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Comparative Social Traits of Various Races

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Comparative Social Traits of Various Races

1. *Statement of the Problem.* It is popularly believed that there are racial differences in social traits. This belief has been systematized in Keane's "Man, Past and Present" (1900); for this author gives a conspectus of "Mental Characteristics" for each of the main races; and social traits for some of the minor subdivisions, as those of Europe. Thus, (p. 532) the Kelt is "mercurial, passionate, vehement." The South Italians are "fickle and untrustworthy" (p. 442), etc. The popular views still lack a *quantitative* basis. Until social traits are determined by measurement they will be subject to endless discussion based on differences of "opinion." Such discussions gradually are replaced by universal acceptance when measurement replaces opinion. It was desired to secure the measurement of certain social traits in a number of representatives of different races.

2. *Historical.* While many comparative studies have been made of the intelligence of races, of which the compilation of the army psychological tests affords the most data, very few studies seem to have been made on social traits not closely tied up with intelligence in the strict sense. This is a matter which Porteus (1919, p. 29) has stressed, and he has given the correlation between social ratings made by teachers and intelligence determined by Binet and Porteus intelligence tests and the test of the form board. His social ratings consisted of teachers' ratings for "Scholastic ability," "Social relations and behavior" and "Temperament and disposition." The correlations were, for the most part not very high.

In a later research, Porteus (1920) has secured, from three teachers, judgments concerning 125 high grade defectives for the following traits:

1. Lacking planning capacity, poor executive ability.
2. Lacking initiative or volition, dependent on others for impulse and direction.
3. Irresolute, easily confused.
4. Nervous and excitable and emotional.
5. Silly or obtrusive; loud or forward.
6. Simple, suggestible.

7. Impulsive, imprudent.
8. Persistent moods, such as obstinacy, foolish elation, seclusiveness.
9. Bad temper, quarrelsome and resentful.
10. Impudent, disobedient, disrespecting authority.
11. Cunning, shy, deceitful.

No studies were made of racial differences in respect to these traits. Yerkes' (1921) report on the "Psychological Examining in the U. S. Army" compares the intelligence rating of men of different nationalities. For instance, while Canadians had an average mental age of 13.3 years, that of the Italians was 11.2 years.

3. *Method.* The system of ratings used in the U. S. Army as worked out by Dr. Walter Dill Scott and his associates of the Personnel Division of the General Staff and by Major Robert S. Yerkes and the Division of Psychology of the Medical Department, U. S. Army, seemed to offer a means of getting the desired rating of social traits. After consultation with Major Yerkes, Professor Thorndike and others, it was decided to use the graphic rating scale of the Scott Company, Philadelphia. The theory of this rating scale is merely to secure for each subject the average position (assigned by two or more persons) of a given trait along a horizontal line, one terminus of which is at grade 0, the other at grade 100.

The special form used for the ratings is reproduced herewith:

By permission of Principal Edward C. Zabriskie and with the cooperation of Miss Rosemary F. Mullen, chairman of the biology department, Washington Irving High School (for girls), New York City (Manhattan Borough) the desired ratings were obtained from 1 to 3 teachers of each of 51 pupils belonging to various races.

The selection of the pupils was made by me. I had already, some months in advance, received from several hundred girls in the Washington Irving High School, schedules which they had filled out under careful instruction, giving the place of birth (country and province) of each of their grandparents. Persons of the Jewish race in any country were

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TABLE I.

Graphic rating scale used in securing estimates of social traits

Race.....	Name.....	School.....	Date.....
I. <i>Leadership</i> ; capacity for planning joint work and putting it through.	Best in the class.	Good at this.	Only ordinary. Rather poor at organization. Never leads; follows.
II. <i>Pertinacity</i> ; doggedness. Sticking to matter in hand even against opposition.	Never gives up a plan.	Abandons plans reluctantly.	Intermediate. Abandons plans readily. Never sticks at anything.
III. <i>Humor</i> . Fondness of comical things and stories; finding fun in many situations.	Extremely humorous.	Normally fond of fun.	Intermediate. Rather serious and slow to respond to fun. Entire absence of humor.
IV. <i>Frankness</i> . Tendency to talk about thoughts and feelings; opposed to seclusion in personal affairs.	Exceedingly (even embarrassingly) frank and expressive of opinions.	Markedly frank in companionship.	Ordinary. Rather less frank than average. Seclusive about personal affairs and interests.
V. <i>Suspiciousness</i> . Liability to suspect the sincerity, reliability or friendliness of associates.	Very strongly marked.		Ordinary caution. Entirely absent; very credulous and confiding.
VI. <i>Sympathy</i> ; understanding of how another feels, and expression of this understanding.	Exceedingly sympathetic, even gushing.		Ordinary. Cold and unresponsive.
VII. <i>Loyalty</i> ; giving steady support to those in authority.	Stands up for and vigorously defends superiors.	Inclined to join with the loyal.	Neutral. Inclined to join with the disloyal. Opposed to superiors; seeks to weaken authority.
VIII. <i>Generosity</i> ; willingness to share possessions or things of value with others.	Exceedingly generous.	Reasonably generous; not markedly so.	Rather close. Exceedingly selfish.
IX. <i>Obtrusiveness</i> ; tendency to intrude into matters, or groups of persons, where not invited.	Obnoxious-ly obtrusive.	Interested in affairs of others.	Intermediate. Uninterested in affairs of others. Abnormally shy and retiring.
X. <i>Coolness</i> ; ability to keep one's head in embarrassing or alarming situations.	Knows best what to do in emergency.	Fairly cool in emergencies.	Intermediate. Rather easily rattled. Loses head completely in emergency.

requested to state that fact, in order to distinguish them from the Gentiles of that country. A list of 60 girls whose ancestry was uniformly of the same race (or as nearly so as the exigencies of getting a fair quota of each race permitted) was drawn up, the girls' names were written on the sheet, and all sent to Miss Mullen. The space, "Race" on the top line of the schedule, was not filled out before the sheets were sent to Miss Mullen, nor by the teachers; but was used only in the final work of tabulation. Of the names thus sent in, certain were those of girls who had left the school or of whom there was little recollection. There was, therefore, a little elimination, of 9 students, whose traits had left no impression on their teachers. This probably influenced the result slightly, if at all.

The tabulation was made by Miss Laura Craytor who assigned values to the points marked on the graphic scale, and calculated, twice independently, the averages.

Usually 5 chief categories of each trait are provided. They were not given equal value (e. g., 20% each) but, on the contrary, the extremes were made less inclusive than the middle class. The value scale eventually used was as follows:

100%	95%	70%	30%	5	0
97%	80%	50%	20%	3%	

This inequality in valuation of different sections of the scale seemed justified in view of the well known fact that the extreme classes are less commonly frequented than the medium classes. A person who is in the highest rank should not grade down to 80%; so the lower limit is placed at 95%. Similarly the poorest class should not include up to 20% of the whole range; the upper limit is made 5%. The medium group has a total range of 40 points; the submedium 25 points each and the extreme 5 points each. Since most teachers checked the middle point of any category, the value of this middle point is given on the scale. In tabulating, where estimates are made by two or three teachers, their results are averaged. In summarizing the results two methods are employed. In one case all individual estimates are averaged for the race;

in the other case, the average estimates about each student are averaged. In the discussion, the average of all estimates is emphasized, as it is believed that, with the small number of persons graded, this method will give the most trustworthy results. Russian and Austrian Jews are tabulated separately and also combined.

Thanks are due to Principal Zabriskie, to Miss Mullen and her assistant teachers, and to Miss Craytor for their cooperation in this work.

4. *Results.* Before giving the results it has to be stated, once for all, and with as much emphasis as necessary, that they are extremely tentative. They are given, and indeed this paper is written, more to illustrate a method and induce others to collect more data of the kind, than to draw final conclusions. Especially must it be kept in mind that since the numbers of persons measured are small, the probable errors of the means are large. However, even in the German and English averages a difference of 10 units, in the means, is probably significant. In Italians a difference of 7 units and in Jewish children of about 5. Of course, the means found are the most probable, but there is a practical certainty that the means obtained by measuring larger numbers of persons would lie within the limits mentioned. Especially must the conclusions from 3 judgments on the 10 traits in 2 Swedish girls be recognised as having only a "curious" interest and no scientific value at all. The data from the one Greek and one negro are given but not discussed.

Table 2 is a summary of the results. In one half of this Table (2 A) are given the averages of the individual estimates; in the other (2 B) the averages of the averages of individuals. In the following discussion, Table 2 A is used especially.

Conclusions. The following are the conclusions based on Table 2 A. Swedish, Greek and African girls are not considered in these conclusions, on account of small numbers involved. These "conclusions" are not to be taken very seriously. Further studies may well lead to a modification of them.

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In LEADERSHIP the German children stand first, quite markedly (62 points), the Italians are second and the English third (46). The Irish show up lowest in leadership (28), and the Jewish children are close to the English (45).

In PERTINACITY the German children stand highest (76), the Italians next (57) and the Jewish third (56). The Irish are lowest in this trait (49) and the English a little higher (52).

In HUMOR the German children stand first (50) and the Jewish second (56), although the Austrian Jews alone are higher than the German children (61). The Irish (43) and the Italians (49) stand at the bottom of the list, contrary to popular opinion. English stand in the table at 50.

In FRANKNESS the German children stand first (57) and the Jews are a close second (55). The Irish are least (42), the Italians next (49) and the English next above (50).

In SUSPICIOUSNESS the Irish stand highest (45) and the Jews next (43); but the Russian Jews are higher than either (46). The Italian

children stand least (37), and the English somewhat higher (41).

In SYMPATHY the Germans and Jews stand at 55. The Irish stand lowest in this respect (34) and the English (50) and the Italians (53) next.

In LOYALTY the German children stand highest, giving the highest grade for any trait, at 85, the Italians stand second (78) and the Jewish children third (75). The English stand lowest (59), while the Irish (73) stand much higher.

In GENEROSITY the German (78) and Jewish children (78) stand equally high while Italians come next at (74). The English children stand low (67) and the Irish second from the bottom (71).

In OBTRUSIVENESS the 21 Jewish children are at 61 (65 for the Russian Jews). The Italians come next (51) and Germans third (49). The two Irish children are least in this respect (38), and the English somewhat higher at 44.

In COOLNESS the Italians stand highest (63) and Germans next (61). The English are at

		<i>Avg. of Individual Estimates</i>									
I.	Leadership	49	28	62	46	34	43	47	45	65	5
II.	Pertinacity	57	49	76	52	51	50	61	56	89	50
III.	Humor	49	43	59	50	50	50	61	56	78	50
IV.	Frankness	49	42	57	50	66	56	54	55	80	50
V.	Suspiciousness ..	37	45	41	41	35	46	39	43	28	50
VI.	Sympathy	53	34	55	50	66	54	55	55	50	50
VII.	Loyalty	78	73	85	59	70	73	76	75	80	80
VIII.	Generosity	74	71	78	67	43	77	79	78	89	80
IX.	Obtrusiveness	51	38	49	44	23	65	57	61	40	50
X.	Coolness	63	58	61	50	66	46	59	53	89	45

		10	6	5	5	21	11	10	21	1	1
		Italians	Irish	Germans	English	Swedish	Russians	Austrians	Jewish	Greek	African

		<i>Average of Averages</i>									
I.	Leadership	46	30	59	47	39	45	47	46	65	5
II.	Pertinacity	54	46	70	52	63	52	60	56	89	50
III.	Humor	49	47	61	50	58	55	60	58	78	50
IV.	Frankness	50	44	56	50	74	55	52	54	80	50
V.	Suspiciousness ...	36	46	42	42	39	46	41	44	28	50
VI.	Sympathy	52	35	55	50	74	54	52	53	50	50
VII.	Loyalty	77	71	85	65	73	73	75	74	80	80
VIII.	Generosity	72	70	78	68	53	78	78	78	89	80
IX.	Obtrusiveness	51	38	49	46	23	63	57	60	40	50
X.	Coolness	61	57	62	50	74	46	60	52	89	45

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the bottom (50), the Jews next (53) (though Russian Jews stand at 46) and the Irish third from the bottom (58).

The 5 *Germans* in the collection stand first in Leadership, Pertinacity, Humor, Loyalty and Generosity or half of the traits, and all good traits! They are second in Frankness and Sympathy and third in Suspiciousness, Obtrusiveness and Coolness.

The 5 *English* are third in Leadership and Humor, fourth in Pertinacity, Frankness, Suspiciousness and Obtrusiveness. They are lowest in Loyalty and Coolness and next to the bottom in Sympathy and Generosity.

The 6 *Irish* are first in Suspiciousness and last in Leadership, Pertinacity, Frankness, Sympathy. They are next to the last in Humor and Obtrusiveness and fourth in Loyalty, Generosity and Coolness.

The 10 *Italians* stand second in Leadership, Pertinacity, Loyalty, Obtrusiveness and Coolness; third in Generosity. They are next to the last in Frankness and Suspiciousness and fourth in Humor and Sympathy.

The 21 *Jewish* children stand first in Generosity and Obtrusiveness; second in Humor and Suspiciousness and third in Pertinacity,

Frankness, Sympathy and Loyalty. They stand next to the last in Coolness and in fourth rank for Leadership.

Between the 11 Russian and 10 Austrian Jews there are some marked differences. Thus, the Russian Jews stand higher than the Austrians in Suspiciousness and Obtrusiveness. The Austrian Jews stand higher than the Russians in Pertinacity, Humor and Coolness.

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