this is the case then Americans need to actively dispel them, for as Barzini commented:

Many of the world's recent catastrophes have been due to these misconceptions. Perhaps some of the world's future troubles will be caused by similar distortions.⁶

If these censures are deserved, then again Americans need to be aware of the symptoms and the potential malignancy of the disease if they are to prepare an inoculum to combat it.

With reference to foreign policy it has often been remarked that Americans find it difficult to comprehend the apparent ingratitude of many of the nations who have been the recipients of generous aid from this country. Thus Eisenstadt notes the moralistic attitude that a good many sophisticates in the United States display in this area:

The moralistic attitude, the self-assurance that American policy is guided only by considerations of justice and right, seems to be very widespread, . . . and easy assertions that whatever is good for

6

Luigi Barzini Jr., "from Italy", Franz M. Joseph (ed.), p. 78.

America is necessarily good for the free world, which should take America's lead; Americans are good, serve only good causes, and therefore should be loved.⁷

More sobering is the forthright accusation starkly unleashed by the Chilean, Labarca - an accusation stemming from an obvious and deep-seated animosity towards the "American Way" - :

I believe I am not in error when I consider my views common to the enlightened classes of my country. . . These groups believe that the United States' gestures of friendship are a crass hypocrisy, and that under the mantle of aid is hidden a greedy desire to get hold of our wealth or - cleverly and to its own advantage - to direct our internal policy.⁸

Similar sentiments are expressed by the Mexican, Villegas,⁹ while a voice from Cuba, Manach suggests that:

. . . In the United States the prevailing mental attitude toward other countries suffers from a certain provincialism that inevitably influences interrelations.¹⁰

Several writers, Manach,¹¹ Joseph,¹² Labarca,¹³

⁷ S.N. Eisenstadt, "from Israel", Ibid., p. 169.

⁸ Amanda H. Labarca, "from Chile", Ibid., p. 68.

⁹ Daniel C. Villegas, "from Mexico", Ibid., p. 322.

¹⁰ Jorge Manach, "from Cuba", Ibid., p. 338.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 326.

¹² Franz M. Joseph, Ibid., p. 348.

¹³ Amanda H. Labarca, "from Chile", Ibid., p. 309.

Villegas,¹⁴ Broughton,¹⁵ Lubis,¹⁶ Khalafallah,¹⁷ and Sarc,¹⁸ have observed that Americans need to study human psychology more closely and to use it more adroitly in their attempts to relate to other nationals. Too often, it seems, America assumes that the goal value systems of other countries are identical with her own. When this assumption is followed by supposedly appropriate behavior, bitter resentment is often its reward. As Labarca has indicated "Time is money" is not the favorite slogan of South America.¹⁹

In like manner it appears that the American habit of taking for granted a universal goal-value system is primarily responsible for the consistently derogatory remarks aimed at the American who travels abroad. Foreign observers seem to save the keenest edges of their satire for the much maligned Yankee tourist. Thus Villegas sees him as:

¹⁴ Daniel C. Villegas, "from Mexico", *Ibid.*, p. 290.

¹⁵ Morris Broughton, "from South Africa", *Ibid.*, p. 258.

¹⁶ Mochtar Lubis, "from Indonesia", *Ibid.*, p. 194.

¹⁷ Mohammad Khalafallah, "from Egypt", *Ibid.*, p. 148.

¹⁸ Omer Celal Sarc, "from Turkey", *Ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁹ Amanda H. Labarca, "from Chile", *Ibid.*, p. 323.

. . . a noisy, stupid, meddling, inconsiderate, and childish being. . . Indeed the North American abroad turns out to be so inferior to the way he appears in his own country that an extremist would advise him never to leave it. . .²⁰

Over a hundred years ago Tocqueville saw fit to express a parallel opinion:

Democratic institutions generally give men a lofty notion of their country and of themselves. An American leaves his country with a heart swollen with pride; on arriving in Europe he at once finds out that we are not so engrossed by the United States and the great people which inhabits them as he had supposed, and this begins to annoy him.²¹

The Rise of American Nationalism

Bearing in mind that Tocqueville's comments were with reference to the 1830's the question of how and when a spirit of nationalism arose in this country is of interest. When men live together in groups, it is imperative that they establish patterns of behavior which are in some measure predictable, for "without shared beliefs and values of some sort no social life is possible."²² Over time some patterns inevitably become socialized - in

²⁰

Daniel C. Villegas, "from Mexico", Ibid., p. 297.

²¹

Alexis De Tocqueville, Democracy in America, translated by Henry Reeve, Oxford University Press: New York, 1947, p. 373.

²²

Martindale, op cit., p. 30.

succeeding generations of a community. Hence forms of greeting and salutation, manners in general, institutions and their functions, identities and accompanying roles, and so on, come to be taken for granted by individuals who share membership of the community. The degree of predictability becomes evident when individuals contravene the accepted standards of behavior, or consciously question their existence. Persons who consistently violate the norms of a community are defined as not "normal" and are often removed from the community into an institution provided for the express purpose of healing them - a process which takes the form of re-instruction and forced acceptance of society's norms.^{23, 24} Such a person is a threat to the stability of the community. Hence, the "patient" remains confined until his therapist decides that he is eliciting the kinds of behavioral responses which are to be expected of a "normal" individual in that particular society. When an individual overtly questions societal norms of behavior he is typically confronted by attitudes of bewilderment, and risks sharp ridicule and possible ostracism.²⁵ Such sanctions are

23

Erving Goffman, Asylums, Doubleday and Company, Inc., New York, 1961.

24

Thomas S. Szasz, "the Myth of Mental Illness", The American Psychologist, 15 (February, 1960), pp. 113-118.

25

Harold Garfinkel, Studies in Ethnomethodology, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1967.

applicable not only with reference to behavior per se, but also to appearance and expressed ideals.

In the United States community norms often originally arose within many different sub-communities situated at diverse points of North America. Obviously, the accepted norms varied somewhat from one locality to the next. Immigration during the colonial period coupled with the proliferation of small settlements that reflected the frontier spirit of the day, resulted in the formation of numerous sub-communities, by nature very provincial. This was the small town America which confronted Tocqueville in the early nineteenth century. This tendency towards fragmentation, if left unchecked, would have afforded an insurmountable barrier for growth of a national spirit. However,

At the very time when the frontier and immigration were particularizing the American people, the Industrial Revolution was reversing the process. . . the Industrial Revolution like a giant cement mixer, was homogenizing their tastes.²⁶

As the nineteenth century wore on the Civil War combined with the Industrial Revolution to pull the people closer together. The great internal conflict engineered a sharp decrease in the

26

Don Martindale, Community, Character and Civilization, The Free Press of Glencoe: London, 1964, p. 353.

influence of the goal-value system professed by most southerners, and numerous compromises ushered in an era in which fusion of ideals was prevalent.²⁷ This fusion of ideals set the stage for the emergence of a kind of nationalism somewhat different from that which was believed to be in existence in the early nineteenth century. In the earlier form the national society is described as a kind of federation of small towns.²⁸

Nonetheless, even at this time observers provide documentation of characteristic traits discernible in the American people,^{29, 30} while Niebuhr credits Jacksonian democracy with bequeathing to America, "An ideal of fraternal nationalism unmatched even in Rousseau's France."³¹ Niebuhr continues:

27

Ibid., p. 356.

28

Ibid., p. 334.

29

Tocqueville, op. cit.

30

St. John De Crevecoeur, Sketches of Eighteenth Century America, Yale University Press: New Haven, 1925.

31

Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, A Nation So Conceived, Yale University Press: New Haven, 1925, p. 9.

Our pressure on all previous sovereignties who shared this hemisphere with us, and the tenacity of our land hunger under the moral sanction of what our patriots called 'manifest destiny', may have given the first intimation of a unique national characteristic or trait of character, namely, the expression of a vital impulse in the name of an ideal. For we began our history by claiming the sanction of a democratic ideal for an imperial impulse, which was ostensibly disavowed and overcome by these same democratic principles.³²

"Small-town" America, imbued with the spirit of individualism and the Protestant Ethic, convinced of the morality of concentrated self-interest, wary of the impact of federal government, and jealous of their local "rights", is the image portrayed by commentators of the age. Its individual stereotype was the Yankee.

In contemporary United States the image of the strong-willed individualist as the epitome of the All American Boy has not been completely displaced. Rural areas seem to be the domain in which this image is especially predominant, thus Riesman's "inner-directed, other-directed"³³ dichotomy - never intended to be mutually exclusive - may perhaps be viewed more profitably as a continuum in today's world. Riesman, noting the

³²

Ibid., p. 29.

³³

David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, Yale University Press: New Haven, 1961.

flight from the farms, and the subsequent stream of new urban dwellers necessarily living in relatively close proximity to one another, focuses on the wider range and more frequent incidence of contact with others. As a consequence of closer living together, he argues, there is increased homogenization of taste and added pressures to conform. We have then, a greater degree of other-directedness.

Those individuals who remain in small towns are seen as portraying more closely the nostalgic image of the Yankee, and to that extent are seen as more inner-directed. Thus, it is worthy of note that the rural communities are traditionally ultra-conservative in their politics, are more likely to cling to the Horatio Alger myth, and to resent federal interference in local affairs. In a witty commentary on rural Oklahomans and their drinking habits, Will Rogers noted: "They'll vote 'dry' as long as they can still reel to the polling station."³⁴ Niebuhr suggests that the outstanding cleavage existing in the current American scene may be that between the urban dwellers and the "rugged Nationalism" of small town America.³⁵ Sinclair Lewis, in his description of Gopher Prairie, Minnesota, provides a

³⁴ Will Rogers in "from Germany", Peter von Zahn, *op cit.*, p. 101.

³⁵ Niebuhr, *op cit.*, p. 47.

vivid insight into the operation of rural provincialism:

Main Street is the climax of civilization...
What Ole Jensen, the grocer says to Ezra
Stowbody the banker is the new law for London,
Prague, and the unprofitable isles of the sea;
whatever Ezra does not know and sanction, that
thing is hereby, worthless for knowing and wicked
to consider.³⁶

With the continuing exodus from the rural areas, however, it may be expected that the goal-value systems of Americans will continue to converge, thus tending to produce a distinctive American type somewhat different from the legendary Yankee.

This does not mean of course that all the citizens of this nation will see these goals and values in precisely the same light. There will inevitably be diametrically opposed factions seeking to operationalize the commonly accepted ideals to the greatest possible advantage of their own party. In this connection, Montagu unleashes a scathing attack on the "New Yahoos".³⁷ This accolade is attached to right-wing extremists, and the type is personified - according to Montagu - by Barry Goldwater. The "New Yahoos" are depicted as flagwaving super patriots, incapable of critical analysis, given to spouting tired cliches, masters of rationalization, and adept at fitting unexamined evidence into their one-eyed view of the world. This species incurs additional wrath from Montagu for its alleged

³⁶ Sinclair Lewis, "Gopher Prairie, Minnesota", The American Society, Kenneth S. Lynn (ed.), George Braziller: New York, 1963, p. 220.

³⁷ Ashley Montagu, The American Way of Life, G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1967, pp. 13-19.

habit of reciting such shibboleths as,

"One nation under God... justice for all...etc.,"

While at the same time opposing the Civil Rights Bill and discriminating against whomsoever it feels ought to be discriminated against.³⁸

It is not mandatory that we agree with Montagu's viewpoint in order to speculate about the international consequences of Goldwater's presidential candidacy. Whether or not "President" Goldwater would have been the diabolical monster that many predicted, must remain an open question. However, as has been noted above, it is often not the reality itself which is of greatest importance, but rather the perception of that reality by significant others. For the case in point, the significant others constituted all of mankind. If we can place any credence in the news dispatches from around the world at the time of Goldwater's nomination, there is little doubt that a frightened world was gaping incredulously at what it believed to be a significant about-face for the supposed champion of the free world.

What seemed to be most distressing was not so much that Goldwater might win the presidency as that there were enough Americans who thought like him to enable him to win the nomination.

38

Ibid., pp. 13-19.

Whether it was true, or not, Goldwater had been dubbed as an inhuman Jingo who would not be averse to plunging the world into a suicidal nuclear holocaust if he believed that this was the only way to achieve his ends. Precisely what effects this nomination had on the American image abroad are inestimable. Suffice it to say that whatever they were they provided anti-American propagandists with an invaluable arsenal for some time to come. The seriousness of this situation is brought home when we remember that:

The course of the great national confrontations rests in large measure on the properties that individuals see in themselves and in other nationals.³⁹

Larrabee, noting the prevalence of self-consciousness among Americans suggested that among other things Americans wonder if they really exist.⁴⁰ In other words, is there such a creature as an American or are they simply a species of European? Riesman offers some thoughts in this area when he observes that:

. . . What is specifically American. . . may be more evident in the experience of those Americans who not only travel abroad, but try to immerse themselves in an alien culture.⁴¹

³⁹ Martindale, "The Annals", *op cit.*, p. 35.

⁴⁰ Eric Larrabee, *The Self-Conscious Society*, Doubleday and Company, Inc.: New York, 1960, p. 11.

⁴¹ Riesman, "The Annals", *op cit.*, p. 39.

More interesting is Riesman's reference to the overseas experience of young college-educated Americans in the Peace Corps and similar organizations.⁴² These individuals are prone to regard themselves as having rejected the crass materialism and the 'vulgar ethnocentrism', in fact many of the values, and much of the lifestyle which they identify as typifying middle-class America. To this extent they are wont to perceive themselves as "un-American". On this basis, it seems that many of the young people who volunteer for such organizations, do so, anticipating, that since they are "un-American", they will experience little difficulty in empathizing with foreign nationals. This would be especially the case in the most under-privileged areas, for here the philanthropist and the indigen would be united by virtue of their common humanity and neither would be corrupted by the societal forms of western affluence. The poetry of it all is short lived, however:

Their real culture shock came at their discovery of how "American" they were in spite of themselves, being imbued with egalitarianism, activism (or at least nonfatalism), candor and impatience.⁴³

As Riesman is quick to add, the basic achievement orientation of these young Americans "does not mark them as distinctively

⁴² Ibid., p. 40.

⁴³ Ibid.

American but as a member of one of the cultures that have undergone modernization."⁴⁴ The reference here, of course, is to such countries as Canada, Australia and New Zealand. It should be noted, nevertheless, that there are readily discernible differences among all of the above three, as well as between any one of them and the United States. Thus the universe of discourse in the United States contains symbols and gestures which, even if they do exist in New Zealand (for instance) do not always convey the same message. Despite the modernity of his own land, the Australian is struck by the frantic pace of life in the United States; by the apparent reification of utilitarianism and the resulting splendid order of things. He perceives himself as being much less an adherent of pragmatic philosophy than most of the Americans he encounters. In short, he regards an Australian as a very different animal from an American.

Canadians too, while recognizing the many traits which they have in common with Americans, are also conscious of distinguishing characteristics. Eayrs notes:

. . . the placidity, the reserve, the caution that mark off Canadian from American behavior. Our politics are more sedate. Our millionaires are less conspicuous in their consumption. Our criminals are less violent in their crimes. Our fashions in

clothing are less daring. And so perhaps, are our fashions in ideas. We lack the vitality of our southern neighbors. Their flair, their "panache", the reckless, raucous individuality that has carried the American nation to such dizzy heights of power and responsibility, are all strangely muted here.⁴⁵

According to the Stoics and Greeks, human parochialism was merely a "remedial error" capable of being corrected by reason. Cicero has observed:

. . .if bad habits and false beliefs did not twist the weaker minds, and turn them into whatever direction they are inclined, no one would be so like his own self as all men would be like all others.⁴⁶

To date, humanity seems to have made scant progress in its efforts to combat parochialism. Niebuhr refers to the dilemma which consists on the one hand, of the obvious unity and common humanity of men, and on the other, of the fact that this supposedly rational creature can recognize a common humanity only in the "uncommon and unique marks of a tribal 'we' group".⁴⁷ This then becomes the root of all parochial, including "national", communities. Individuals who do not possess the appropriate identity marks, racial,

⁴⁵

James Eayrs, "from Canada", *op cit.*, p. 279.

⁴⁶

Cicero, *De Legibus*, I, x, p. 29.

⁴⁷

Reinhold Niebuhr, *Man's Nature and His Communities*, Charles Scribner's Sons: New York, 1965, p. 91.

religious, cultural often suffer severe sanctions, which may include instances of extreme brutality.

Modern anthropological discoveries supply evidence that the Stoics were correct in claiming that uniquely human qualities exist, and that Cicero was on target when he suggested that "the capacity to learn is invariable".⁴⁸ These uniquely human qualities were seen as providing men with the capacity to creatively manipulate their environment - a factor which separates them from other animals. But all of history reveals that even the best educated and enlightened men experience extreme difficulty in being sufficiently rational to offset the covert sources of parochial loyalties which determine the boundaries of a community, and which goad the "we" group to inflict inhuman brutalities on fellow humans who do not possess the required marks of identity. It is indeed,

. . . the curious paradox lying at the heart of human universalist aspirations and at the same time making history the tangled story of endless forms of community and communal conflict.⁴⁹

It does seem then, that man is prepared to accept mutual responsibilities for the survival of his kind, and for its welfare, only within limited communities. Hence,

48

Cicero, op cit., p. 31.

49

Niebuhr, Man's Nature and His Communities, op cit., pp. 93-94.

The Stoics were right in asserting the common humanity of man, and wrong in underestimating the power and persistence of tribalism in human history.⁵⁰

It is evident that Stoic universalism had a powerful impact upon early Christianity. An unfortunate consequence of this was that a new mark of tribalism was inadvertently established since the concept of universalism became incorporated into one specific religion. As Niebuhr remarks:

. . . Christian universalism did not save the Jews, who remained loyal to the old faith, from the brutalities of Christian anti-Semitism with its awful pogroms against the Jewish heretics.⁵¹

Unquestionably, the cultural and moral differences between groups and nations are real, but it will require more time, experience, and enlightenment to demonstrate that they are not innate. In the interim we need to be aware of the differences, and amenable to compromise. The rise of the nation-states, close-knit communities with a jealous ethnic and linguistic nuclei of homogeneity, was a disquieting reversal for the Stoic ideal of a universal humanity transcending all boundaries of color and creed.

Within the United States the battle to transcend racial and ethnic limits continues to be waged. The fluctuating history of the

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 94.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 95.

Civil Rights controversy bears witness to the bitterness of the struggle, and points up the reluctance of the majority sub-community to tamper with its requirements for membership. Color, the indelible mark, is especially controversial. For the present, however, our interest, is focused not so much on the internal strivings of minorities to gain acceptance, but on the way that outsiders perceive the characteristics of nationals - in this case, Americans.

With reference to national character, Bagehot believed that,

. . . invincible attraction, the necessity which rules all but the strongest man to imitate what is before their eyes, and to be what they are expected to be, moulded men by that model. This, I think, the very process by which new national characters are being made in our own time.⁵²

To observers, both foreign and indigenous, the proneness of Americans to conform to accepted standards in the manner described by Bagehot, is very evident. To mention but a few, Tocqueville,⁵³ Hague,⁵⁴ Siegfried,⁵⁵ Montagu,⁵⁶ Larrabee,⁵⁷

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Walter Bagehot, Physics and Politics, introduction by Jacques Barzun, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1948, pp. 38-39.

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Tocqueville, op cit., pp. 156-169.

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John A. Hague, American Character and Culture, Everett Edwards Press, Inc., De Land, Florida, 1964, p. 154.

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Andre Siegfried, America Comes of Age, Translated by H.H. Hemming and Doris Hemming. Harcourt, Brace and Company: New York, 1927, pp. 54-69.

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Montagu, op cit., pp. 34-37.

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Larrabee, op cit., pp. 27-44.

Fromm,⁵⁸ Galbraith,⁵⁹ von Zahn,⁶⁰ Riesman,⁶¹ and Whyte,⁶² have all dealt with this topic at different times.

In the present discussion this conformity, and subsequent uniformity, will be looked at along the dimension of competition. Numerous writers, Tocqueville,⁶³ Bryce,⁶⁴ Potter,⁶⁵ Montagu,⁶⁶

58

Eric Fromm, Escape From Freedom, Avon Books: New York, 1967, pp. 208-230.

59

Galbraith, op cit., pp. 17-26.

60

von Zahn, op cit., pp. 105-109.

61

Riesman, The Lonely Crowd, op cit., pp. 207-213.

62

William H. Whyte Jr., The Organization Man, Simon and Schuster Inc., New York, 1956.

63

Tocqueville, op cit., pp. 307-318.

64

James Bryce, The American Commonwealth, Macmillan and Co., New York, 1896. Vol. 1, pp. 677-681.

65

David M. Potter, "American Women and the American Character", American Character and Culture, John A. Hague (ed.), op cit., pp. 65-84.

66

Montagu, op cit., pp. 106-108.

Ruitenbeck,⁶⁷ Galbraith,⁶⁸ Kirk,⁶⁹ Aron,⁷⁰ Gorwala,⁷¹ Castrence,⁷² Mills,⁷³ Goodman,⁷⁴ Holmes,⁷⁵ and Adams⁷⁶ among many others, stressed the high incidence of competitive behavior permeating many aspects of American life. The American's apparent devotion to competition is among those characteristics which comes through most consistently when observers report on the American national character. Moreover, the added requirement that satisfaction is attainable only in victory, seems to be the accepted norm. The implication deducible

67

Hendrik M. Ruitenbeck, The Individual and the Crowd, The New American Library: New York, 1964, pp. 110-118.

68

Galbraith, op cit., pp. 47-83.

69

Russell Kirk, The American Cause, Henry Regnery Company: Chicago, 1966, pp. 84-113.

70

Raymond Aron, "from France", op cit., p. 63.

71

A.D. Gorwala, "from India", op cit., pp. 186-188.

72

Pura S. Castrence, "from the Phillipines", op cit., pp. 230-231.

73

C. Wight Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Classes, Galaxy Books: New York, 1956.

74

Paul Goodman, Growing Up Absurd, Random House: New York, 1960.

75

Oliver W. Holmes, Jr., "The Soldier's Faith", The American Society, Kenneth S. Lynn (ed.) op cit., pp. 163-166.

76

Henry Adams, "American Ideals", Ibid., pp. 167-169.

from this is that the means of obtaining desired goals are often not those overtly legitimated by society.

Since the role of competition, as it pertains to the American national character, is to occupy a central place in our discussion, let us turn now to examine this role as it has operated throughout recent American history.

CHAPTER II

COMPETITION IN AMERICAN SOCIETY

Within a decade of the Civil War, to be an American was to be, above all, an Ishmael, an entrant in a brutal competition in which, according to the most recent oracle, Darwin, only the fittest would survive.¹

Towards the end of the nineteenth century a radical individualism characterized American Protestantism. Calvinistic morality enjoined the virtues of thrift and industry attributing poverty to moral defects or laziness. To the Social Darwinists society was an arena in which men met to compete. The winners were rewarded; the losers were punished. Only the strong deserved to survive. The rise of Social Darwinism in the United States coincided with the rise of great fortunes. It was indeed a time of "heroic inequality".²

Many ethnic prejudices were spawned in the competitive society of the age. The ironies of the period were very evident in the Protestants' condemnation of the Jews for avarice that supposedly violated the traditional market-place code of Christianity. Native America, anxious and frustrated in an era

¹ Reinhold Niebuhr and Alan Heimert, A Nation So Conceived, Yale University Press: New Haven, 1925, p. 43.

² John K. Galbraith, The Affluent Society, New York: The New American Library, 1958, p. 55.

of ruthless competition, seemed intent on exorcising the darker aspects of its own nature by intimidating all alien stocks who had allegedly come to the United States in quest of worldly gain, and not for the spiritual blessings of liberty.³

At the time that Social Darwinism was bending society to the right, the Marxists were pulling hard to the left. On the right were the Social Darwinists seeing struggle as not only inevitable, but good. On the left were the Marxists thundering that in the end the victims of suppression would destroy the whole edifice and many of its inhabitants. The basic tenets of both ideologies still seem to play a very real part in the contemporary American scene. There is still a strong group of right-wing reactionaries who firmly believe that the poor have only their own laziness to blame for their situation. This being the case they are neither to be pitied nor aided, but simply ignored. In contrast to these are the militants on the left typified by the ultra-radical New Left and the extremist Black Power advocates. The New Left would appear to be even more leftist than Marx. Its adherents pursue a philosophy based on irrationalism in that they are concerned only with destruction of existing institutions. They have no program of construction to put forth. Inevitably this

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Niebuhr, op cit.

destruction will proceed by violent means, and the means, it seems, will shape the ends. The black militants seek a dichotomous, completely polarized, black-white society. They too are prepared to employ violent means to this end. From the very latest federal commission report on this point it seems that this black-white gap is widening with significant acceleration.⁴

On both wings of American society then, there appear to be radical and fervent factions smouldering with enmity towards their opposites, and indeed to all who will not adopt the "correct" viewpoint. Between the wings stands the majority of Americans busily engaged in ardent competition for the goals that society insists they should be striving towards. In some manner that few will attempt to explain, the acquisition of material goals, usually consumer goods, has become equated with happiness. But, like the donkey chasing the carrot, the pursuit is endless for most individuals.

The pursuit of happiness is admirable as a social goal. But the notion of happiness lacks philosophical exactitude; there is agreement neither on its substance nor its source.⁵

In a more forthright vein and with particular reference to the American scene Montagu maintains that,

⁴ John Gardner (Chairman), "One Year Later", in The Minneapolis Tribune, February 28, 1969, p. 22.

⁵ Galbraith, op cit., p. 270.

The pursuit of happiness in America is perhaps the most misconceived of human endeavors. . . the pursuit of happiness is a fool's game. . . It denies pursuit, and all attempts to contain it are vain. Nor can it be purchased. It is one of the many things that money cannot buy.⁶

But these are voices in the wilderness. Americans continue to produce and consume at an ever-increasing rate and this consumption continues to be, at least implicitly, equated with happiness. Society defines which objects will be deemed as most consumable. Society homogenizes taste. The mass media, and particularly television, are limitless aids in this process. The advertising men are ever available to tell people what they should want. There is inevitably a better item than the one an individual may already have. He is constantly badgered, cajoled and fawned upon to continue the eternal pursuit. Of course the amoral reality of planned obsolescence, which permeates many industries, is a vital tool in maintaining the system. Equipment and machinery are purposely designed to falter after a "sufficient" time span has elapsed. This puts the consumer back in the market for a similar product - a product without which it would be impossible to go on!

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Ashley Montagu, The American Way of Life, G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1967, p. 27.

While it would seem that individuals do compete in order to conform, it is submitted that the reverse is also true. Americans conform in order to be permitted to continue competing. Thus, men accept the highly valued goals of society, and accept the need to pursue them in an atmosphere of intense competition. But, at least ostensibly, the rules of the game must be observed. Businessmen are required to join certain clubs, to conduct themselves in the prescribed manner, to observe the accepted protocol of the various situations which will confront them. To stay in the game it is important that the boat not be rocked excessively. One must toe the line. One must conform in order to compete. In this sense it can be seen that competition and conformity are mutually reinforcing. Both play a dramatic role in contemporary American society.

'To hell with your goals!' cry the Yippies. 'What's needed is a generation of people who are freaky, crazy, irrational, sexy, angry, irreligious, childish and mad, . . . people who re-define the normal; people who break with the status - role - title - consumer game; people who have nothing material to lose but their flesh.'⁷

The Yippies express absolute rejection of the goals of society. They wish to disengage themselves from the 'rat-race', and to this end they actively seek identification as non-conformists.

⁷ Daniel Walker, Rights in Conflict, Bantam Book: New York, 1968, p. 87.

Their shock-tactics, their unkempt appearance, their amoral behavior, their deliberate attempts to heap scorn on the most hallowed institutions of society, form part of their campaign to shed the conformist image. Yet they do not always succeed. While professing a philosophy which would seem bent on returning man to the state of the 'noble savage', the Yippies are strikingly American in their techniques. They are competing for influence on the citizens of America. They do this by intensive sloganeering and by deliberately staging performances for the mass media, especially television. They are in that same arena which is instrumental in fashioning the goals and values of the society which they detest. To struggle against that society they choose its own weapons. They are conforming in order to compete.

On the political scene the competition is no less intense. Foreigners are quick to note the similarity between political machinery and big business. Lawyers, financiers and successful businessmen dominate the scene. Campaigns develop into colossal struggles between machine-backed candidates. The belief that any man can reach high political office in contemporary America is a myth. A candidate needs powerful financial backing even to warrant a place in the preliminaries. His candidacy must be launched with a lavish, expensive, advertising campaign. This is true for most local as well as state and federal politics. To attract the necessary dollar support a potential nominee must

be strategically placed in society. He must be in contact with the "right" people. In return for their backing it is assumed that the candidate, if successful, will have the interests of his supporters at heart. On the other side of the coin, interest groups need to nominate that individual whom they consider to have the best chance of winning for only if their man is in office can they be secure in the knowledge that their best interests will be served. Whether or not the same person would be the best man for the job most often seems to be a secondary consideration. Politics then becomes implicitly defined as "The art of winning elections". Speech writers play a major part in the production. It is important that a candidate says the things that people want to hear. Thus the ludicrous situation develops in which a candidate woos a rural audience with his fervor for their cause on one occasion, and expresses a contrary opinion in the metropolis a few days later. To the outside observer the most surprising aspect of such a situation is that it seems to be casually accepted by the general populace as part of the game.

There is periodic excitement at the time of the presidential elections, as for a sensational match in the sports world. . . but once it is over the voter returns to business, the fundamental reality of his life.^{7A}

7A

Andre Siegfried, America at Mid-Century. Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York: 1955, p. 262.

The candidate is participating in an exciting contest where all the spoils go to the victor. If the means he employs are not always beyond reproach who can blame him, given the prize he is seeking? It is the old principle of self-interest. Everyman for himself. The business struggle all over again. Certainly there is cooperation as well as competition within the business world - the preponderance of corporations attests to this. But within the corporations there are myriads of individuals striving for a place in the sun. As one writer has so pithily stated it: "To get ahead, he must co-operate with the others - but co-operate 'better' than they do."⁸

In the world of sport Americans compete with a rare passion. Football, basketball, baseball, and hockey dominate the team sports scene. Youngsters are drilled religiously in the fundamentals and finer points of the game by all kinds of amateur and professional coaches. Intense competition usually begins in early grade school and the importance of winning becomes rapidly ingrained. For coaches, especially those at the College and professional level, survival is largely dependent on the won-lost record. The game's the thing! While occasionally one hears lip-service paid to that hallowed adage, in practice the appendage

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William H. Whyte, Jr., The Organization Man, Simon & Schuster, New York: 1956, p. 124.

"but only if we win" should be tacked on. Again we might point to the cooperation intrinsically required in team sports and dwell on this to refute the charge of intense, personal competition. Certainly there is cooperation, but for many, if not most, individual accomplishment is the prime aim. The grade school child soon learns of the public aura that shrouds top sportsmen. Many socializing agents are on hand to point out the prestige such persons enjoy and the easy access they have to highly valued material goods. Given the goals of society it is little wonder that boys start at an early age in their attempt to "cooperate better" than their fellow team members. High school teams are seldom badgered with fawning recruiters, but high school seniors very often are. Similarly it is the individual who receives the accolades and the fat professional contracts at the college level. Only the fittest survive. Many of the losers wander off to seek an alternative area in which to compete for the highly valued goals. Some will become fans and camp followers. The fan identifies with the team and through it competes against the fans of other teams. With the fan, as with the coach and player, winning is of paramount importance. For those who still believe that the game's the thing in America, witness a sports event on television. A morbid gloom that hangs like a pall over the arena is a certain sign that the home team is in trouble. The deafening silence which greets a score by the visitors, the brilliance of the offense

notwithstanding, bears living testimony to the reality. The catcalls that often greet the umpire who awards a penalty against a home player add to the evidence. That the player performed an illegal action is usually of secondary importance. That the umpire did not define the situation in the same way as the spectators is primary. The use of somewhat illegal means is readily condoned in the interests of gaining the end. No, the game is not the thing anymore. Winning is. Fans of all nations are partial to some extent. Most however will recognize and acclaim the outstanding play whichever side is responsible for it. To this extent the game remains the thing. In America such behavior is rare. If a visiting team is applauded one may safely assume that those responsible are camp followers with a strong sense of identification and who have made the trip to help boost their team in enemy territory. They are often recognizable by their marks of identification - distinctive hats, appropriately colored sweaters, streamers, etc.

Academic competition in schools and colleges is no less intense. While the story of a middle class father who berates the teacher of his third grade son for having the audacity to give the child something less than straight A's may not be typical, it is symptomatic. His boy was destined for Harvard and the teachers should adjust their grading accordingly. In high schools the struggle intensifies. Students who come out on top will go to

the most prestigious colleges. In turn, graduation from one of these latter practically assures an individual of a head start in society's pecking order. Those who have survived to enter colleges and universities become vividly aware of the 'curve'. This is the ascription given to the common practice among professors of grading set percentages of students as A, B, C, D, F. It is perceived that high status companies and business establishments give easier access to the highly valued material goods than do their more lowly counterparts. Further, it is well known that recruiters for these companies use college grades as one of their most important criteria in selecting the students who are to be courted so lavishly. It is not surprising then that a frantic dog - eat - dog competition for grades develops among students. In most courses only a limited percentage will receive A's and B's, and hence the eternal sifting goes on.

On the other side of the fence sit the professors. To the layman they often appear to be members of a hallowed elite. Members of an intellectual fraternity of eccentrics who have transcended this world. A closer examination most often reveals a group of harassed and harassing individuals with very human urges and ambitions. One of the most highly valued goals of academicians is fame and prestige among colleagues. One acquires this primarily per medium of publications. This results in the well known 'publish or perish' phenomenon which pervades

the faculties of American Universities. As a consequence most disciplines are deluged with professional journals that churn out reports of studies from all corners of the nation. Now obviously such proliferation cannot be considered unworthy in itself. The point, however, is that the pressure to publish often means a sacrifice of precision in the interests of time. Further, it encourages unethical practices, manipulation of data, and so on. In a very real sense professors are judged and promoted on their rate of production. Too often quality is inferred from quantity.

Even in their leisure hours Americans are busily competing. The use of the golf game as a business tool is quite common. The joining of appropriate clubs is very often simply a means of impressing the right people and thus improving one's chances of succeeding in business competition. The expense account has tended to carry-over the competition of work into that of leisure. Thus salesmen compete for customers by wining and dining the latter as lavishly as their expense accounts will permit.

The spirit of intense competition can be readily seen to permeate many aspects of American life. The outsider quickly becomes aware of this. Its initial effects are somewhat stunning and awesome, but if the newcomer is to remain and to survive he must learn to shift into a higher gear and swim along with the tide.

As Others See Us

In the first half of the nineteenth century Tocqueville referred to the "hypocrisy of luxury" in America.⁹ This was a reference to the tendency of handicraftsmen to attribute to their commodities attractive qualities which they do not in reality possess. While noting that such a tendency is not unique to democracies, he suggests that

To mimic virtue is of every age; but the hypocrisy of luxury belongs more particularly to the ages of democracy.¹⁰

What Tocqueville was observing seems strikingly like an early form of our contemporary commercial scene replete with its hordes of synthetics and steeped in a tradition of planned obsolescence. To Tocqueville, Americans appeared to pursue their welfare with a rare ardor and to cling tenaciously to this world's goods. At the same time he noted that the grip on present items is soon weakened so that the individual might move on to perceivably higher goals. Tocqueville saw a constant universal competition operating in the United States, and an infinite strife between equalities of conditions and the means it

⁹ Alexis de Tocqueville. Democracy in America. Translated by Henry Reeve. Oxford University Press: New York, 1947, p. 275.

¹⁰ Ibid.

supplies to satisfy them. He believed that since innate status differences do not exist in America, money is seen as the only commodity left which can raise some men above the common level. Love of wealth is therefore to be traced as at least an accessory motive behind all that Americans do.

"Graft in all its forms, from the crudest to the most polished, remains a settled feature of politics."¹¹ With monotonous regularity the theme of the American's passion for accumulated wealth is among the most common of those documented by foreign observers. Thus Villegas suggests that the hero to be imitated in the United States is not the scholar or the intellectual but the businessman. He believes further that the great moral lesson that American fathers teach their children is the need for self-sufficiency and how to earn money wisely.¹²

Villegas offers the interesting aside that foreign diplomats are often chosen for their business ability, and as a result are usually poorly trained in the arts of diplomacy and make ineffective ambassadors. When these diplomats have business interests in the host country the temptations towards graft and corruption are significantly increased. Nevertheless this latter situation

¹¹

A.D. Gorwala, "from India", *As Others See Us*. Franz M. Joseph (ed.), Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1959, p. 274.

¹²

Daniel C. Villegas, "from Mexico", *Ibid.*, p. 294.

seems to be not uncommon.¹³ Villegas puts forth the opinion that the American is not a hard-hearted materialist without any saving graces. He does regard his wealth as a means, not an end. The problem is, however, that Americans have been so concerned with means, and spent so much time in attaining them that they have become ends.¹⁴

According to the Cuban, Manach, the American's pragmatic sense of values causes him to measure men not by qualities such as kindness or intelligence, but by deeds and results. To be adjudged as a man of quality an individual is required to "deliver the goods".¹⁵ In the attempt to acquire such status there emerges a

Harshly competitive and money - minded social environment that strangles all moral scruples. . . weakens society on its most intimate levels (in family, for example), and engenders extremely abnormal forms of delinquency.¹⁶

Ruitenbeck, commenting on this constant competition for status suggests that in this country "crisis is the norm".¹⁷ With specific reference to the lower classes he speaks of the potential

¹³ Ibid., p. 295.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 305.

¹⁵ Jorge Manach, "from Cuba"; Ibid., p. 329.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 330.

¹⁷ Hendrik M. Ruitenbeck, The Individual and the Crowd. The New American Library: New York, 1964, p. 111.

alienation of the young. This he believes is developing from the fact that an increasingly urbanized society has less and less need for unskilled young people. Fewer apprenticeship opportunities are available. It is becoming more difficult to start at the bottom of the ladder and climb to the top. At the same time all the materially desirable goals that it tells him are the proper objects of his desire are forever flaunted before him.¹⁸ Ruitenbeck argues that it is not mass society per se that is responsible for the plight of the individual, rather it is the inadequate preparation for his social role that this society gives the individual. Yet he agrees that it would be quite hazardous to attempt changes in this area.

Even to suggest the possibility of large scale action to produce social change has become suspect. Conformity is a prime virtue. Even in revulsion against conformity, people tend to conform; they drop the pattern of Suburbia for the pattern of Bohemia. . . the movement often seems to be from one set of external imperatives to another.¹⁹

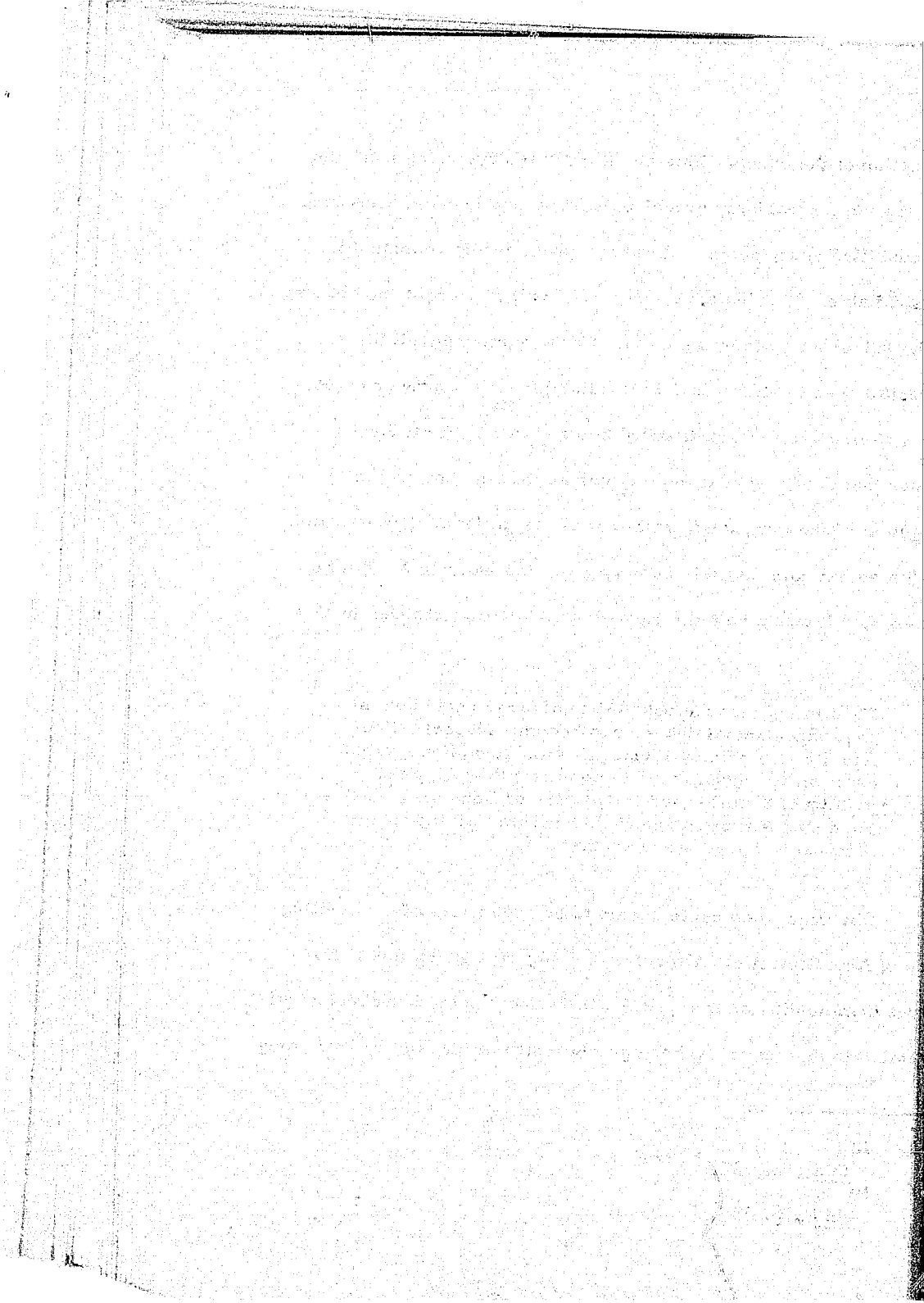
The urge to compete seems to be at the root of the bustling pace of American life. Almost invariably foreigners find themselves commenting on this pace. At the focal point of technological invention in this age of technology, America appears to be swarming

¹⁸

Ibid., p. 112.

¹⁹

Ibid., p. 115.



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with people groping to keep up with the fast accelerating social change. "Time is money", a slogan created for America, is an appropriate expression for one of the deepest impressions an outsider receives upon entering into the social life of this nation. Thus, in commenting on the reluctance of Americans to participate in certain forms of easy relaxation such as strolling, Sarc notes:

In cities strolling is hampered by frequent stops for red lights and by the haste of most walkers, and there are few scenic walks for pedestrians. . . . Their absence in the United States is mainly attributable, I think, to the fact that 'whiling away time' is hardly compatible with the pulse of life there. . . . In addition, coffeehouses in America, like any other establishment, would have to strive for a high turnover and could not allow customers to linger too long.²⁰

On the same note the first impressions of urban America seem to have been rather overpowering for Lubis:

An American city is nothing like any other city on earth: the feverish atmosphere, the machines and machines, pushbuttons and pushbuttons, and the terrible haste; people everywhere are in a perpetual hurry; they do not walk but run.²¹

Continuing with this theme and tying it into a more general comment on American society Lubis observes:

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Omer Celal Sarc, "from Turkey", *Ibid.*, p. 135.

²¹

Mochtar Lubis, "from Indonesia", *Ibid.*, p. 197.

Clockwork regularity and a hustling speed! Streamlined efficiency was evident everywhere: in the airport, in the hotel, and in the city. To be efficient, to get the maximum results out of every undertaking, to reduce waste of material, time, energy, and thought to the least possible.²³

The American political scene has always held a peculiar fascination for outside commentators. Tocqueville became interested in studying America primarily to investigate the operation of a democratic system of government. It was then the embryonic phase of a great experiment which fascinated the intellectuals of other lands. Democracy in America was establishing itself about the time that Tocqueville's France was undergoing its bitter and bloody revolution. It was only some forty years since 1789 when Tocqueville conducted his microscopic examination of a very promising alternative to monarchistic government. Writing towards the end of the nineteenth century, the Englishman Bryce remarks with reference to the United States:

They represent an experiment in the rule of the multitude, tried on a scale unprecedentedly vast, and the results of which everyone is concerned to watch.²⁴

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Mohammad Khalafallah, "from Egypt", *Ibid.*, p. 149.

²⁴

James Bryce, *The American Commonwealth*. Macmillan and Co., New York, 1896, Vol. 1, p. 1.

Turning to a discussion of politics per se, Bryce expressed the notion that political parties in this country, even as early as the turn of this century, were far more elaborately organized than anywhere else in the world. He saw them as having passed almost completely under the control of a professional class. "Politics, considered not as the science of government, but as the art of winning elections and securing office."²⁵ Warming to his subject, and adding a touch of cynicism, Bryce suggests:

It must also be remembered that the merits of a President are one thing and those of a candidate another thing. . . Now to a party it is more important that its nominee should be a good candidate than that he should turn out a good President. . . It will be a misfortune to the party, as well as to the country, if the candidate elected should prove a bad President. But it is a greater misfortune to the party that it should be beaten in the impending election, for the evil of losing national patronage will have come four years sooner.²⁶

Bryce reserved some of his sharpest insights for political lobbyists. He saw it as another instance of the American's urge to work for his own self-interest even though this might create misfortune for the majority of citizens who were not included in his interest group. Lobbying was seen as a process which could easily degenerate into a network of corruption:

²⁵ Ibid., p. 6.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 80.

Though lobbying is perfectly legitimate in theory, yet the secrecy and want of personal responsibility, the confusion and want of system in the committees, make it rapidly degenerate into a process of intrigue, and fall into the hands of the worst men. It is so disagreeable and humiliating that all men shrink from it, unless those who are stimulated by direct personal interest; and those soon throw away all scruples.²⁷

Manach has some rather strong words for a parallel political topic:

The democracy of presidents who are almost always exemplary is also, on its lower levels, the democracy of political 'machines' and state and municipal bosses; of vulgar, hand-shaking politicians; and of unscrupulous or fabulously enriched labor leaders.²⁸

As Americans See Themselves

If the evaluations of foreigners sound over-critical at times, they appear mild when measured against the analyses of social critics at home. Malcolm Muggeridge summarizes the feelings of many when he imagines some future historian looking back at us, as Gibbon did on the Roman Empire:

They can't really have believed, he'll say to himself, that this notion of progress they bandied about meant anything. That happiness lay along the highways, and well-being in a rising gross national product. That birth control pills, easy divorce and abortion made for happy families, and sex and barbiturates for quiet nights. There must, he'll conclude, be some other explanation; civilization must have been possessed by a death-wish, since it so assiduously and

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Ibid., p. 680.

²⁸

Manach, op cit., p. 337.

ingeniously sought its own extinction - physically, by devoting so much of its wealth, knowledge and skills to creating the means of destruction; economically, by developing a consumer economy whereby more and more wants have to be artificially created and stimulated in order to take up an endlessly expanding production; morally, by abolishing the moral order altogether and pursuing the will-o-the-wisp of happiness through satiety; a generation of men . . . knowing so much and understanding so little, materially so rich and spiritually so impoverished, wielding such overwhelming power and feeling so immeasurably weak.²⁹

Hague sees the twentieth century American as a man tormented by ambiguity and frustration. "He is a man with a headache that won't go away."³⁰ As a result of this situation Hague believes that it is not surprising that:

some Americans have begun to wonder if they have been pursuing the right goals. . . We have reached so many of the goals we have pursued that we are a little puzzled about where we should go next.³¹

Goodman complains of the "artificially induced demand for useless goods,"³² while Mills sees the central problem of modern capitalism as being that of creating a market for an endless supply

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Malcolm Muggeridge, "Man Wallows in Surfeit of Earthly Achievement", Minneapolis Tribune, February 9, 1969, p. 2c.

30

Hague, op cit., p. 161.

31

Ibid.

32

Paul Goodman, Growing up Absurd. Random House: New York, 1960, p. 30.

of objects.³³ Mills saw competition in business as fierce and unyielding. For him American Commerce was akin to the arenas of ancient Rome, a constant battle of wits and might against hungry and unscrupulous foes. Further, he saw the struggle as unending, as a contest that could never be resolved, for no sooner has man scaled his immediate cliffs than he covets even greater riches. His appetite is insatiable.³⁴

For such writers the American is seen as caught in a rut of competition. In a kind of unique conformity. A conformity of automated action. It is against such a condition that contemporary existentialists rail. They beseech man to struggle against conformity. To wriggle out of the rut and to continue wriggling once clear. But when we consider that the rut itself is one of constant struggle the situation becomes paradoxical. Thus Fishwick remarks:

No matter what existentialism's cultural origins or terminology, its diagnosis has striking relevance in contemporary America. . . . We accord ultimate meaning to the useful, but refuse to ask: useful for 'what'? Increasingly we find ourselves being transformed into things - cogs in the universal system of organized production and consumption. We are lonely in crowds, trapped in organizations, entranced by status symbols, stripped of privacy in a naked society.³⁵

³³ C. Wright Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Classes. Galaxy Books: New York, 1956, p. 38.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 66.

³⁵ Marshall W. Fishwick, "Diagnosing the American Dream". American Character and Culture, John A. Hague (ed.). Everett Edwards Press, Inc., De Land, Florida, 1964, p. 6.

According to Fishwick the basic struggle in American society is one of survival. Not all writers perceive the constant conflict as undesirable however. Thus Kirk writes of the "deep-seated and human longing for competition,"³⁶ and "competition is the means through which most improvement in society is accomplished."³⁷

Again,

Competition puts a premium on industry, thrift, honesty, and ingeniousness, for the slothful, the spendthrift, the known cheats, and the stupid fall behind in the economic contest of free enterprise."³⁸

Kirk's clichés and assertions sound familiar. They are the same ones as have been expressed by conservative right wing anti-totalitarianists for decades. At times, he seems to be whistling a tune suspiciously like that of the Social Darwinists. He relents a trifle though and somewhat magnanimously proclaims that:

Even the losers in the human competitive race profit from the existence of competition, because the abilities and the goods produced by the able in the competitive struggle benefit everyone in society.³⁹

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Russell Kirk, The American Cause. Henry Regnery Company: Chicago, 1966, p. 87.

37

Ibid., p. 92.

38

Ibid.

39

Ibid.

To those such as Kirk who perceive the abstraction 'competition' as a fundamental 'good', it is difficult to see its shortcomings. The philosophical question as to whether competition per se is good or evil is hardly relevant here. What is important is the effect that continuous, intense, competition has on the individual and on society. Many social analysts have expressed a deep concern about possible deleterious results for both man and his society. It is in this context that we need to examine our free enterprise system. Kirk's optimistic and somewhat naive presentation is inadequate to cope even with the victors in the game. As for the losers, perhaps the feelings of many of them can best be summarized in the words of Malcolm X.

I truly believe that if ever a state social agency destroyed a family, it destroyed ours. We wanted and tried to stay together. . . But the Welfare, the courts, and their doctor, gave us the one - two - three punch. . . I knew I wouldn't be back to see my mother again because it could make me a very vicious and dangerous person. . . knowing that my mother in there was a statistic that didn't have to be, that existed because of a society's failure, hypocrisy, greed, and lack of mercy and compassion. Hence I have no mercy or compassion in me for a society that will crush people, and then penalize them for not being able to stand up under the weight.⁴⁰

The definition of the situation appears to vary according to one's societal perspective.

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Malcolm X, The Autobiography of Malcolm X. Grove Press, Inc.: New York, 1964, p. 22.

Returning to the quest for goals, Riesman points out that many of the desires that drove men to the point of distraction in past years are now satisfied relatively easily:

But the craving remains. It is a craving for the satisfactions others seem to have, an 'objectless craving'. The consumer today has most of his potential individuality trained out of him by his membership in the consumers' union.⁴¹

Riesman believes that the professional man in contemporary America feels surrounded by a swarm of competitors turned out by a vastly expanded education system. This latter is a consequence of a society whose capital system is in such a good shape that it can afford to devote a large share of the national income to the service trades and professions. People, therefore, become the central problem of industry. As a result of this a body of individuals whose job it is to manipulate people emerges. These individuals, equipped with the inevitable expense account, are busy bridging the gap between work and leisure. As Riesman puts it, the expense account "gives the glad hand its grip".⁴² It was created as a weapon that could strike lethal blows at would-be business competitors. In a short time, as the environment would insist, the expense account

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David Riesman, The Lonely Crowd. Yale University Press: New Haven, 1961, p. 128.

42

Ibid.

became the norm for all those intent on manipulating the economic appetites of others. It is no longer an offensive force. Customers expect it; take it for granted. If a manipulator does not possess it his chances of success are considerably limited. Again it becomes a question of conforming in order to compete. Riesman sees this amalgamation of work and leisure as being yet another contributing factor to the ambiguity and search for meaning that he claims is evident in many Americans.⁴³

On the same note Whyte remarks that the man of the future is not the individual but the man who works through others and for others. Riesman talked about "Antagonistic cooperators",⁴⁴ and the expression fits the sentiments professed by a number of commentators. Thus Whyte suggests: "To get ahead, of course, one must compete - but not too much, and certainly not too obviously."⁴⁵

Man is pushed by forces beyond his control into movements he does not understand, and in Larrabee's words, "makes excellent material for synthetic moulding by mass media and is especially vulnerable to the onslaught of manufactured loyalties."⁴⁶ According

⁴³

Ibid.

⁴⁴

Ibid.

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Whyte, op cit., p. 122.

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Eric Larrabee, The Self-Conscious Society. Doubleday and Company, Inc., New York, 1960, p. 18.

to Riesman the contemporary American is in the shadow of the firm. The institution is perceived as harnessing the wills of many people who are competing for places. To outdistance these competitors, and to attempt to shine alone, is a dangerous pursuit. Thus while the individual urgently aspires to certain goals that are within his grasp he is often prevented from reaching out and drawing them in. At least overtly he must comply with the rules of the game. This again breeds a sense of frustration and meaninglessness. It is allegedly to escape this dilemma that a number of businessmen retreat to small towns. "What they had hoped for was to achieve a professional monopoly in a place where competition was not too great, - to be a big fish in a little pond."⁴⁷

These writers suggest however, that quite often many of these folk have come to the countryside imbued with a romantic image of rural life. Apparently many are soon disenchanted as is evidenced by the high rate of turnover among them. The desire to be removed from stiff competition is evidently not completely realized. While there may be fewer economic competitors, the individual is severely restricted in his social contacts and activities. Many appear to miss the potential anonymity of the city where a man may 'escape' temporarily if he so desires.

⁴⁷ Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, "Small Town in Mass Society", Analyses of Contemporary Society, Bernard Rosenberg (ed.) Thomas Y. Crowell Company, New York: 1968, p. 212.

The small-town residents assumes the role of the warm, friendly, sociable, helpful good neighbor and friend. However, the forms of social competition and the struggle for individual success cause each man to examine his neighbors's pocketbook. . . the individual has the psychological problem of resolving the self-image of himself as a relatively successful member of the community in its various forms of social and economic competition.⁴⁸

The artificiality of many of the occupations in which Americans are engaged invokes the wrath of Goodman.

Consider the men and women in TV advertisements, demonstrating the product and singing the jingle. They are clowns and mannequins, in grimace, speech and action. And again, what I want to call attention to in this advertising is. . . the human problem that these are human beings working as clowns; that the writers and designers of it are human beings thinking like idiots. . . Alternately, they are liars, confidence men, smooth talkers, obsequious, insolent, etc., etc.⁴⁹

Goodman argues that this hypocrisy is the distinctive feature of contemporary America and complains of the "artificially induced demands for useless goods."⁵⁰ Lynn reminds us that this tendency has been a characteristic of quite long standing with Americans.

When Franklin donned his fur cap, or indicated to his son. . . that he might ingratiate himself with important individuals by 'imitating' Jesus and Socrates, he was setting a dangerous example.

48

Ibid., p. 196.

49

Goodman, op cit., pp. 25-26.

50

Ibid.

For the policy of deceiving others could easily end. . . in self-deception - and this ultimate fraudulency has in fact, been the last laugh in many an American life.⁵¹

American writers have also been severely critical of their countrymen's tendency to place their personal self-interest ahead of the well-being of the majority of citizens. This is well illustrated in the system of lobbying existent at all levels of government. Particularly effective are the lobbyists in Washington who act on behalf of the corporations which are controlled by the American business aristocracy. At times these interest groups are able to marshal sufficient power to force through issues which might have disastrous effects on the public at large. Domhoff alludes to the frightening drug industry hearings of the early 1960's.

Suffice it to say here that through its friends in the Congress, on the White House staff. . . The drug industry completely eliminated the drug bill's price-cutting provisions, which would have reduced its unbelievable profit rates. Only the sad but timely scandal over thalidomide saved the bill's safety provisions, previously attacked as bureaucratic and unnecessary by the industry. Such examples could be multiplied endlessly.⁵²

At the state level, Zeigler comments:

⁵¹ Kenneth S. Lynn, The American Society, George Braziller: New York, 1963, p. 8.

⁵² G. William Domhoff, Who Rules America, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: 1967, p. 113.

No matter what kind of economy enjoyed by the state, businesses dominate the numerical structure of lobbying.⁵³

The extent of corruption involved in lobbying is impossible to measure. That it does indeed exist in some substance is evident from Simon's remarks made with reference to the Illinois state legislature of the 1950's. Simon, a Republican lawmaker and a former law school dean, estimated that one-third of his fellow state legislatures accepted payoffs.⁵⁴ Goodman is another who rails against the power of the lobby. Commenting again on the artificiality of many American occupations he cites the case of a young man aspiring to be an auto mechanic.

So our young man takes this first - rate job. But what when he then learns that the cars have a built-in obsolescence, that the manufacturers do not want them to be repaired or repairable? They have lobbied a law that requires them to provide spare parts for only five years (it used to be ten).⁵⁵

A subject of parallel interest is that of the impact of money on political nominations.

Direct primaries make getting a nomination almost as expensive as winning an election; and there is little doubt that even an aspirant for nomination by

⁵³ Harmon Zeigler, "Interest Groups in the States", Politics in the American States, Herbert Jacob and Kenneth Vines (ed.), Little Brown & Co.: Boston, 1965, p. 133.

⁵⁴ Paul Simon, "The Illinois State Legislature", Harper's Magazine, September, 1964, p. 74.

⁵⁵ Goodman, op cit., p. 19.

a convention will receive substantial support if he has convinced the party's leaders that he and/or his backers are able and willing to contribute heavily to the party's war chest.⁵⁶

Businesses originated, at least ostensibly, to serve the public while providing a livelihood for the individuals operating them. In contemporary America the question arises as to whether business concerns exist for the benefit of society or whether society exists merely to provide a backdrop for business operations. It is interesting to note for example the kinds of reasons given for the recent interest of some prominent corporations in civil unrest: "There is determination in the business community, a determination based partly on the new-found knowledge that social chaos is bad for business."⁵⁷ In the same light some social scientists express misgivings about the modern emphasis on automation as it effects the personal life of citizens. Computerization of credit information, gives easy access to what was once considered very confidential data. Today a system of credit ratings can blacken a person's character in a very real sense. Overcoming a past mistake is a much more arduous task. One has the impression of a great unknown, threatening,

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Austin Ranney, "Parties in State Politics", in Jacob and Vines, op cit., p. 80.

57

Joe Rigert, "History Turns on the Great Walls of the Central Cities", Minneapolis Tribune, February 16, 1969, p. 3c.

world beyond the computer. A feeling that "Big Daddy" is always watching. Credit bureaus themselves have become big business.

They provide creditors with data on an individual's working, purchasing and paying habits. . . By 1973 credit information on a shopper from Rochester, N. Y., will be instantly available to a storekeeper in Redlands, Calif. . .⁵⁸

Apparently, the big problem with credit bureaus is their lack of humanity. There has been no way to insist that credit bureaus and the people who operate them behave sympathetically towards their victim. A recent comment in Time Magazine, is instructive: "The result is a file that can contain hearsay as well as fact, and an account of a man's life that can be misleading, inaccurate - and incredibly damaging."⁵⁹

The role of competition in American life has been a basic one. To many Americans free competition has become the primary mark of democracy. It has been set against the system of cooperation implied in totalitarianism. It has led to the emergence of a strong feeling of suspicion against most forms of socialism. To pin the tab 'Socialistic' on movements which are contrary to their interests has been a very effective ploy used by the radical right. The McCarthyism of the fifties provides fitting testimony to that. It is submitted that this reification of competition is in itself a

⁵⁸ Time Magazine, December 20, 1968, p. 79.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

prime factor in the ills prevalent in American Society today. Montagu has gone so far as to proclaim that inasmuch as the competitive frame of reference misplaces the emphasis upon oneself rather than on other men it is antithetical to being involved in the welfare of others.⁶⁰ Furthermore, argues Montagu, the great insistence by businessmen on the point that America owes its greatness to the spirit of competition, can be hotly debated. On the contrary, he suggests that whatever greatness America has achieved has been secured in spite of competition not because of it.⁶¹ While Montagu's assertions may have ridden the pendulum too far to the left they too provide food for thought.

In the subsequent discussion an attempt will be made to demonstrate how the intensity of competition in America has been a prime factor in instigating the recent violence and chaos that has rocked the internal foundations of this nation.

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Montagu, op cit., p. 38.

61

Ibid.

CHAPTER III

VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

We are known for our violence, we Americans. The creative violence with which we haul down the good for what we fancy as better. The cruel violence with which we have treated red men, and black. The intoxicating violence of our music and art. The absurd violence of our comics and cartoons. The organized violence of our athletics and corporate games. . . And now we have come violently to disagree about the nature of our violence in Vietnam or Dallas or Watts or Hiroshima. . . Our young deplore the violence of the old and are tempted to use violence against them. The old deplore the ferocity of the young and are tempted to use violence to suppress them. Thus we came, already maimed, to 1968. . . The commission on Civil Disorders spoke, nay cried, about the bitter heritage of our racism. Martin Luther King fell slain, and the rotten cores of a hundred cities burned. Robert Kennedy fell slain, and even his safe suburban enemies wept.¹

Crime and violence is challenged only by the war in Vietnam as a topic of vital interest to Americans of the Sixties. In the cities the threat of violence tends to isolate individuals from the general populace. Social interaction becomes restricted to the immediate family and a close circle of friends. The fear of Vietnam seems to develop into a general fear of strangers. According to the

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Max Frankel, Introduction to the Walker Report, Rights in Conflict, Bantam Books, New York: 1968, p. v.

President's Commission on law enforcement,² this fear of strangers has greatly impoverished the lives of many Americans, especially those who live in high crime neighborhoods in large cities.

People stay behind the locked doors of their homes rather than risk walking in the streets at night. Poor people spend money on taxis because they are afraid to walk or use public transportation. Sociable people are afraid to talk to those they do not know.³

As the level of sociability and mutual trust is reduced, streets and public places often do become more dangerous. In a type of self-fulfilling prophecy, there will be fewer people abroad and those who are abroad will manifest a fear of and a lack of concern for, each other. The many reported incidents of bystanders indifferent to cries for help are the logical consequence of a reduced sociability, mutual distrust and withdrawal. Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of a fear of strangers is that it sheds doubt on the stability of the moral and social order of society. When respect for this order is undermined the security that comes from living in an orderly and trustworthy society is considerably reduced. "The costs of the fear of crime to the social order may ultimately be even greater than its psychological costs to individuals."⁴

² Nicholas Katzenbach, *The Challenge of Crime in a Free Society*, A Report by the President's Commission on Law Enforcement and Administration of Justice, Avon Books, New York: 1968, p. 166.

³ Ibid., p. 166.

Commenting on the same phenomenon Time Magazine observes:

"As residents and businessmen seek ways to protect their property and their lives, the soaring crime rate is matched only by the rising curve of paranoia."⁵

The crimes that concern Americans the most are those that affect their personal safety. The most frequent and serious of these crimes of violence against the person are willful homicide, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery. The FBI also collects 'offenses known' statistics for three property crimes: burglary, larceny of \$50 and over, and motor vehicle theft. These seven crimes are grouped together in the "Uniform Crime Reports" (UCR) to form an Index of serious crimes. Including robbery, the crimes of violence make up approximately 13 percent of the Index. America has long felt itself to be crime-ridden. Virtually every generation since the founding of the Nation has believed that it was threatened by the spectre of rising crime and violence.

A hundred years ago contemporary accounts of San Francisco told of extensive areas where 'no decent man' was in safety to walk the street after dark: while at all hours, both night and day, his property was jeopardized by incendiarism and burglary. . . The looting and takeover of New York for three days by mobs in the 1863 draft riots rivaled the violence

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Time Magazine, March 7, 1969, p. 26.

of Watts, while racial disturbances in Atlanta in 1907, in Chicago, Washington, and East St. Louis in 1919, Detroit in 1943 and New York in 1900, 1935, and 1943 marred big city life in the first half of the 20th century. Lynchings took the lives of more than 4,500 persons throughout the country between 1882 and 1930.⁶

In spite of this tradition the overall rate of violent crimes now stands at its highest point, well above what it has been throughout most of the period. Thus for the four crimes against the person included in the Index, the rate has jumped from about 105 per 100,000 population in the late 1930's to approximately 185 per 100,000 population in 1965.⁷ (Reliable records are not available for the years prior to 1933.) For the three Index crimes against property the comparative figures are 480 per 100,000 in the late 1930's and 1,250 per 100,000 in 1965. The FBI reports a 16 percent increase in crimes of violence for 1967 over 1966 including an increase of 11 percent in murder. In New York City arrests for murder in the first six months of 1968 were 40.2 percent higher than in the same months of 1967. For the whole of 1968 crimes of violence were up 19 percent from the 1967 figures. Robbery led the way with an increase of 29 percent. Murder and forcible rape were each up 14 percent.

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Katzbach, op cit., p. 101.

ibid., pp. 102-103.

Robbery is the principal source of violence from strangers. For UCR purposes, robbery is the taking of property from a person by use or threat of force with or without a weapon. Nationally, about one-half of all robberies are street robberies, and slightly more than one-half involve weapons. It is estimated that some injury is inflicted in about 25 percent of all robberies.⁸

Lax Gun Laws

The American rate of homicide by gunfire is 3.5 murders per 100,000 population. Sixty percent of all murders in this nation are by firearms. Given this situation it is difficult to understand why there has not been a concerted effort to legislate stronger gun laws. In countries where strong gun laws exist the homicide rate is well below that in this country. Thus the rate is .04 per 100,000 in Japan, .05 in Britain, .52 in Canada. England, Japan and West Germany are next to the United States, the most heavily industrialized countries in the world. Together they have a population of 214 million. Among these 214 million there are 135 gun murders a year. Among the 200 million people of the United States there are 6,500 gun murders a year - about forty-eight times as many. That the majority of Americans

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Ibid., p. 91.

favor stricter gun control was shown in the Gallup Poll of 1966 (67 percent) and in the Harris Poll of April, 1968 (71 percent). The major obstacle to strict control is the National Rifle Association. This organization has garnished powerful support in Washington and built a lobby which has managed to prevent a piece of legislation which a significant majority of citizens believe to be essential. The NRA has succeeded in having its selfish interests prevail in spite of the recent shooting catastrophies which have beset Americans. All this in a government which is allegedly 'of the people, by the people, for the people!' The NRA suggests that if a person wants to commit a murder and does not have a gun, he will find some other way to do it. As Schlesinger has noted,

This proposition is at best dubious, and it does not apply at all to the murder of political leaders. No one has ever tried to assassinate a President with a bow and arrow. Every assassination and attempted assassination has been by gun.⁹

The most emotional argument presented by the NRA is that licensing and registration provisions for handguns, rifles and shotguns would disarm the public and thus render it easy prey for violent criminals, or an invading or subversive enemy. As the recent President's Commission on Law Enforcement points out,

⁹ Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Violence: America in the Sixties, Signet Books, New York: 1968, p. 47.

All proposals for regulation would permit householders and shopkeepers to continue to possess firearms. Licensing and registration for the legitimate firearms owner would merely add a small measure of inconvenience to the presently largely unregulated mailorder and over the counter sales of firearms.¹⁰

Those supporting stricter control of firearms agree that many potential criminal offenders will obtain firearms even with additional laws. But they point to the finding of the Senate Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency, which found that criminals, for the most part, purchase their firearms through the mails or in retail stores, rather than stealing them.¹¹ The argument that an armed populace is a necessary precaution against an invading enemy seems hardly worth pondering in this nuclear age. The sight of the NRA and the approximately thirty million gun owners in America, repelling a nuclear attack with rifles and shotguns would indeed be something to behold.

Crime in All States

Many Americans delude themselves that crime is the vice of a small minority of citizens. This view is inaccurate. The President's Commission estimates that about 40 percent of all

¹⁰ Katzenbach, op cit., p. 547-548.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 38.

male children now living in the United States will be arrested for a non-traffic offense during their lives. An independent survey of 1,700 persons found that 91 percent of the sample admitted they had committed acts for which they might have received jail or prison sentences.¹² Crime is not a single phenomenon that can be examined, analyzed and described in one piece. It occurs in every part of the country and in every stratum in society. Its practitioners and its victims are people of all ages, income and background."¹³ A comparison of the dollar take-off of different crimes is of interest. Crimes such as a arson, robbery, and burglary, and larceny, most often perpetrated by the poor, cost Society approximately 574 million dollars per year. Embezzlement, a predominantly white-collar crime, amounts to 200 million dollars annually. Embezzlement is exceeded only by burglary.

The 'white collar' criminal is the broker who distributes fraudulent securities, the builder who deliberately uses defective material, the corporation executive who conspires to fix prices, the legislator who peddles his influence and vote for private gain, or the banker who misappropriates funds in his keeping."⁴

¹²

Ibid., p. 55.

¹³

Ibid.

The white-collar crime problem is difficult to control precisely because it is so complex. This becomes most clearly evident when the offender is not an individual but a corporation. Further, it seems that increasing affluence is intimately associated with crime. "An abundance of material goods provides an abundance of motives and opportunities for stealing, and stealing is the fastest growing kind of crime."¹⁵

From a view point expressed in the report of the President's Commission, crime is often brought about by the reluctance or inability of the public to initiate action against it. "Corporate and business, 'White-Collar', crime is closely associated with a widespread notion that, when making money is involved, anything goes."¹⁶

Social and economic conditions are seen as another 'cause' of crime. Thus crime flourishes and always has flourished in city slums, those neighborhoods where overcrowding, economic deprivation, social disruption and racial discrimination are endemic. Crime flourishes in conditions of affluence; the situations in which there is much desire for material goods and many opportunities to acquire them by devious means. These illegal means most certainly include violence in all of its forms. It is impossible to ascertain how much embezzlement, fraud,

¹⁵
Ibid., p. 67.

¹⁶
Ibid., p. 88.

loan sharking, price-rigging, tax evasion, bribery, and graft, exist. The President's Commission indicates that the economic losses accruing from such crimes far outweigh those caused by the three index crimes against property. Of course many of the offenses in this category go undiscovered. Most people pay scant attention to such crimes when they consider 'law and order' in America. This seemingly results from the belief that these crimes usually do not differ a recognizable threat to personal safety.

However, it has been argued that these crimes are, in a sense, the most threatening of all because of their corrosive effect on the ethics of American business.

Businessmen who defraud consumers promote cynicism towards society and disrespect for law. The Mafia or Cosa Nostra or the Syndicate, as it has variously been called, is deeply involved in business crime, and protects its position there by bribery and graft and, all too often, assault and murder.¹⁷

Again,

As serious as the physical and financial costs of corporate crime may be, it is probable that they are less serious than the damage it does to the Nation's social, economic, and political institutions. . . . Serious erosion of morals accompanies violations of this nature. It is reasonable to assume that prestigious companies that flout the law set an example for other businesses and influence

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¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 65.

individuals, particularly young people, to commit other kinds of crime on the grounds that everyone is taking what he can get. . . Perhaps most important the public tends to be indifferent to business crime or even to sympathize with the offenders when they have been caught.¹⁸

Organized Crime

If 'crime in the streets' is the big problem to most Americans, the question of organized crime is a close second. . . The extraordinary thing about organized crime is that America has tolerated it for so long.¹⁹

The President's Commission registered its concern about organized crime and, more importantly, about America's casual attitude toward it. The Commission estimates that the annual gambling gross of the Mafia is somewhere around 20 billion dollars. These funds provide the 'juice' to corrupt public officials, to diminish respect for the laws of society, and to infiltrate legitimate businesses. These overtly legitimate organizations then embark on a program of unfair competition which drives would-be opponents out of the market. The methods employed by the Mafia are always at least covertly violent. Its success is directly dependent upon its ability to corrupt law enforcement since, quite obviously, semi-public practices such as bookmaking

¹⁸

Ibid., p. 158.

¹⁹

Ibid., p. 29.

could not survive without protection.

Further, the Mafia provides services that many people want. Its crimes have relatively few complainants. The logical corollary to this is that if some of these desired services, such as gambling, were to receive legal sanction, the source of 'juice' might dry up somewhat and cripple the Syndicate. The recent legalization of off-the-course betting in Australia and New Zealand has provided additional, and lucrative sums for the Internal Revenue Departments of those countries. Furthermore, there has been no apparent decrease in the moral standards of the public as a result of such legislation. The most noticeable result has been the significant decline in the number of illegal off-the-course bookmakers.

Organized crime exists by virtue of the power it purchases with its money.

The millions of dollars it can spend on corrupting public officials may give it power to maim or murder people inside or outside the organization with impunity. . . The purpose of organized crime is not competition with visible, legal government but nullification of it. When organized crime places an official in public office, it nullifies law enforcement.²⁰

The cumulative effect of the infiltration of legitimate business cannot be measured. Today's corruption is more difficult to

detect and assess than that of the prohibition era. Neutralizing local law enforcement is central to the operations of organized crime. Where can the public turn if there is no one to investigate the investigators, and the political figures are neutralized by their debts to the Mob. Thus,

Anyone reporting corrupt activities may merely be telling his story to the corrupted; in a recent 'investigation' of widespread corruption, the prosecutor announced that any citizen coming forward with evidence of payments to public officials to secure government action would be prosecuted for participating in such unlawful conduct.²¹

Chaos on the Campus

No type of higher education institution in any section of the country escapes student disruptions. This is the conclusion of a study on student dissent recently presented to the Vice President of Student Affairs at the University of Minnesota. The study indicated that there was a movement away from non-violent disruptions to more militant ones. As is well known the campus disruptions have not been confined to the United States. In all other countries of the world there were 78 campus disruptions for the nine months of the 1967 - 1968 academic year. In the same time period there were 143 disruptions on the campuses of the United States.²²

²¹ Ibid., p. 447.

²² John McLean, "Student Dissent Report: No campus escapes disorders", Minnesota Daily, February 21, 1968, p. 1.

In the 1968 - 1969 academic year the rate of campus disturbances in this country is probably running ahead of that for the previous year. In the wake of the Kerner Commission Report, the major issue seems to have swung away from the war and the draft towards that of 'black demands'.²³ The Kerner Commission reported a very real movement towards the formation of a dichotomous, polarized society, one white, one black; one rich, one poor. It warned of the consequences that could be anticipated if no concerted effort was made to abort this trend. The follow-up report prepared by the National Urban Coalition and Urban America, Inc., has looked at the nation's response to these warnings a year after they were delivered. Among its notations were some which applied specifically to education.

A wave of disorder struck the nation's high schools in 1968-69 and is continuing. At the same time, turbulence on college and university campuses has taken on an increasingly racial character. There was striking evidence of deepening of the movement toward black pride, black identity and black control. . . The nation has not reversed the movement apart. Blacks and whites remain deeply divided in their perceptions and experiences of American society.²⁴

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Otto Kerner (Chairman), Report of the National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders, Bantam Books, March, 1968.

24

John Gardner (Chairman), "One Year Later", in the Minneapolis Tribune, February 28, 1969, p. 22.

Competition and Violence

Most Americans are more inclined to think of crime in moral rather than insocial terms. An August 1965 Gallup Poll asked people what they thought was responsible for the spiralling crime rate. Most responses were with reference to the moral character of the population rather than with changes in objective circumstances or with law enforcement. Only 12 percent cited objective conditions such as 'unemployment', 'poverty', 'the automobile', or 'the population explosion'. The Report of the President's Commission emphasizes that many of our assumptions about crime are highly questionable. The Report demonstrates that we worry excessively about the tangible symptoms of our social problems without undertaking the uncomfortable task of analyzing the disease. Our perception of crime is often class oriented, and we conveniently forget that a large percentage of crime is white-collar.²⁵ The point is stressed that Americans tend to turn their social problems over to experts and trust them to come up with adequate solutions. The Report suggests that process is quite inadequate because experts cannot change our style of life, and it is precisely this which causes much crime. "To eliminate most crime we would have to curb the

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Katzenbach, op cit., p. 30.

national appetite for 'progress', 'success', and for constant change."²⁶ There is reason to believe that, while young people frequently act out, it is because they want in. According to the Commission,

Perceived prospects for future occupational status was found to be a far more important determinant of 'rebellion' than social or economic origin. . . rebellion occurs when future status is not closely related to present performance.²⁷

Furthermore,

Crime is not an alien phenomenon, a cancer on the otherwise healthy skin of the body politic. Crime is often the direct result of the vagaries of what might be called 'the American character'. What we believe as a people, what we tolerate, how we go about acquiring wealth, the standards we practice rather than preach determine the nature and extent of crime we get as a nation. We are dedicated to progress, to rapid change, to belief that anything (or anybody) which is old is somehow useless and should be replaced. We encourage competition, emulation of those who have achieved wealth, and often wink at some of the unethical or illegal means by which such wealth has been acquired.²⁸

The Commission believes that Americans today are beset by self-doubt rather than dignified by self-understanding. It points the finger at cynical politicians who habitually equate crime with the political failures of the last administration. It accuses both political parties of having been hypnotized by the vote-getting potential of the crime theme during the recent Presidential

²⁷ Ibid., p. 717.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 35.

Campaign. It observes that the incessant reiteration of the theme has resulted in a war against our young, our disaffected, and our minorities.

We must understand that crime is going to be with us forever, and that its appalling frequency can be somewhat mitigated if we understand its roots in our culture; and that self-understanding and meaningful action based upon it, is necessary if we are to overcome the national schizophrenia that is the cause of so much social and personal malaise.²⁹

The previous underlying violence are ones that the critical justice system can do little about. The unruliness of young people, widespread drug addiction, the existence of much poverty in a wealthy society, the pursuit of the dollar by any available means are phenomena the police, the courts, and the correctional apparatus, cannot confront directly.

They are strands that can be disentangled from the fabric of American life only by the concerted action of all of society. . . unless society does take concerted action to change the general conditions and attitudes that are associated with crime, no improvement in law enforcement and administration of justice. . . will be of much avail.³⁰

The criminal justice system deals preponderantly with young people and slum dwellers and it is this group who are most embittered by painful social and economic pressures. Society

²⁹ Ibid., p. 36.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 56.

insists that individuals are responsible for their actions, and the criminal process operates on that assumption. The criminal justice system has a great potential for dealing with individual instances of crime, but it is incapable of eliminating the breeding grounds of crime.

A community's most enduring protection against crime is to right the wrongs and cure the illnesses that tempt men to harm their neighbors.³¹

The Commission emphasized that America must transfer its well-founded concern about crime into social action aimed at preventing crime. It implores Americans to face the fact that widespread crime implies a widespread failure by society as a whole.

We will not have dealt effectively with crime until we have alleviated the conditions that stimulate it.³²

The theme of competition leading to violence is one that occurs time and time again throughout the Report of the President's Commission. Man, striving for worldly goods, for a future commensurate with his potential, becomes very aggressive when confronted with threats to his ambitions: Looking at the persistency of crime in certain inner city areas the Report notes:

³¹

Ibid., p. 69.

³²

Ibid., p. 86.

These neighborhoods have always been characterized by substantial crime; as classes move into these areas of rapid change, as hopes for advancement rise, the struggle for social recognition frequently becomes criminal in nature.³³

The Report suggests that the most significant environmental factor is not poverty but rather the pace of social change within a community.

A society that places a high premium on freedom over order, that prizes material success, and that encourages mobility aspirations is not likely to be able to contain all its members within a conventional mold. . . members of our society may have to tolerate a fairly high amount of nonconformity among youth.³⁴

When the right to compete is preempted in a society such as this, resulting violence is not surprising. People who, though declared by the law and the constitution to be equal, are prevented by society from improving their circumstances, can hardly be blamed for developing extraordinary strains on their respect for the law and society. Frankel's bitter remarks seem apropos:

In the summer of our discontent, not even George Wallace's angry young men could turn up a roster of scapegoats to blame by name. . . we railed, in the name of law and order, against the guardians of the law in the Supreme Court. We tried suppression here and appeasement there, but still the hostilities and frustrations and ambitions of the deprived, whether rich or poor, propelled us from melee to mayhem.³⁵

³³ Ibid., p. 25.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 720.

³⁵ Max Frankel, op cit., pp. v-vi.

The Kerner Commission concluded that the culture of poverty resulting from unemployment and family breakup generates a system of ruthless, exploitative relationships within the ghetto. Prostitution, dope addiction, and crime in general, create an environmental 'jungle' characterized by personal insecurity and tension. Children growing up under such conditions are likely participants in civil disorder.³⁶

Ghetto residents claim that they are 'exploited' by local merchants, and there are indications that these complaints are not without substance.

Lack of knowledge regarding credit purchasing creates special pitfalls for the disadvantaged. In many states garnishment practices compound these difficulties by allowing creditors to deprive individuals of their wages without hearing or trial.³⁷

Warning the nation on the probable outcomes of the policy of treating symptoms rather than the disease, the Kerner Commission commented:

If the Negro population as a whole developed even stronger feelings of being wrongly 'penned in' and discriminated against, many of its members might come to support not only riots, but the rebellion now being preached by only a handful.

If large-scale violence resulted, white retaliation would follow. This spiral could quite conceivably lead to a kind of urban apartheid with semi-martial law in many major cities.³⁸

³⁶ Kerner Report, op cit., p. 14.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 15.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 397-98.

As Others See Us

According to Eisenstadt there is in Israel a prevailing climate of opinion which perceives Americans as highly individualistic. This individualism includes an intensive spirit of competition which will employ any available means to acquire material wealth.³⁹

The German von Zahn, has commented at some length on violence in America:

In the big cities gangsters are able to hold meetings at which questions of professional training are discussed. . . the police look the other way. With a grin the newspaper reader takes note of the fact that obvious criminals before investigating committees of Congress are treated with a kind of ironic reverence. And on another level there is the widespread glorification of self-help in situations where legal means fail to produce results. . .

In America the tradition of self-help with violence is almost as old and hallowed as that of the Saturday evening brawl in an Upper Bavarian inn. . .

The situation in the South is especially confusing, because there the muscles and tendons of violence have been covered by the ruling circles with the flesh of legalistic justification. . . Where else in the world is there a society that for over a hundred years has resisted with all means, including violence, giving up forms and privileges that constantly require thinking along double standards and measuring with double yardsticks.⁴⁰

39

S.N. Eisenstadt, "from Israel", As Others See Us, Franz M. Joseph (ed.). Princeton University Press: Princeton, New Jersey, 1959, p. 160.

40

Peter von Zahn, "from Germany", Ibid., p. 101.

Von Zahn speaks of the 'double face' of America that in so many areas is manifested in the spectacle of two ideals vying with each other. Frequently the two are incompatible. Thus, the ideal of preserving the purity of the white race exists alongside the colorblindness embodied in the Constitution. In no other country, suggests von Zahn, could these opposing principles coexist in such a manner in the twentieth century.

Imagine a nation in one half of which the equality of its citizens before the law extends into the remotest corners of club charters, and in the other half of which the inequality of castes is established by law; within short time such a nation would break up. Not the United States.⁴²

The shafts from Sartre's bow are swift and sharp.

And that super-European monstrosity, North America? Chatter, chatter: liberty, equality, fraternity, love, honor, patriotism, and what have you. All this did not prevent us from making anti-racial speeches about dirty niggers, dirty Jews, and dirty Arabs.⁴³

The topic of Negro suppression has been prominent among the writings of foreign commentators. Mrs. Labarca's comments typify them.

And what kind of democracy was it that kept them like helots? . . . I understood the demographic and historical reasons for the color line, but even so I was indignant that ethnical prejudices should cause people to see in

⁴² von Zahn, *op cit.*, p. 105.

⁴³ Jean-Paul Sartre. *Preface of The Wretched of the Earth*. By Franz Fanon. Grove Press Inc., New York: 1963, p. 26.

every Negro a potential criminal, bandit, or lascivious beast, forgetting that crass ignorance and hopeless poverty deform any man and cause him to regress toward the troglodyte, be he white, yellow, or black.⁴⁴

On the same point, Manach notes:

And the same nation that is the defender of the world liberty is a country of violent racial discrimination. . . perhaps the fear of economic competition has some relation to that prejudice, along with apprehensions of the social and political influence that the Negro would have if freed from all restrictions.⁴⁵

As Americans See Themselves

An American has suggested that "Americans are today the most frightening people on this planet."⁴⁶ He supports his assertion by pointing to the horrified comments that came in from around the world after the assassination of Robert Kennedy and after the Chicago Democratic Convention. "Even such specialists in violence as the Germans and the Russians now condescend to us."⁴⁷

Montagu is another who believes that Americans are either the most violent people on earth or close to it.⁴⁸ Montagu unleashes

⁴⁴ Amanda H. Labarca, "from Chile", *Ibid.*, p. 315.

⁴⁵ Jorge Manach, "from Cuba", *Ibid.*, p. 338.

⁴⁶ Schlesinger, *op cit.*, p. 19.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴⁸ Ashley Montagu, *The American Way of Life*. G.P. Putnam's Sons: New York, 1967, p. 45.

a savage attack on the tendency of Americans to whitewash much of their violence by a process of rationalization and sanctimonious labeling. The "myth of the savage Indian"⁴⁹ created a cult of heroism wherein all white frontiersmen were a law unto themselves blessed with the inalienable right to bear arms and pledged to dispose of as many 'red barbarians' as possible. For Montagu the glorification of violence, a hallmark of the frontier, is still with us. He alludes to the spirit of aggression which permeates many facets of this society. Thus he indicates that not only does the United States have the highest rate of violent crime in the world, but it also exhibits a unique aggressiveness in its politics, sports, commerce and entertainment.

Many defenders of the hallowed right to bear arms rest their case on the argument that it is a right written into the Constitution, and consequently is not contestable. Again, this reification of a document compiled for the world that was, almost two hundred years ago, raises the ire of Montagu. In the early days of the colony, when police and lawmen were scarce, there would seem to be more justification for instituting and maintaining a law which permitted men to bear arms. To insist that a Constitution written so long ago is still some kind of infallible oracle from which all wisdom flows, seems quite ridiculous.

Yet, guns are seen as only a symptom, not a cause of the violence in American Society. Montagu grants that the removal of guns will not cure the disease but insists that such a step would be of immeasurable help in reducing the expression of the disease in one of its most dangerous forms.⁵⁰ Schlesinger is of the same opinion. While urging the enactment of stricter gun laws he allows that:

Still, however useful in making it harder for potential murderers to get guns, federal gun legislation deals with the symptoms and not with the causes of our trouble.⁵¹

Schlesinger chides the old in American Society for their tendency to deny the existence of the disease. He points out that "sanctimony is not a persuasive answer to anguish,"⁵² and blames this attitude for much of the alienation of the young.

They are tired of alibis when they see the men they admired most shot down. They are tired of hearing the older generation say that it was only some crack-pot or foreigner, and that America, this anointed nation of law and order, had nothing to do with it.⁵³

Schlesinger insists that while there may not be a question of collective guilt, there is a problem of collective responsibility.

⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 47.

⁵¹ Schlesinger, *op cit.*, p. 48.

⁵² Ibid., p. 95.

⁵³ Ibid., p. 91.

Certainly two hundred million Americans did not strike down John Kennedy or Martin Luther King or Robert Kennedy. But two hundred million Americans are plainly responsible for the character of a society that works on deranged men and incites them to depraved acts. . . Unless, like Lincoln, we acknowledge the existence of the problem, unless we see the destructive impulse as rooted in our history, our society and ourselves, we will never be able to conquer and transcend the trouble within.⁵⁴

Menninger adds more powder to the pistol:

Included among the crimes that make up the total are those that 'we' commit, we noncriminals. . . 'our' crimes help to make the recorded crimes possible, even necessary; and the worst of it is we do not even know we are guilty.

Perhaps our worst crime is our ignorance about crime. . . our smug assumption that it is all a matter of some tough 'bad guys' whom the tough 'good guys' will soon capture. . . By our part, I mean the encouragement we give to criminal acts and criminal careers. . . our neglect of preventive steps. . . our love of vindictive 'justice', our generally smug detachment, and our prevailing public apathy.⁵⁵

The prevalence of violence in the mass media, especially television and films, has been seen by many social scientists as a contributing factor to the American propensity for violence. Television networks are competing for viewers. Commercials are the lifeblood of the networks. The rate for advertising time varies directly as the number of viewers who watch the programs. Hence, if programs containing violence prove popular with the viewing public, basic economics demands that these are the programs that will be

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 89-90.

⁵⁵ Karl Menninger. The Crime of Punishment. The Viking Press, New York, 1968, pp. 3-4.

shown. The economic competition among broadcasting systems then becomes directly responsible for the violence presented on the screen. Assuming that there is a direct relationship between violence on television and the acceptance of violence in society, as research would have us believe, the networks must accept a measure of responsibility for the current situation.

It is surely reasonable to suppose that continuous exposure to the spectacle of violence creates the insensitivity. . . that. . . encourages the acceptance of excessive violence as the 'normal' way of life.⁵⁶

The all too familiar theme of economic prosperity over-riding all other considerations is thus repeated. Vigorous competition cultivates aggressive business practices and an atmosphere of violence. Frankel saw the same pattern at the base of the chaotic Convention in Chicago in 1968. He saw a profound conflict developing throughout American society.

It is a conflict between the affluent and educated upper classes of American society who, together with the poorest classes, are demanding ever faster change and even wholesale upheaval, and the large body of middle-class Americans, newly prosperous or still striving, who fear the loss of what they have acquired or intend to achieve if the ways and priorities of life are to be seriously altered.⁵⁷

56

Schlesinger, op cit., p. 57.

57

Frankel, op cit., p. viii.

Economic competition, the struggle for still more of the 'good' things in life, encourages a 'win at any costs philosophy' that often leads to aggression and violence.' Montagu expressed himself strongly on this issue:

The principle of the American way of life is the idea of competition. This takes the simple form of going and doing better than the other fellow even if you have to do he and his family injury in the process. . . This kind of indifference to the consequences to others of ones competitiveness is inherent in the principle of competition. . . This kind of competition leads to high frequencies of nervous breakdowns and ulcers, high delinquency rate, divorce and separation, homicide, and to violent crime rates that are the highest in the world.⁵⁸

C. Wright Mills depicted the new entrepreneur as typically a scheming manipulator who often makes his profits by "doing somebody in".⁵⁹

Violence is nowhere more prevalent in America than in the nation's capital. There was an average of two bank robberies every three days in Washington in January, 1969. In the same month there were five times as many armed holdups in the city - about 700 - as in January, 1965. In the bulging jails some ninety percent of the female and sixty six percent of the male inmates are dope addicts,

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Montagu, op cit., p. 44.

59

C. Wright Mills, White Collar: The American Middle Classes. Galaxy Books: New York, 1956, p. 74.

with heroin the most common 'fix'.⁶⁰ As Time Magazine notes:

Even more unsettling than property losses, though, is violent crime, especially rape and armed robbery, which increased 50% in the past year.⁶¹

The situation in other cities is hardly less disturbing.

In Boston, office girls refuse to work alone after 6. In Kansas City, hospitals have trouble finding night nurses. Prudent Chicagoans try not to ride the el after dark. . . Nearly everywhere, even without consciously thinking about it, city dwellers are adjusting their lives, their residences and their jobs to the fear of physical violence. Parks that once were playgrounds on hot summer nights are now virtually empty. Iron bars and heavy mesh cover exposed windows, while doors are double- and triple-locked.⁶²

A similar picture is painted by the chairman of the Urban Coalition, John Gardner. He refers to the cities he saw as he traveled the country as secretary of health, education and welfare as 'fragmented worlds' of ignorance, fear and hostility. According to Gardner these cities were not communities, but encampments of strangers.⁶³

60

Edward P. Morgan, "Nixon Shows an Understanding of Washington Crime Problem", Minneapolis Tribune. February 9, 1969, p. 3c.

61

"The City: Terror in Washington", Time, March 14, 1969, p. 30.

62

"Police: The Thin Blue Line", Time, July 19, 1968, p. 16.

63

John Gardner, in Morgan, op cit.

We will see a good deal more of searing emotions spiraling from violence and counter violence before we are through. . .but they won't solve a thing.⁶⁴

This then is the situation in contemporary America. Whether the observers be Americans or foreigners, social scientists or journalists, politicians or militant agitators there is substantial agreement that all is not well in the United States. The theme of competition generating violence is a recurrent one. Many writers have sketched the American as a highly competitive individual who is quite unscrupulous in the means he employs to gain his ends. Further, the seeds of this attitude are seen as sown by society itself. A cyclical process is established whereby the reification of material well-being leads to intensive competition which spawns aggression and violence. The aggression often leads to the acquiring of present goals, but also to the aspiring for future and 'higher' goals. Hence, the eternal quest.

In the face of the observations presented it seems imperative that a number of empirical questions be raised. For instance, is there a direct relationship between competition and propensity for violent action in an individual? Are Americans more motivated towards achievement (more competitive) than are other nationals?

It is with a view to examining such propositions that we move on to the next phase of this discussion.

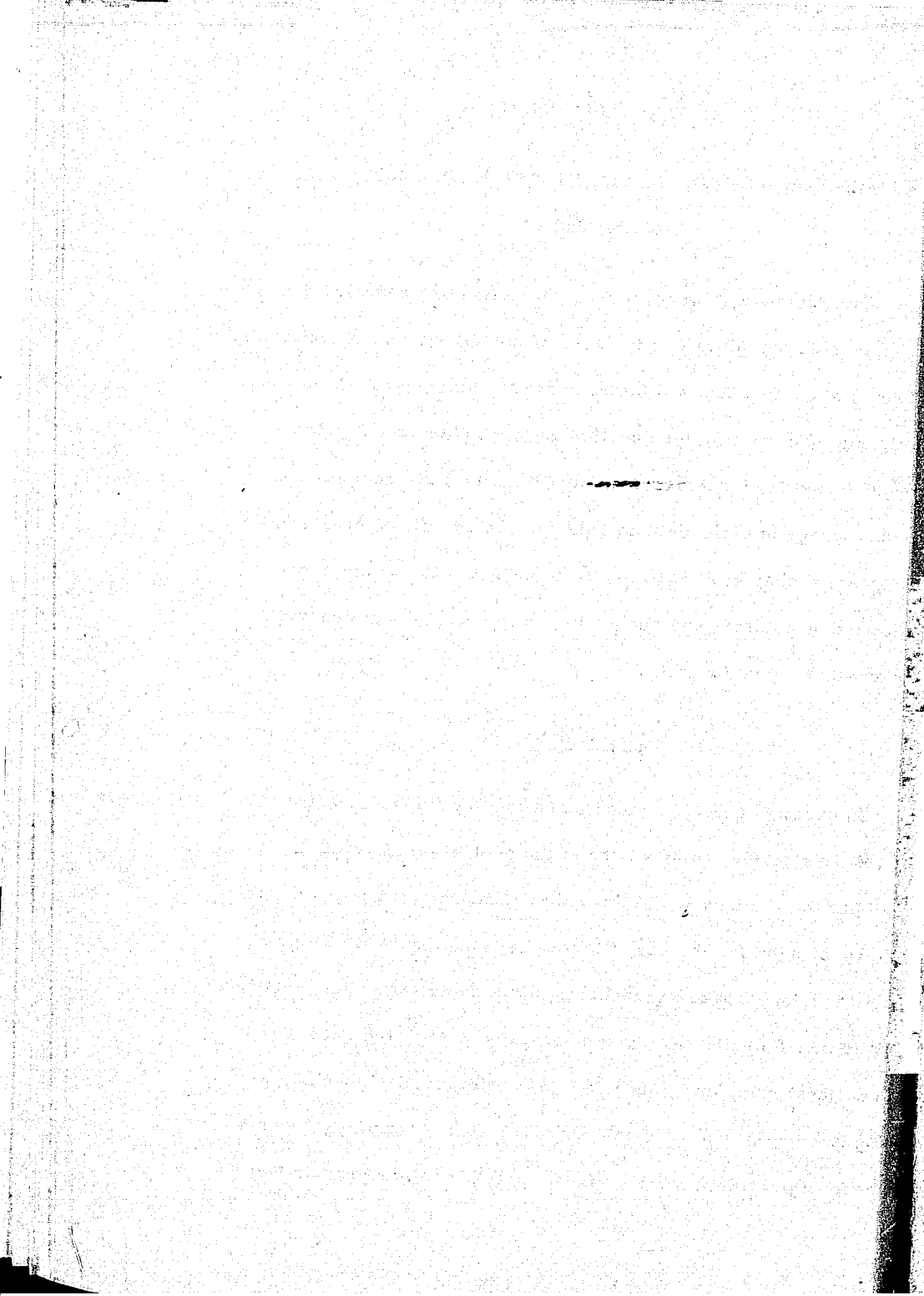
CHAPTER IV

DESIGN FOR A STUDY OF COMPETITION AND VIOLENCE IN AMERICA

Our review of American characteristics has revealed the opinion by both outsiders and insiders of the existence of an unusually high level of competition and violence among Americans. It is interesting then to raise the question as to whether an empirical comparison would find Americans significantly more competitive and more prone to violence than selected groups of non-Americans. In the present chapter it is proposed to describe the sample, to develop our hypothesis and our scale procedures, and to describe and pretest the questionnaire.

The Sample

In order to draw a comparison along the lines suggested above, it was decided to make use of the population of graduate students at the University of Minnesota. Graduates were preferred to undergraduates for the very practical reason that most foreign students at Minnesota are graduates. Since the study design demands groups of non-Americans, it was necessary to use graduates to obtain national samples of sufficient size to make feasible the drawing of comparisons. It was decided that it would be preferable to draw foreign student samples from specific nations, rather than



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to take an overall random sample of all foreign graduates. In so doing it was felt that any significant results which might be obtained could be discussed more meaningfully and with greater theoretical relevance. In view of this it is not possible to generalize from the findings of this study to the entire population of foreign students at Minnesota.

The next consideration concerned precisely which nationals should be selected for comparison with Americans. Here again the question of size was paramount. By far the largest groups of foreign students at Minnesota are those from India and China. However, both of these are Asian nations. Hence in the interests of validity, it was felt that just one of these, India, should be chosen. It was decided to use a sample from a European nation as a second group for comparison. This decision created a new problem. No European nation has more than thirty students at the University. It was felt that each sample should be between thirty and forty, at a minimum, in order to obtain cell sizes of sufficient magnitude to allow the application of tests of significance. As a result it was decided to choose the European sample from two countries, both of which had a comparatively large number of students at Minnesota. These countries were West Germany and England.

An additional requirement in the non-American samples was that the individuals included should be relatively recent arrivals in the United States. This was based on the reasoning that foreigners would tend to become more "Americanized" the longer they resided in this country. Consequently, most of the students chosen in the foreign samples arrived in the United States in 1968 or 1967. Thus, of the thirty-five Indian respondents, only three arrived here prior to 1967. Of the thirty-five northern Europeans - nineteen West Germans and sixteen Englishmen - just five arrived in America prior to 1965.

Most of the foreign students at Minnesota are males. Furthermore, the assumption was made that national stereotypes are more usually based on the male, rather than on the female character.¹ With these considerations in mind, the decision was made to include only males in the samples.

It is invalid to compare apples and oranges. Along the same lines it seemed invalid to compare social scientists with engineers, for instance. For this reason it was felt that the samples should be stratified according to the respondents' graduate majors. The question as to which general academic areas should be included

¹
David M. Potter, "American Women and the American Character," in American Character and Culture, John A. Hague (ed.), Everett Edwards Press, Inc., De Land, Florida, 1964, pp. 65-84.

was largely dictated by the smallest foreign sample - the northern Europeans. Once this sample had been chosen, the Indian and American samples were selected so as to correspond as closely as possible in terms of percentage distribution of academic majors. The three samples contained respondents distributed among academic majors as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

<u>Major</u>	<u>Approximate Percentage in each Sample</u>
Administration	18
Agriculture	5
Engineering or Mathematics	25
History or Philosophy	10
Languages and Literature	6
Physical Sciences	22
Social Sciences	14

The sample from India was randomly selected within the academic areas. The same was true for the American sample. Seventy Americans from eighteen different states were included in the American group. Minnesotans, with twenty-six respondents, were disproportionately represented.

In sum then, the overall sample consisted of three distinct groups; the Americans, the Indian, and the northern European. There were seventy Americans, and seventy non-Americans. Thirty-five of the latter were from India and thirty-five from northern Europe. The samples were controlled for sex, education, and

graduate major. Further, to the extent that all of the students were graduates, there was an approximate control for age. The non-American sample was controlled for time of arrival in the United States.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. Americans are more highly competitive than are the nationals of either India or northern Europe.

Explanation. Our review of the literature has indicated that Americans are perceived by commentators, both American and foreign, as intensively competitive. In fact the implication is that Americans have no peer as a group in this particular characteristic. Assuming that this is the case, it was anticipated that Americans would score higher on an index of competition than would a group of non-Americans.

Hypothesis 2. Americans are more prone to aggression than are the nationals of either India or northern Europe.

Explanation. The literature suggests that a study of American history reveals a tradition of aggressive self-help. Further, statistics indicate that the curve of violent behavior is exhibiting a constantly increasing gradient in America. A number of contemporary writers have suggested that the American is among the most

aggressive nationalities in the world. With this in mind, it was predicted that Americans would emerge higher on a scale presumed to measure aggression than would the non-Americans.

Hypothesis 3. Non-Americans perceive Americans as highly competitive.

Hypothesis 4. Non-Americans perceive Americans as more highly competitive than Americans perceive themselves.

Explanation. Almost invariably, commentators from foreign countries perceive the American as typically among the most dedicated competitors in the world. There is little doubt that Americans regard themselves in approximately the same light. Nevertheless, it is submitted that outsiders perceive Americans as more unscrupulous in their competition than Americans perceive themselves. Since it is assumed that individuals react to others on the basis of their perception of those others, any significant difference in perception between Americans and non-Americans would seem to be important.

Hypothesis 5. Non-Americans perceive Americans as highly aggressive.

Hypothesis 6. Non-Americans perceive Americans as more highly aggressive than Americans perceive themselves.

Explanation. There is little question that many foreign observers view contemporary America as a violent society. Furthermore, the recent political assassinations, the race riots, the campus disturbances, and numerous protest demonstrations have been given considerable coverage in the foreign press. The result is an image of America and Americans as violent and highly aggressive. Americans seem less inclined to view themselves and their society as at the root of the violence in their country. More often, disturbances are seen as perpetrated by atypical individuals and groups. Again, such a difference in perception would seem important for understanding the reactions of outsiders to Americans.

Scales

Four measuring instruments were required. These were to measure competition, aggression, perception of competition in Americans, and perception of aggression in Americans.

Competition. A review of scales in the literature revealed a dearth of indices in this area.

The concept, competition, can be defined in a number of ways, along more than one dimension. Thus it could be argued that a tendency to compete intensely in athletics may not necessarily be associated with an appetite for business or academic competition. In the present study it was decided to develop an index composed of items making general statements about competition and its perceived effect on personality and societal development. Twelve items were drawn from various sources.^{2, 3} The respondents were required to circle the appropriate initials according to whether they Very Strongly Agreed (VSA), Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), Strongly Disagreed (SD), or Very Strongly Disagreed (VSD). The items were arranged to form a Likert type scale. These items were as follows:

1. I would not let earning a living greatly warp my life.
2. Competition is the means through which most improvement in society is accomplished.

² David C. McClelland, The Achieving Society. D. Van Nostrand Company, Inc., Princeton, New Jersey, 1961, pp. 495-97.

³ B.F. McCue, "Constructing an instrument for evaluating attitudes toward intensive competition in team games," in Marvin E. Shaw and Jack M. Wright (ed.). Scales for the Measurement of Attitudes, McGraw Hill, New York: 1967, p. 87.

3. Participation in intensive competition develops leadership.
4. Intensive competition in team games while at school helps to train most individuals to face the problems of life.
5. All other things assumed equal, I would prefer to work for myself than to carry out the program of a respected superior.
6. I work very hard at everything I undertake until I am satisfied with the results.
7. I would prefer to work on a project that was getting somewhere, even though it was far from where I usually live and work and among people very different from me.
8. Seniority should be given greater weight than merit in giving promotions.
9. Being pitted against another as in a political or athletic race is enjoyable.
10. Winning may not be everything, but losing is nothing.
11. Other things assumed equal, it would be preferable to work for a definite salary than for a commission on work done.
12. An article for sale is worth what people will pay for it.

For reasons presented in the section on "internal consistency", items 5, 7, 8, and 10 were not included in the final index. However, it was decided to retain these items in the final questionnaire. The primary reason for this was to help offset the "memory" effect in test-re-test reliability.

Aggression. In the present context aggression was conceptualized along the lines of the model utilized by Buss and Durkee.⁴ These writers divided hostile-aggressive behavior into a number of sub-classes. After substantial pre-testing and the use of the item analysis, factor analysis, and collection of norms, four sub-classes emerged as most important for a description of hostile-aggressive behavior in males. These included:

1. Assault - physical violence against others. This includes getting into fights with others but not destroying objects.
2. Indirect aggression - both roundabout and undirected aggression. Roundabout behavior like malicious gossip or practical jokes is indirect in the sense that the hated person is not attacked directly but by devious means. Undirected aggression, such as temper tantrums and slamming doors, consists of a discharge of negative effect against no one in particular.
3. Irritability - a readiness to explode at the slightest provocation. This included quick temper, grouchiness, exasperation, and rudeness.
4. Verbal aggression - negative effect expressed in both the style and content of speech. Style includes arguing, shouting, and screaming; content includes threats, curses, and being overcritical.⁵

Buss and Durkee did not attempt to arrive at an over-all hostile-aggression index. Rather, they chose to develop a separate index for each of the sub-classes. In the present study the decision

⁴ Arnold H. Buss and Ann Durkee. "An inventory for assessing different kinds of hostility," Journal of Abnormal Social Psychology, 1957, 21. pp. 343-368.

⁵ Arnold H. Buss, The Psychology of Aggression. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., New York: 1961, pp. 169-170.

was made to select items from each of the four sub-classes, and to use these as a basis for developing an over-all index. Fifteen items were selected and are listed below:

1. It makes my blood boil to have someone make fun of me.
2. It is acceptable for a person to resort to physical violence if he has to, to defend his own rights.
3. It is very difficult to think of a good reason for ever hitting anyone.
4. If anyone annoys me I am apt to tell him what I think of him.
5. I lose my temper easily but get over it quickly.
6. When a person is yelled at, he should yell right back.
7. When I really lose my temper, I am capable of slapping someone.
8. I can remember being so angry that I picked up the nearest thing and broke it.
9. It is difficult not to be a little rude to people that one does not like.
10. Once in a while it is impossible to control the urge to harm others.
11. If someone doesn't treat me right, I don't let it annoy me.
12. I never get mad enough to throw things.
13. I generally cover up my poor opinion of others.
14. If someone hits me first, I let him have it.
15. A person should not let a lot of unimportant things irritate him.

Items 5, 6, 8, 10, and 15 were excluded from the final index.

This again was done for reasons to be described in the section on "internal consistency".

Perception of Competition in America. To measure this variable five indicators were assembled based on the statements in the literature.

These are presented below:

1. The ideal of bigger, faster, and more, is very prevalent in American society.
2. Purely selfish motives are behind many of the financial grants given to other countries by the United States.
3. Americans are probably the most highly competitive people in the world today.
4. Americanism is nothing but a childish desire to "beat the world".
5. The American is willing to sacrifice anything to profit.

Perception of Aggression in America. Once again five indicators were developed on the basis of statements in the literature. These include:

1. Americans are the most frightening people on the earth today.
2. It is illogical to claim that the whole of American society must accept much of the responsibility for the wave of recent assassinations of top political and civil rights figures in this country.
3. The American is no more prone to resort to aggressive behavior to obtain his individual rights than are most other nationalities.

4. In America, the tradition of self-help with violence appears to be well established.
5. It is part of the "American Way" to go out and do better than the other fellow even if you have to do him and his family injury in the process.

The Questionnaire

Twelve questions were formulated to ascertain background factors such as nationality, socio-economic status, political preference, and religion. Following this, the thirty-seven statements making up the four indices outlined above were randomly distributed under a section entitled "Attitudes and Opinions".

Reliability. The reliability of each of the four scales was evaluated by administering the questionnaire to thirty-two junior and senior students at the University of Minnesota. The questionnaire was administered twice to the same students, with seven days between administrations. The purpose was to determine the consistency of the responses of the same individual. Thus if an item or an entire scale is reliable, it should evoke a similar response from an individual, assuming that there were no significant intervening variables during the period of time between the two questionnaires.

Spearman's Rank-order correlation coefficient was used to find the measure of association between the two responses of the same individual. The formula used to obtain the Spearman Rank-

Order correlation was:

$$R = 1 - \frac{6(\sum D^2)}{N(N^2 - 1)}$$

As an example of how reliability was evaluated, the data for one of the thirty-two students used in the pre-test are presented in Table 2. This example is based on responses to the Perception of Violence index.

Table 2

Item	Scale Reliability - Respondent 1			
	*X ₁	X ₂	D	D ²
1	5	4	-1	1
2	1	3	2	4
3	3	3	0	0
4	5	5	0	0
5	4	4	0	0
				<u>5</u> Total D ²
				R = .750

*X₁ - Subject's first response.

X₂ - Subject's second response.

D - Difference between the response for a given item.

D² - The square of the difference.

In this way the reliability of the responses for each individual on each scale was evaluated. For the Competition scale, R ranged between .875 and .984 with an average of .942. For the Aggression index the range was .921 to .988 with an average of .959. For the Perception of Competition R varied between .650 and .950 with an average of .838 for Perception of Aggression correlations ranged from .650 to 1.00 with an average of .831.

Validity. The items used in both the competition scale and the Aggression scale were all taken from instruments which had been previously assembled to measure these traits. In both of these

original instruments the items had survived selection by a panel of judges from a pool of items. Additionally, it appears that the items on both of these scales possess face validity.

The question of internal consistency needs to be broached as a check on the internal validity of the four scales. Thus, the validity of an item would be questionable if it failed to discriminate between individuals at opposite ends of a scale. For example, a respondent with a low aggression score should, with a high degree of regularity, respond to each item in a manner reflecting low aggression. The data to conduct these internal consistency tests were obtained from the pre-test questionnaires of the thirty-two juniors and seniors used in estimating reliability.

A numerical value of from one to six was assigned to each response on the six-item Likert type scale. To obtain a person's score on any index, the scores of his responses to individual items were summed. The respondents were then ranked, for example, from the most competitive to the least competitive. By eliminating the middle two quartiles, the eight most competitive and the eight least competitive remained against which the internal consistency of the scale was checked. An item had internal validity, was consistent with the scores of the entire scale, if it accurately discriminated between the most competitive and the least competitive.

The same procedure was adopted for each of the other three scales. This procedure is demonstrated in Table 3 for one of the items on the Competition scale.

Item. Competition is the means through which most improvement in society is accomplished.

Table 3

Internal Consistency of an Item

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>
Most Competitive	16	0
Least Competitive	4	12

N = 32

Percentage of consistent cells = 87.5%

A decision was made to use only those items whose percentage of consistent cells was seventy-five or greater. Using this criterion items 5, 6, 8, and 10, were formally eliminated from the Competition Index; and items 5, 6, 8, 10, and 15, from the Aggression Index. All the items comprising the scales on perception accurately discriminated more than seventy-five percent of the time.

The two Perception scales were formed from viewpoints presented by contemporary observers of the American scene. To this extent, they would appear to be relevant, and possess face validity, as well as being internally consistent.

In sum, the four scales appear to have some measure of validity. Further, the items used exhibited quite high reliability. The final questionnaire was personally delivered to each of the 140 respondents, along with a stamped, addressed envelope for the return of the completed items.

When a potential respondent was not at home, two call-backs were made on subsequent occasions. Nine of the non-Americans (6 Indians, 2 Englishmen, and 1 German) could not be located. The same was true for three Americans. This reduced the sample size to 128. One hundred six of the questionnaires were returned giving a response rate of approximately 83%.

The highest response rate was the Northern European at 91%. The American group was next at 85%, while the Indian sample was a somewhat disappointing 69%. Our final samples consisted of 57 Americans and 49 non-Americans. Twenty-nine of the latter were North European, and 20 were Indians.

It remains for us to review the findings, and to attempt to reach conclusions on the basis of these.

CHAPTER V

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Before testing the hypotheses outlined in the previous chapter, it is important to compare the national groups on various basic characteristics. In this connection we need to know what similarities and differences exist among the groups with respect to factors which might influence the respondents' scores on the dependent variables in which we are interested. Any attempt to investigate possible contaminating factors will be restricted to those which for various theoretical reasons could influence the results.

In the present study the following factors were considered as potential contributors to a spurious relationship: age, socio-economic status, position in the family of orientation, and social environment (urban or rural). In addition, data were gathered on religion and political affiliation in as much as they are usually associated with nationality. It was desirable that the samples be similar in terms of age, socio-economic status, position in family, and childhood environment. On the other hand, it was assumed that the respondents' cultural backgrounds would largely determine their religion and their political preference. For example, it was assumed that samples of Israelis, Egyptians and Indians would be predominantly Jewish, Moslem, or Hindu respectively. Their political position would

be polarized by the institutions of their respective national states. Hence it was expected that the sample groups would be significantly different with respect to politics and religion, thus increasing our confidence in the representativeness of our samples.

Each of these variables was run separately against the three groups in a cross-tabulation computer program, and the chi-square statistic was calculated in each case. In general, the hypothesis being tested in these cross-tabulations was that the variances on each of these variables would be the same within each national group. A brief discussion of the relationships found to exist is presented below.

Age

It was felt that age might be an interfering variable in any study of American and non-American judgments of competition and violence in American character, because of the conventional wisdom the world over that people tend to become more conservative with age. Furthermore, it was realized in advance that the average ages of American and foreign students at the same general level in their university studies would probably be different, for usually by the time some foreign student has managed to find the means to study in America two to three years will have passed since his baccalaureate degree was obtained.

If we examine our samples of Indian, North European, and American students in terms of 4-year age intervals the anticipated finding that the average age of foreign students would be somewhat older than that of Americans at a comparable level of university study was borne out. This may be seen in Table 4.

Table 4
Percentage Age Distribution by National Groups

	21 - 24	25 - 29	30 - 34	35 - 39
Indian	47.4	36.8	5.3	10.5
Northern European	21.4	50.0	28.6	0.0
American	56.1	38.6	5.3	0.0

When the three national groups - American, Northern European, and Indian - were tabulated against age intervals, a chi-square of 24.317 with 6 degrees of freedom was obtained. This was significant at the .001 level, thus negating our general hypothesis concerning an equal distribution of age groupings among the three national groups. As was expected, the foreign students tended to be older than their American counterparts. This was especially the case for the Northern Europeans. The modal category for this group was 25 - 29, as against 21 - 24 for the American and Indian samples. These latter two were quite similar in age distribution, with the Indians

tending to have more individuals in the older categories. Table 4 presents a percentage row distribution.

When we go beyond these expected differences to the further question as to whether the average age differences between the samples could affect the outcome of the study, however, it is necessary to inquire further as to the possible implications of age grouping for the perceptions of violence in America. For the perception of social reality, absolute age is not as important as age category or generation. Quite apart from the studies of generation by such sociologists as Karl Mannheim and S.N. Eisenstadt, it is noteworthy that in their conflicts with University authorities the student rebels have intuitively invoked a generation concept. With great frequency they have drawn the line between the generations at age 29, treating all persons over that age as "the enemy".

If we utilize this as a roughly accurate picture of the generation division the discrepancy between the samples does not appear to be nearly as great.

While the differences between the samples by generation is still considerable, it is noteworthy that the larger number of persons in all samples fall into the category of 29 and under.

It seems reasonable to claim then, that the respondents are at least from the same generation. Further, we note that it is the

Table 5

Percentage Generation Distribution by National Groups

National Group	Generational Differences	
	29 and under	30 and over
Indian	84.2	15.8
North European	71.4	28.6
American	94.7	5.3

foreign samples that contain the older generation members. It is felt that older, more experienced outsiders will be more inclined to follow the philosophy that "people are people" the world over. On the other hand, the younger Americans may be the most likely of all Americans to condemn their own system. In other words, it is suggested that the type of age difference that appears tends to bias the results, if at all, in the opposite direction to that hypothesized.

Socio-Economic Status

So many social scientists have urged, and so many studies have confirmed the fact that socio-economic differences between upper, middle, and lower classes have an important effect upon social perception that it was deemed essential to randomize the samples on this variable if it were not potentially to destroy our conclusions.

Efforts to gauge this variable usually include a consideration of indicators such as occupation, education, income, place of residence, and so on. With cross-cultural samples the difficulty of measuring status in society is considerably enhanced. Added to this is the fact that these respondents are all graduate students whose status at this time may often be in a state of flux. Further, to attempt to formulate an index of the social class of the respondents' parents, based on such indicators as those suggested above, would have been of questionable validity. Thus, income differentials across national lines, and varying status of occupations in different cultures, would be only two important factors tending to distort such an index. In view of this it was decided to make no attempt to develop an index. At the same time it was felt that some indication of how the respondents perceived their own social class was relevant. This of course was subject to errors of definition and judgment, but given the circumstances, it is defended as probably the most practical method of obtaining at least a general assessment of how the samples compare on this variable.

The results showed that there was no significant relationship between nationalities and social classes. Most respondents categorized themselves as either lower-middle or upper-middle. The distribution is shown in Table 6. The chi-square of 6.049 with 6 degrees of freedom was non-significant.

Table 6

Percentage Distribution of Social Class

	Working	Lower-Middle	Upper-Middle	Upper
Indian	5.3	42.1	52.6	0.0
Northern European	3.6	28.6	57.1	10.7
American	5.3	42.1	50.8	1.8

Ordinal Position in Family of Orientation

Social scientists have suggested that the family as a small group undergoes basic changes with the addition of each child. Such changes in turn affect the relationships among family members, and ultimately bring about changes in personality. Thus, Le Masters¹ showed that the arrival of the first child often constitutes a very real crisis for young newly-weds. It seems that the young parents are over-zealous in their efforts to learn their parental roles, and in the process subject their first-born to excessive amounts of attention. This child experiences considerable trauma when much of the attention is diverted from him by the arrival of a second infant. The first child finds that he must restructure the pattern of interaction to which he had been accustomed. His relationships are no longer as predictable as they formerly were, and this often leads to a considerable amount of alteration in personality.

¹E. E. LeMasters, "Parenthood as Crisis", Marriage and Family Living. 1957, 19, pp. 352-355.

Lasko² produced evidence that indicated that mothers were more coercive and restrictive, and less consistent, with their first-born than with their second child. Hence, due to the accident of birth, the first-born is subject to structural variables that are quite likely to create personality problems. Sears, Maccoby, and Levin³ found that the middle child was less likely to receive praise and more likely to be required to perform household chores.

It seems then that ordinal position exerts significant influence on the development of personality traits and attitudes. In view of this it would seem relevant in the present study to ascertain whether any national group contained an inordinate number of individuals belonging to a particular ordinal category in their parental family.

The chi-square on this variable amounted to 10.974 with 6 degrees of freedom, and was non-significant for $p < .05$. In other words, there was no significant relationship between national group and ordinal category. Hence it seems safe to assume that ordinal position of the respondents in their family of orientation will exert little influence on the comparative characteristics of the groups in our sample.

²Joan K. Lasko, "Parent behavior toward first and second children", Genetic Psychology Monograph. 1954, 49, pp. 97-137.

³R.R. Sears, Eleanor, Maccoby, H. Levin, Patterns of Childrearing. Row, Peterson. Evanston, Ill: 1957.

Living Area Growing Up

Barker⁴ has demonstrated how community size is instrumental in controlling the degree and quality of exposure to adults that children experience. From this he reasons that such variance in exposure experiences may lead to quite different conceptions of how to relate to older persons, and to the general environment.

In discussing some of the sociological correlates of personality development. Clausen and Williams emphasized the impact that residential setting can exert on the growing child.

It would be difficult to imagine a sharper contrast in environments for the developing child than that between an urban slum in the United States and the small French village that Wylie has described in his "Village in the Vaucluse". . . Here family, school, and other community agents reinforce a single image of the good, the inevitable course of development. At the age of four the child enters school and quickly learns the school routines which will comprise the most important part of his life for the next ten years. Confronted by the unbroken social pressure of parents, teachers, and friends, he learns that there are aspects of life that must be faced, definitions that must be memorized and accepted as they are.⁵

In view of this evidence, nationality was cross-tabulated against two indicators of 'living area growing up'. The first of these sought to determine the general type of environment (urban

⁴ Roger Barker and Herbert F. Wright, Midwest and its Children. Rev. Peterson and Co., Evanston, Ill: 1957.

⁵ John A. Clausen and Judith R. Williams, "Sociological Correlates of Child Behavior", N.S.S.E. Yearbook. LXII, Part 1, 1963. pp. 84-85.

or rural) in which the respondent spent the major part of his childhood and adolescence. The chi-square here was 2.893 with 6 degrees of freedom. Quite obviously, this was not significant.

The second indicator measured the size of the population in the respondent's childhood living area. This resulted in a chi-square of 10.836 with 10 degrees of freedom. Again the result was non-significant.

Religion

As was anticipated the chi-square here was large, 104.450 with 16 degrees of freedom, thus again rendering the relationship significant at the .001 level. Clearly, the group which contributed most to this high chi-square was the Indian, 84.2% of these nationals adhered to the Hindu religion, and all Hindus were Indians. Jews and Methodists were found only among the Americans, and together constituted 14% of the American group. In general the North European and American groups had comparable distributions on this variable.

In the present study, we are interested in looking at whether cultural origin is a factor contributing to the degree to which certain traits and attitudes are developed within individuals. Hinduism is an intricate part of the cultural origin of Indian graduate students at the University of Minnesota. Any random sample of such students

will be overwhelmingly Hindu. In view of this, the significant chi-square obtained was as we would have expected. Table 7 affords a detailed description of the percentage distributions.

Political Affiliation

As in the case of religion it was expected that there would be a significant difference among the national groups on political allegiance. This variable, along with religion and nationality, were seen as forming part of a cultural complex, and this complex has a powerful impact on the formulation of traits and attitudes in the individual.

Thus it is argued that a man's decision to adhere to socialism or conservative republicanism (for example) will be influenced in no small way by the political and social environment to which he has grown accustomed. For instance, it was expected that the Northern European sample would contain a disproportionate number of socialists, given the obvious fact that English politics exhibits much more socialism than does that of the United States.

Following this reasoning it was anticipated that a chi-square should be significant on this factor if our samples were truly representative. This was found to be the case. The chi-square was 25.818 with 10 degrees of freedom, and was significant at the .005 level. Table 8 details the percentage breakdown.

Table 7

Percentage Distribution of Religious Affiliation

	*RC	L	M	P	A	OP	J	H	O
Indian	5.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	84.2	10.5
Northern European	25.0	25.0	0.0	3.6	17.9	7.1	0.0	0.0	21.4
American	31.6	19.3	3.5	7.0	1.8	12.3	10.5	0.0	14.0

*RC - Roman Catholic; L - Lutheran; M - Methodist; P - Presbyterian;
A - Anglican; OP - Other Protestants; J - Jewish; H - Hindu; O - Other.

Table 8

Percentage Distribution of Political Affiliation

	Socialist	Liberal Democrat	Conservative Democrat	Liberal Republican	Conservative Republican
Indian	6.3	87.4	0.0	6.3	0.0
Northern European	25.0	46.5	3.6	14.2	10.7
American	3.5	43.9	14.0	19.3	19.3

Summary

The three national groups had been controlled in the sampling for sex, graduate major, and - in the case of the foreign students - for time in the United States. In this chapter the samples were analyzed for homogeneity on age, social class, ordinal position in family, and living area growing up. Further, despite a significant chi-square calculated on the particular age intervals employed, it has been shown that the respondents may be considered as broadly homogeneous with regard to generational grouping.

In addition, the samples were tested for heterogeneity on religion and political affiliation. As anticipated, the groups were heterogeneous on both variables. It has been argued that these variables are fundamentally implicated in the definition of cultural origin. To this extent, heterogeneity in these areas is not only

to be expected, but is in fact essential if we are to have representative samples from the different cultures.

It would seem reasonable to assume then that the samples are sufficiently similar to be comparable on the variables that concern us. On the basis of this assumption let us now turn to a comparison of the three groups on competition, aggression, perception of competition in America, and perception of aggression in America.

CHAPTER VI

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Observers of America have suggested that there is a relationship between the high level of competition, and the prevalence of aggression and violence in America. In view of this, and in view of the sharp increase in overt conflict in recent years, it seemed appropriate to test for such a relationship, as between Americans and a selected sample of non-Americans. To this end, the Pearsonian product moment correlation coefficient between competition and aggression was computed for the sample groups (of American, Indian, and North European) both combined and separately.

For the overall sample ($N=106$), an r of .508 was obtained. This was significant at the .01 level. In short, the relationship was validated. In the American group ($N=57$) the coefficient of correlation amounted to .259. This was significant at the .05 level. For both the North Europeans and the Indians the correlations obtained were highly significant, being at the .01 level. In the former group the r was .711, while for the Indians it was .728. On the basis of these simple bivariate correlations it appears that a relationship does indeed exist between the two variables under discussion.

Furthermore, it was reasoned that an individual's perception of competition in American society would be related to his perception

of aggression. This again was borne out very strongly in the correlations. Thus in the overall sample the r obtained between the two "perceptions" was .723. For the American group the corresponding correlation was .546, while the North Europeans and the Indians were .783 and .856 respectively. All of these values were highly significant, being above the .01 level.

The high correlations between these variables raises the question of lack of independence between the indicators on the different factors. In other words, were the items designed to measure perception of competition actually measuring the same factor as the items set up to measure perception of aggression. It was possible that both indices were tapping a common underlying dimension, or again, while two separate dimensions may actually exist, perhaps the sets of items were not sufficiently refined to make the distinction. To the extent that there was quite high correlation of some of the items of one index with those of the other, (see Appendix B) this latter possibility cannot be discarded. Factor analysis may have been employed to help provide answers to these questions. However, given the focus of the present study, it was decided not to pursue this question of dimensionality at this time. Rather, the decision was made to continue to make the distinction between the two perception variables.

To test the six hypotheses outlined in Chapter IV, the Student's t test for difference between means of groups was employed. In order to justify the use of this statistic in problems involving differences between means, two assumptions need to be made. In the first place the populations sampled should be normal, and secondly, their variances should be homogeneous. The normality assumption seems to be the less important of the two. Commenting on this requirement for the use of the t test, Hays suggests,

By and large, however, this assumption may be violated with impunity provided that sample size is not extremely small.¹

Our smallest sample size was the Indian. This group consisted of twenty respondents. In terms of the t test, a sample size of twenty would not be considered as "extremely small". Further we have employed two-tailed t tests. These are even less demanding in their normality requirement than the 1-way t .

The assumption of homogeneity is considered as more important. In this connection, Hays makes the point that:

For samples of equal size relatively big differences in the population variances seem to have relatively small consequences for the conclusions derived from a t test. On the other hand, when the variances are quite unequal the use of different sample sizes can have serious effects on the conclusions.²

¹ William L. Hays, Statistics for Psychologists, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966. p. 322.

² Ibid.

In view of the fact that we have unequal sample sizes, it was decided to compute an F score prior to testing a pair of groups for significant difference in mean scores. The F statistic essentially tests the null hypothesis that the ratio between the sample variances is equal to 1. If the F is found to be non-significant then we cannot reject the null hypothesis, and can reasonably assume that homogeneity of variance exists.

Hypothesis 1 Americans are more highly competitive than are the nationals of either India or Northern Europe.

This hypothesis, as stated, implies the existence of two sub-hypotheses. Thus we are suggesting that Americans are more highly competitive than are (a) Indian and (b) Northern Europeans. It was decided to run three t tests relating to this hypothesis. The first test compared the American sample with the entire non-American sample. The second pitted Americans against Indians, and the third involved Americans and north Europeans. Table 9 presents details of the contrasts, including the result of the F test for each group. All three of these F scores were non-significant (at $p < .05$) thus allowing us to assume homogeneity of variance.

For the first of the three comparisons a negative t resulted. This was in the opposite direction to that implied by hypothesis 1, thus suggesting that the Americans were less competitive than their non-American counterparts. It should be noted however, that

the t score obtained was not significant at $p < .10$. On the basis of these samples then, we cannot reject the null hypothesis that the means of the two groups are the same.

On investigating the comparison between Americans and Indians we again find a negative t . In this case, however, the result is highly significant being at the .005 level. In other words, the Indian graduate students were significantly more competitive than the corresponding group of Americans. This leads us to some speculation concerning the samples. From the outset it was believed possible that an inherent bias existed in the sample of foreign students. This bias revolved around the reasoning that students who were prepared to cross oceans for the specific purpose of bettering their life-chances, would probably be among the most competitive in their own societies. With respect to the Indians, the finding here

Table 9
Mean of American Group Compared With Mean of Other Groups on Competition

	Non-Americans	Indians	North Europeans
F test	1.380	1.251	1.015
t test	-1.414	-3.386*	.651

*

Significant at $p < .005$ with 74 degrees of freedom.

was most interesting as well as serendipitous. India is seen as a highly individualistic society, but competition is held in check to a great extent by the caste system operating there. When they arrive in America, the arena where men meet to compete broadens considerably. At least by law, all men are members of the one caste in America. To be a Brahman in India is to have a head start on the large majority of the population. But in terms of social prestige, to be a Brahman in America counts for nothing.

To progress in the American environment Indian individualism becomes highly functional. In addition, many of the Indian students are here on Fulbright scholarships. To win such an award the successful applicant would have had to emerge victorious from a sifting process involving thousands of competitors from his area. The inference is that those who survive have done so in highly competitive situations. They are among the very top competitors in their home country. It is these that we are comparing with what might be considered as a much more typical group from American society.

A similar, though perhaps somewhat weaker, case can be made for the North Europeans. England and West Germany do not have a system of castes. At the same time they apparently have more rigid class lines than those existing in the United States. These boundaries define the populations within which competition may occur.

As with the Indians it would seem highly probable that those who survive the demanding preliminaries are among the most ardent competitors in their societies. Given that the United States provides much more room for status by achievement as against status by ascription, the competitive instincts of these highly competitive individuals are again very functional in this country.

Even so, a random sample of American graduate students at Minnesota are as highly competitive as those students who are probably drawn from the most highly competitive groups in their own countries. The inference would seem to be that a high level of competition is more the norm in America than it is in northern Europe. Of course, this is speculation, and we are not justified in making the claim that this is the true state of affairs. Only a replication, with data actually gathered in the home countries of the students would allow us to argue with some confidence on this point.

Hypothesis 2 Americans are more prone to aggression than are the nationals of either India or northern Europe.

Once again, it was decided to compute three *t* scores in connection with this hypothesis. Table 10 contains those results. None of the *F* scores was significant at the .05 level.

The overall *t* test resulted in a positive score - the direction implied by the hypothesis - but this score was non-significant. However,

when the Indians alone were contrasted with the Americans a significant result in the predicted direction was obtained. For the northern Europeans there was a non-significant test result. India the country that nurtured Ghandi, the father of non-violent protest, has something of a tradition of non-aggression.

For the north Europeans there was no significant difference between their mean score and that of the American group.

In sum, hypothesis 2 was upheld in the case of the Indian students, but not for the north-Europeans.

Table 10

Mean of American Group Compared With Mean of Other Groups on Aggression

	Non-Americans	Indians	North Europeans
F test	1.176	1.201	1.232
t test	.660	*2.280	-.623

*Significant at $p < .05$ with 74 degrees of freedom

Hypothesis 3 Non-Americans perceive Americans as highly competitive.

From the format of the hypothesis, it was not appropriate to apply any tests of significance. The mean for the non-American group on this variable was between 4 and 5. Of course in the Likert type scale, a mean score is meaningful only when compared with other

means on the same variable. In other words, the point score 'per se' is meaningless. However, to the extent that we are aware of the fact that in our system a score of 4 is analogous to an 'Agree' check on an item, and a score of 5 is analogous to a 'Strongly Agree', we are able to obtain an indication of the direction of the group's sentiments. Both the Indians and the northern Europeans consistently returned scores in this range on this variable.

Hence, while no test of significance is applicable, there is evidence that this hypothesis is supported.

Hypothesis 4 Non-Americans perceive Americans as more highly competitive than Americans perceive themselves.

Here again three t tests were employed to examine the hypothesis. One of the three F tests used to measure homogeneity of variance in this instance was significant at the .01 level. This was in the comparison between the Indians and the Americans. In view of this, we need to be hesitant about having confidence in the results of the t obtained. Table 11 presents details of the tests on this variable.

Table 11

Mean of American Group Compared With Mean of Other Groups on Perception of Competition in America

	Non-American	Indian	North European
F test	1.315	**2.231	1.371
t test	** -2.809	* -1.991	* -2.440

*Significant at $p < .05$; **Significant at $p < .01$

In spite of the caution required as a result of the significant F mentioned above, the evidence clearly indicates that the hypothesis is upheld. Non-Americans tend to see more competition in American society than do Americans themselves.

Hypothesis 5 Non-Americans perceive Americans as highly aggressive.

Like hypothesis 3, this hypothesis was not set up to be subjected to a statistical test of significance. For the entire non-American group the mean score on perception of aggression in American society was between 3 and 4. This was also true for the separate Indian and north European samples. Under our coding system a score of '3' is equivalent to 'Disagree' and a score of '4' indicates 'Agree'. According to this rough measure, there would not seem to be sufficient evidence to claim that the hypothesis had been borne out.

At the same time we should consider the possibility that the indicators used to measure this variable may have been weighted somewhat harshly in a negative sense with respect to American society. If this were so then even those respondents who tended to perceive Americans as highly aggressive might be inclined to place checks towards the middle, rather than at the extremes, of the scale. It is only when we compare these scores with those obtained by another group on the same items that we can interpret them in a meaningful way. This brings us to the last hypothesis.

Hypothesis 6 Non-Americans perceive Americans as more aggressive than Americans perceive themselves.

All three F scores were non-significant on this variable.

Table 12 gives details of the three t tests.

All three t scores were in the hypothesized direction, and two of the three were significant at the .05 level. While the Indian sample did not exhibit a significant difference at conventional significance levels, it would seem that there is substantial evidence to support the hypothesis as stated.

Table 12

Mean of American Group Compared With Mean of Other Groups on Perception of Aggression in America

	Non-Americans	Indians	North Europeans
F test	1.391	1.015	1.386
t test	*-2.300	-1.221	*-2.275

*Significant at $p < .05$

Summary of Findings

This study set out to examine some aspects of competition and aggression in a restricted portion of the American population. Six hypotheses relating to these variables were tested, and three were borne out quite strongly. These three were hypotheses 3, 4 and 6. All three were concerned with the two 'perception' variables. From these data there was no evidence to verify the suggestion that American graduate students at Minnesota were more competitive

than their Indian or North European counterparts. It is, however, possible that the mechanisms which select individuals for foreign study favor the high competitors.

The results pertaining to aggression were varied. The Indian students were significantly less aggressive than either the Americans or the north-Europeans. At the same time, there was no significant difference on this variable between the latter two groups. Our basic thesis implied that cultural background is an influential factor in shaping an individual's personality traits. The results obtained for India would seem to jibe with this reasoning. Traditionally non-violent India producing non-aggressive individuals. The large majority of the north-European respondents spent the formative years of their childhood in the aftermath of a shocking war that had ravaged their homelands. Violence had been an inherent part of their daily existence. It is feasible then, that people who had been nurtured in such an atmosphere, would exhibit aggressive tendencies.

Furthermore, England and West Germany are highly industrialized relative to neighboring countries. To this extent they resemble the American model quite closely. Consequently, it is not surprising that the two samples were not significantly different on either competition or aggression.

The variables, competition and aggression, were measured with independent scales. The former was assembled in such a way as to gauge attitude towards the effectiveness of competition. The

aggression scale was basically a behaviorist model designed to tap individual aggressiveness. Perhaps it might have been more appropriate, given our thesis, to have formulated a scale designed in such a way as to measure aggressiveness in competitive situations. The early chapters presented abundant documentation of the belief that Americans are especially aggressive in situations involving economic and personal competition.

There seems to be little doubt that non-Americans perceive Americans as highly competitive. While from our data, there is some question about whether outsiders perceive America as highly aggressive, there is strong evidence to support the claim that outside observers perceive Americans as significantly more prone to resort to aggression than Americans perceive themselves.

As was indicated earlier, such perceptions would seem to be worthy of consideration by the citizens of this country. People react to others on the basis of how they perceive those others. In the past it has seemed that America has sought to win allies abroad by boosting the economy of less fortunate countries. Unfortunately, such gestures have often been neutralized by the bitterness created among the local inhabitants by fundamental changes wrought in their way of life. Endeavoring to force democracy, and such values as 'time is money', on too many people too quickly has very often led to hostility rather than friendship, and to disparagement rather than gratitude.

It is from this perspective that many observers view America. A people that have recently assassinated three of their most beloved leaders; as the "policeman" of the western world; as the only nation that has ever dropped a nuclear bomb; as a country that has one of the highest rates of violent crime in the world; the creator of the tradition of violence in movies and television. This forms a major part of the American image abroad. Our sample was drawn from the most enlightened section of their respective countries - all were university graduates. Yet even these perceived competition and violence as being very prevalent in American society.

Ironically, the situation seems to be that these foreign students who see Americans as crass competitors and prone to resort to aggression to achieve their ends, are themselves much like the 'typical' American they tend to disparage. The Indians are apparently even more competitive than their American counterparts, though seemingly less aggressive. The North Europeans are not significantly different from Americans either as competitors or as perpetrators of aggression.

"Ah, Mephistopheles!"³

3

Christopher Marlowe, "Tragical History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus", Norton Anthology of English Literature, edited by M.H. Abrams (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1962), p. 628.

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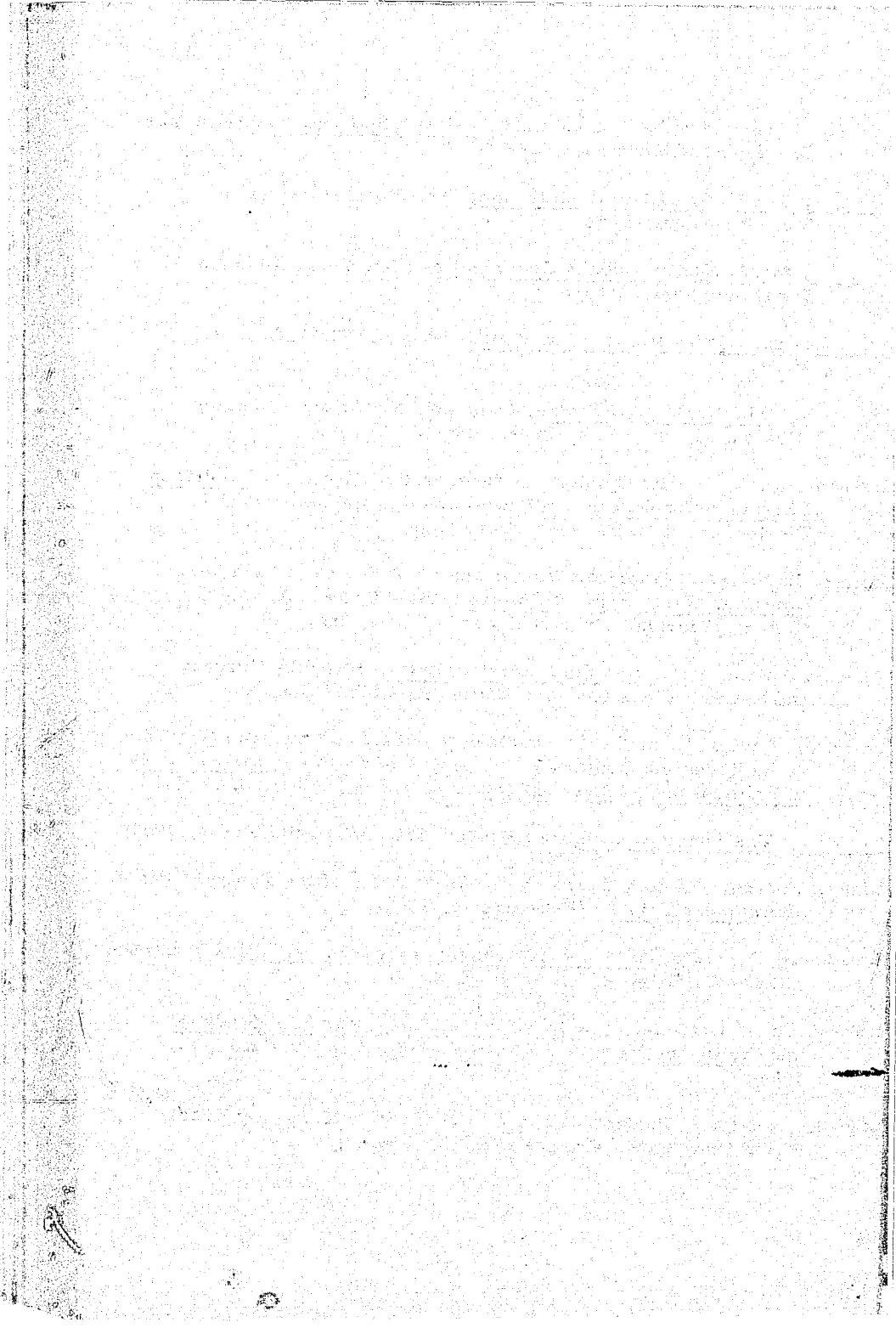
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APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

SOCIAL RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear Student:

The attached questionnaire is designed to gather data about various aspects of society. This data can contribute to our understanding of some important questions. We hope, therefore, that you will fill out the questionnaire with care.

All of the questions are answered simply by circling a number or some letters of the alphabet. Please be sure to answer every question.

You will note that there is no space for writing your name on the questionnaire - nor is there any code number listed. In other words, the replies are completely anonymous.

The success of the study depends on your completing the questionnaire to the best of your ability. We appreciate your help, and sincerely thank you for it.

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION
(Circle one number)

1. Nationality:
 1. American
 2. Chinese
 3. English
 4. German
 5. Indian (from India)
 6. Japanese
 7. Russian
 8. Scandinavian
2. My present age is:
 1. Twenty or under
 2. Over twenty but under twenty-five
 3. Twenty-five or over, but under thirty
 4. Thirty or over, but under thirty-five
 5. Thirty-five or over, but under forty
 6. Forty or over
3. What is your religious preference?
 1. Roman Catholic
 2. Lutheran
 3. Methodist
 4. Presbyterian
 5. Anglican
 6. Other Protestant:
Which denomination?

 7. Jewish
 8. Hindu
 9. Other: Please specify.

4. Which of the following areas is closest to describing your present major?
 1. Administration
 2. Agriculture
 3. Engineering
 4. History or philosophy
 5. Languages and literature
 6. Physical Sciences (e.g. Chemistry, physics, geology)
 7. Social Sciences (e.g. Anthropology, psychology, economics, sociology, political science)

5. If you were asked to use one of these five names to describe your social class, which one would you choose?
 1. The lower class
 2. The working class
 3. The lower middle class
 4. The upper middle class
 5. The upper class
6. Which of the following comes closest to your own political preference?
 1. Socialist
 2. Liberal Democrat
 3. Conservative Democrat
 4. Liberal Republican
 5. Conservative Republican
7. How many brothers do you have? _____
8. How many sisters do you have? _____
9. Are you:
 1. Only child
 2. Youngest child
 3. Middle child
 4. Oldest child
10. What kind of place did you live in, for the most part, during your childhood and adolescence?
 1. Farm (father was a farmer)
 2. Fringe - the open country but father was employed in non-farm work
 3. Suburb or small town near a city where father worked
 4. Within the city limits of a city, town or village
11. How large was the town or city you lived in most of the time when you were growing up?
(If you lived on a farm answer for the size of the place where you did most of your family shopping. If you lived in a suburb give the size of the city in which your father worked.)
 1. Village or small town - up to 2, 499
 2. 2, 500 to 24, 999 population
 3. 25, 000 to 49, 999
 4. 50, 000 to 99, 999
 5. 100, 000 to 499, 999
 6. 500, 000 and over

12. How long have you been in the United States?

1. All my life
2. Not all my life, but over fifteen years
3. Over ten years, but under fifteen
4. Over five years, but under ten
5. Over three years, but under five
6. Over two years, but under three
7. Over one year, but under two
8. Less than one year

II. ATTITUDES AND OPINIONS

For each of the following statements circle the appropriate initials according to whether you Very Strongly Agree (VSA), Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD), Very Strongly Disagree (VSD).

13. Americans are the most frightening people on the earth today.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

14. It makes my blood boil to have someone make fun of me.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

15. It is acceptable for a person to resort to physical violence if he has to, to defend his own rights.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

16. I would not let earning a living greatly warp my life.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

17. The ideal of bigger, faster, and more is very prevalent in American society.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

18. It is very difficult to think of a good reason for ever hitting anyone.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

19. Competition is the means through which most improvement in society is accomplished.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

20. Participation in intensive competition develops leadership.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

21. It is illogical to claim that the whole of American society must accept much of the responsibility for the recent wave of assassinations of top political and civil rights figures in this country.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

22. If somebody annoys me I am apt to tell him what I think of him.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

23. The American is no more prone to resort to aggressive behavior to obtain his individual rights than are most other nationalities.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

24. When I really lose my temper, I am capable of slapping someone.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

25. Intensive competition in team games while at school helps to train most individuals to face the problems of life.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

26. It is difficult not to be a little rude to people that one does not like.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

27. I work very hard at everything I undertake until I am satisfied with the results.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

28. Purely selfish motives are behind many of the financial grants given to other countries by the United States.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

29. Americans are probably the most highly competitive people in the world today.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

30. Americanism is nothing but a childish desire to "beat the world".

VSA SA A D SD VSD

31. If someone doesn't treat me right, I don't let it annoy me.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

32. The American is willing to sacrifice anything to profit.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

33. In America the tradition of self-help with violence appears to be well established.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

34. Being pitted against another as in a political or athletic race is enjoyable.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

35. I never get mad enough to throw things.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

36. I generally cover up my poor opinion of others.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

37. Other things assumed equal, it would be preferable to work for a definite salary than for a commission on work done.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

38. If somebody hits me first, I let him have it.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

39. An article for sale is worth what people will pay for it.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

40. It is part of the "American Way" to go out and do better than the other fellow even if you have to do he and his family injury in the process.

VSA SA A D SD VSD

Again, thank you for your help in filling out this questionnaire.

APPENDIX B

**INTER-ITEM CORRELATIONS FOR DEPENDENT
VARIABLES**

Inter-Item Correlations for Aggression Items Against the Four Scale Totals

Questionnaire Numbers	Competition	Aggression	Perception of Competition	Perception of Aggression
14	.022	.346**	-.079	-.163
15	.214*	.564**	.093	.100
18	.124	.550**	-.020	-.060
22	-.090	.180	-.168	-.117
24	.105	.538**	-.104	.048
26	.064	.257**	-.073	-.007
31	.043	.496**	.084	.163
35	.158	.468**	-.015	.083
36	-.087	.242*	.002	.013
38	.269**	.605**	.063	-.031

*Significant at $p < .05$

**Significant at $p < .01$

Inter-Item Correlations for Competition Items Against the Four Scale Totals.

Questionnaire Number	Competition	Aggression	Perceptions of Competition	Perceptions of Aggression
16	.114	-.032	-.059	.019
19	.448**	-.046	-.48	-.270**
20	.461**	-.056	-.005	-.090
25	.412**	.163	.089	-.040
27	.209*	.043	.066	-.068
34	.371**	.183	.121	.060
37	.307**	-.038	.036	.001
39	.340**	.089	-.125	-.246*

*Significant at $p < .05$

**Significant at $p < .01$

Inter-Item Correlations for Perception of Competition Items Against the Four Scale Totals.

Questionnaire Number	Competition	Aggression	Perception of Competition	Perception of Aggression
17	.023	.005	.408**	.134
28	.122	-.062	.527**	.405**
29	.140	-.048	.417**	.103
30	-.198*	-.112	.531**	.483**
32	-.013	-.193	.523**	.438**

*Significant at $p < .05$

**Significant at $p < .01$

Inter-Item Correlations for Perception of Aggression Items Against the Four Scale Totals.

Questionnaire Numbers	Competition	Aggression	Perception of Competition	Perception of Aggression
13	-.244*	-.095	.271**	.533**
21	-.055	-.088	.257**	.593**
23	-.032	.024	.306**	.527**
33	-.017	.041	.419**	.670**
40	-.097	-.096	.378**	.636**

*Significant at $p < .05$

**Significant at $p < .01$

END