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ON THE STUDY OF NATIONAL CHARACTER

By DAVID G. MANDELBAUM

LIKE other human institutions, scientific meetings serve a variety of functions and the ostensible reason for their existence is not always nor for everyone the prime purpose for attending. But it cannot be gainsaid that ideas may be exchanged, modified, developed at such occasions, especially at so notable an occasion for anthropologists as the International Symposium of 1952 arranged under the auspices of the Wenner-Gren Foundation.

This paper is one example of such interchange of ideas. It was the author's assignment to comment at one of the Symposium sessions on the inventory paper written by Dr. Margaret Mead on the subject of national character studies. Much of Mead's survey was found straightway to be useful, stimulating and unexceptionable. But on three points of practical and theoretical moment, I took exception. They had to do with the relation of national character studies to applied anthropology, to psychological theory and to sampling techniques and theory.

These three matters were discussed by Mead and myself briefly before the relevant session of the Symposium and again at the session. Since they seemed of some importance, I drafted an amplification of my comments at the Symposium and sent it to Mead. Our discussion and correspondence, together with Mead's revision of the wording of several statements in her original paper (1953), clarified my understanding of these statements. This clarification on the subjects of applied anthropology and psychological theory made unnecessary some parts of my previous comment, although other parts are included here to present certain emphases which I believe are necessary. On the subject of sampling, divergence of opinion apparently still exists and my original observations stand much as first given. Since these three subjects are dealt with in various parts of the inventory paper, interspersed among others, it is well for purposes of clarity to sketch first those aspects of national character studies on which there is agreement and then discuss the three topics on which there has been something less than agreement.

I

The people studied in national character analyses are socially demarcated as members of a political grouping, a state or nation. They are thus subject to at least some common institutional influence which justifies the common cultural implications of the term "nation," and by any test, a modern state is a real, a viable, social unit, not to say a crucial one at times. People do act as members of a particular nation, not necessarily in the whole round of their lives, not always consistently, but frequently and consistently enough to make

the society and culture of the nation or state a worthy object of anthropological study.

The study of national *culture*, as Mead cogently notes (p. 651), should precede any analysis of national *character*. That is, the formal institutions as well as the informal regularities of behavior which characterize the nation must be described, particularly as they are manifest in the small groups which are the particular subjects of the anthropologist's scrutiny. Technology, economics, social organization, art, religion, language—all the usually noted aspects of a culture should be described with sufficient economy and precision so that the culture scene within which the character factors operate may be known.

Once the culture is described then we may focus on the processes which are and have been involved in the ongoing life of the people, processes among which those of culture-and-personality are one set. These culture-personality processes operate within the limitations fixed by certain other sets of forces: the analysis of culture-personality adds another dimension of scientific refinement to our still quite rough-hewn analyses of culture change and stability.

These sets of forces are phased, in that one set provides the necessary conditions for the functioning of the others. Hallowell's inventory paper explores some of these necessary preconditions, as when he writes "One of the necessary conditions of psychological structuralization is association of the human individual with others of his species" (1953: 601). The classes of factors also interact as when cultural forces affect the social, ecological, and biological spheres.

National character studies attempt to map regularities of psychological process, as of emotion, motivation, and learning, which are characteristic of specified groupings of men and women. Thus Mead's paper defines these studies (p. 646) as ". . . the attempt to delineate the regularities in character among the members of a national group attributable to the factors of shared nationality and the accompanying institutional correlates. . . ." The paper rightly emphasizes that national character studies are one kind of culture-personality studies and are distinguished by the fact that the group observed is defined by shared institutions which are in the first instance, though not exclusively, political. It might be added that such national units are grouping with which the study begins and are not necessarily the sole concern or province of such studies.

For it may well turn out that a politically sovereign people do not make up a comparably sovereign and independent unit within a classification of types of character structure. In the American Indian field, Hallowell (p. 607) questions the congruence between the familiar culture areas and new classifications made on the basis of personality phenomena. This opens an interesting area for investigation without invalidating the usefulness of the traditional culture area concept or the possibility of culture-personality classifications. Similarly in-

teresting questions concern the relations between national groupings and culture-personality classifications.

Comparison between social or cultural change and change in character regularities may be also made. Mead postulates (p. 645) that when marked changes occur throughout a social system, "... an alteration in 'cultural character' may be expected to occur as an intra-psychic correlate of what is usually called 'social change'." This seems a reasonable first statement, its usefulness must depend on how it is further developed. An important part of such further development is the securing of data in historic depth on individuals. Mead refers (p. 643) to this historical facet of culture-personality studies when she notes that such studies are distinguished by providing "clusters of information on single individuals." From another point of view Hallowell also stresses the importance of considering personality historically when he notes that the culture as described by the ethnographer "... is not what is directly presented to and learned by the individual at any point in this [socialization] process." (p. 610)

Culture-personality analyses, whether done by use of personality history or any other method, whether derived from observations of nationals or primitives, are additional aids toward our prime purpose. That purpose is to explain and predict the ways of men. More amply stated, it is to formulate the forces and processes which have brought about past developments and to assess the probabilities of ongoing development in the behavior of groups of men and women (cf. pp. 659-660 of Mead's paper).

The explanatory, "historical," function has long been part of our characteristic posture as enquirers into man's culture. The predictive, "scientific," function is its counterpart. Both are needed, several of the Symposium papers point out that each can reinforce the effectiveness of the other. Culture-personality research can enhance both functions if only by providing a means of examining some of our assumptions. Ethnological interpretation, as Mead's paper indicates (p. 643), and as Darryll Forde has well stated in the Symposium discussions, very frequently is founded upon "apparently reasonable" assumptions. The validity of some of these assumptions may be assessed by the culture-personality approach. It must be noted in this connection that anthropologists have frequently punctured assumptions about human nature which have been made in other disciplines. While this deflating role still has a place, our discipline can hardly thrive on such negative accomplishments, especially since many of our own major psychological, cultural, and societal assumptions remain only "apparently reasonable."

Although recent years have seen notable advances in culture-personality work and in the part thereof called national character studies, the latter particularly are still in the first fledgling and perhaps fumbling stages. The growing pains of these stages are well worth enduring because, as Hallowell's quotation

from Rousseau in the Symposium discussions reminded us, "The really distinguishing features of nations have escaped us."

The examination of these distinguishing features of nations by anthropologists has great disadvantages as well as advantages. Most frequently mentioned among the difficulties in the way of valid results are the size and complexity of the groups studied. From a tight little South Pacific island, the ethnologist may shift his sights to, say, the island subjects of Her Britannic Majesty. The shift is not only from a relatively few individuals, many of whom can be known as individuals, to an enormous mass, varied by region and class, envisageable only in statistical terms, but also from a situation in which major external pressures seem relatively few and comprehensible to one in which a decision in Moscow, a crop failure in Malaya, a technical development at Los Alamos, may significantly affect the life ways of the island respondents. These are real but not insuperable difficulties.

Another kind of difficulty lies in the fact that national character studies attempt to define provincial organizations of personality characteristics against a background of what Hallowell calls "the generic attributes of human personality" (p. 612). But these generic attributes are far from being precisely established and indeed, can be well understood only after reduction from provincial organizations. Yet what is provincial must be understood in relation to what is generic. Here the procedure can best be by a series of approximations for both, progressively and reciprocally corrected as the analyses go on. The problem of the comparative range of national cultures against which a particular national culture is to be placed, discussed by Mead (p. 657), involves similar approximations.

Other difficulties have less to do with problems intrinsic to the research than with the social context of the researchers. Since national character studies may deal with matters of great interest to a large literate society and issues which may be under hot dispute, the anthropologist engaged in these studies may expect a less ready acceptance of his good faith (as noted on p. 658 of the Mead paper) than is accorded to him when he publishes on some small remote people involved in pursuits of concern only to themselves and to the ethnologist. It should be noted that there has also been some failure of communication concerning these studies within the discipline and some consequent reluctance to view these studies on their merits. In this the pioneers in the field—to whom credit is due for their enterprise and originality—are not entirely blameless since they have sometimes presented their working hypotheses so as to give the impression that these were verified formulae. Of other difficulties in the field, such as the accusation of racism mentioned on page 656 of Mead's paper, none be hindrances of a major order.

The advantages for anthropology in working with national cultures and literate peoples are major. Documentary historical materials are available to

provide the time perspective necessary for generalizations concerning cultural processes. Those generalizations now used can thus be sharpened and the breadth of their scope tested with data from peoples and cultures which have played leading roles in human history but heretofore have had relatively small bits devoted to them in the literature of anthropology. Potentially rich resources, such as the folklore files discussed in Stith Thompson's contribution to the volume of inventory papers, may be tapped for answers to questions which have not yet been systematically put to such materials.

If national peoples are subject to the complex influence of great economic, political, religious, and social forces which must be taken into account by the anthropologists, there is the compensatory advantage that cogent analyses may be available which the anthropologist can use for his studies. Moreover, able analysts whose special abilities can be enlisted in cooperative research may also be available. Mead has discussed the advantages of teamwork (pp. 653, 657) and we need only quote and endorse her statement that a national character study "provides a particularly congenial atmosphere for interdisciplinary cross-stimulation and teamwork."

II

Among the less endorsable statements is the second sentence of the paper that "They [national character studies] take their form and methods from the exigencies of the post-1939 world political situation." This seems a bit sweeping in view of the enumeration, given later in the paper, of methods, most of which were developed and in use considerably before 1939. But other passages indicate that what is meant is that national character studies have been stimulated by the world political situation, that some of them have utilized funds which were forthcoming because of international tensions, and that some of the national character studies so far conducted have had to be done "at a distance" because of political barriers to field work. To such statements in the paper, there should be added an emphasis which, in my opinion, is not given in sufficient degree in Mead's discussion.

It is that these features of the brief initial history of such studies, should not be taken to imply that national character studies must inevitably be tied to current political exigencies. It is not inevitably so and it should not be so lest this field of research become long blighted for anthropologists. Any field of research which is completely and inextricably linked with a particular set of political tensions cannot but suffer as an area of scientific or scholarly research.

Further, one passage of the paper seems to say that national groupings are not apt units for anthropological research and are taken as the basic social entities for national character studies only because nations happen to be ter-

ribly important in contemporary world affairs. At least such is my best interpretation of the explanatory sentence which follows the assertion (p. 660) that the study of national character has been, in its references to contemporary political units, primarily an applied science. "We have studied national character not as the best setting within which to trace the correspondences between political forms and individual character formation—for very possibly a much smaller unit, such as the New England town or the Swiss Canton would be a far better locus for pure research—but because in today's world nation-states are of paramount political significance, and a great many activities of individuals and groups, both in domestic and international settings, are conducted in terms of national values."

This assuredly should not be taken to mean that nations are not fit entities for "pure" research because they are currently of such high importance in the lives of men, and that conversely anthropological research on nations can only be applied research. Moreover, the political forms of either the New England town or the Swiss Canton are obviously part of the larger state system and are manifestations of national institutions. Neither town ordinances or decrees of the Canton council are dissociated in fact or in theory from the political institutions of the state. It is precisely because individuals are affected and in some ways may be deeply affected by common national institutions that the nation is a valid social grouping with which to pursue culture-personality research as well as ethnographic studies of national cultures.

Similarly, the reader finds it difficult to discern the purport of one of the summarizing statements (p. 662) in which it is noted that the status of the subject can best be dramatized "by saying that if a world organization were to be formed in which the constituent units were not the present nation-states, but larger regional or smaller sub-national units, the interest in 'national character' would shift. . . ." Of course. But is not the task to observe, analyze and generalize from such change if it should come about? And would not the national units and national institutions have to be major elements of the observation, analysis and generalization? In this hypothetical case or in the actual reality of the present and past of many peoples, the national grouping is to be studied as an important societal unit and not only because of the pressure of cold or hot wars.

While it is true that national character studies have been largely stimulated by or have received research funds because of political exigencies and that some have unfortunately had to be done at a distance, the impression should not be given that policy makers or administrators have eagerly turned to anthropologists for answers to obdurate political problems. It is rather that anthropologists already in government employ but without particularly vital functions were allowed to pursue studies they suggested, or that some anthropologists

put in successful bids for governmental funds assigned for research. Nor have anthropologists turned up with ready answers for all administrative and policy problems to which they turned their attention.

It must be strongly stated that applied anthropology can be of great importance for certain governmental problems, even in the present state of development of the discipline generally and of its applied aspects. The Symposium papers on these aspects well demonstrate that there are certain gross errors in the understanding of peoples which administrators have perpetrated to the detriment of their own laudable goals. Here the applied anthropologist can save governmental action from a wrong turning—one which is wrong by anyone's lights. But for many practical problems all we have to offer is the promise of a new and possibly useful approach. This despite the recent inclination of a few, usually naive and inexperienced, administrators to expect the anthropologist to turn up early some enchanted morning laden with all the answers. It is worth noting that Ruth Benedict's *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* has had considerable influence, but as a book by an anthropologist and not a classified memorandum by a civil servant.

In sum, if national character studies are to be carried on mainly because of non-scientific, political, and shifting motivations, then this field of inquiry cannot but suffer in valid results, in scholarly acceptance, and in scientific direction. Fortunately, this is not and need not be the case. These studies can be carried on as enterprises of "pure" science, although they certainly may have applied facets as well. But any exclusive tethering of national character studies to political exigencies gives both too narrow and too invidious a view of this promising field.

III

The relation of national character studies, and of culture-personality research generally, to psychological theory is another broad topic which bears clarification. It may not be amiss to stress here that psychologists have not yet provided us with a solid, consistent, tested, applicable array of axioms and principles among which we need only make an apposite selection to ply our trade.

The paper tells us—the italicizing is the author's—that "it is the *presence* of psychological theory . . . that differentiates the culture-personality approach" (p. 643). Five kinds of psychological theory are given as examples of what "a culture-and-personality approach may use as one part of its conceptual approach," associationalism, Hullian learning theory, Gestalt perceptual theory, Freudian constructs of character formation, and "the eclectic constructs of social psychology."

Not only do these formulations have little in common, but as the first three have been developed, their findings come out of investigation of a very limited group of phenomena and so have limited applicability to holistic cul-

ture-personality studies. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that there are some formulations by psychologists, such as those by Watson, which are not useful even within their limited scope and others, say those by Freud, which need modification and adaptation before taking for culture-personality purposes, as Mead herself has effectively pointed out in various of her works.

There are a good many psychological formulations of various kinds which do offer useful guides for culture-personality research—guides which the worker in this field must know—but such psychological contributions are not often in the form of propositions readily transferable to national character analyses. Hallowell's paper refers (p. 609) to this condition of psychological theory. "The psychological substratum of culture has been partially obscured until recently because, in addition to the lack of any effective theories of personality structure, development, and functioning, theories of learning adequate for handling this complicated process at the human level were not sufficiently developed. To some extent this is still true."

The extent to which this is true may be gauged by the fact that most personality psychologists are far from satisfied with the classifications of personality types or with the plotting of personality structure which have so far been presented. Hence when Dr. Mead's paper says (p. 651) that "National character studies attempt to trace the way in which the identified cultural behavior is represented in the intra-psychic structure of the individual members of the culture, combining cultural theory and psychological theory . . . into a new psycho-cultural theory . . .", it is well to remember that psychologists are not at all sure about the nature of intra-psychic structure.

All in all, these comments on quotations concerning psychological theory should not be interpreted as vitiating the very telling points made, both of a positive nature and in rebuttal of past criticism. The present comments should indicate how a certain exuberance of expression in this and similar papers could have led to some of the criticisms which have been made. More modest and careful phrasing could help avert the impression which some critics have entertained, that in such papers more was being claimed than could be defended, more was being promised than could be delivered.

It is a reasonable outlook that much can and will be delivered as national character research goes on. Workers in this field must have a sufficient acquaintance with what the psychologists have to offer to be able to appropriate suitable ideas and techniques for their own work. For culture-personality research deals, in part, with the same kinds of phenomena, and asks questions of a broadly similar sort as does a good part of psychological research. But as Mead points out, the culture-personality student may find it necessary, for lack of suitable contributions from psychology, to construct theoretical formulations of his own to deal with phenomena which have heretofore been within the psychologist's speciality.

IV

The problem of sampling becomes of special concern in national character studies because of the size and complexities of the grouping which is analyzed. Generalizations concerning nations must be made, even by a large team, on the basis of a relatively few observations. And the question arises as to whether these generalizations apply to the whole society or only to the few communities which have been studied, whether they hold true for many individuals in the nation or just for the handful who have happened to come to the analysts' notice, if they apply in various circumstances and junctures of the nation's history or only to the particular situation of the period of study, and indeed whether they really are useful in understanding even the subjects which the analysts have particularly worked with or are only tidy constructs of partial relevance, attractive to the constructors mainly because of the aesthetic appeal of their apparent tidiness.

The first attempts by anthropologists at national character studies have been particularly censured on the score of sampling and Mead's paper presents both rebuttal and affirmation on this subject in a number of places. Thus the author characterizes "anthropological sampling" (pp. 654-5) in these words—the emphasis is in the original. "*It is simply a different kind of sampling*, in which the validity of the sample depends not so much upon the number of cases but upon the proper specification of the informant so that he or she can be accurately placed, in terms of a very large number of variables—age, sex, order of birth, . . . political and religious position, exact situational relationship to the investigator, configurational relationship to every other informant, and so forth."

It may possibly be a fruitful procedure to measure an individual against such a scale of specifications, but the fact is that the specifications are used only because they have been assessed by some sampling method, crude and unwitting thought it might have been, and have been found by such sampling procedure to be relevant to the society and so to the individual under examination. Age, sex, birth order are part of the specifications for the human animal to be sure, but if these specifications are to provide data useful for national character studies, they must somewhere be used to appraise what are the usual, or typical, or inevitable, or inappropriate social expectations for an individual of a given age, sex, and birth order. Denoting the incidence of such expectations must involve some statistical summaries and some implications of size and nature of sample, rough and ready though they may be. And this is all the more true of specifications which are not biologically given, such as "political and religious position."

The crux of the argument comes in the next paragraph (p. 655) in which it is said that "The sociologist or social psychologist . . . is interested in *how much* of measurable quantities of an entity called 'resistance to parental authority'

can be found to be distributed in the total population. But the anthropologist is interested in the *pattern* of resistances and respect . . . ”

These are not two independent operations, but rather the first and second phases of a single research operation—if the research is to result in scientifically valid results. Observations of new phenomena or on new problems are carried on according to regular procedures and ideas of relationships which the observer uses as a result of his scientific training and experience. When in this procedure he sees and formulates a new kind of relationship in the phenomena, he has stated a new pattern of these phenomena. But if he is to be sure that it is a valid pattern, he must test to find out whether it really does occur throughout a range of phenomena and if it is seen to recur under various kinds of observation. Unless the range and incidence of occurrence is ascertained, the perception and formulation of pattern is left as a potentially useful notion rather than as a verified and documented datum.

“Pattern” was variously defined in the course of the Symposium discussions. Kluckhohn defined the term as a constancy in dimension or content and in the word “constancy” both the first and second phases may be implied. Both were explicitly given in Chapple’s definition of pattern—a relationship of functional dependence which is verifiable through observation. The anthropologist who halts at the first phase of the operation and presents a picture whose validity he does not attempt to assess, is just as short of the mark as is the social psychologist who is content to take any unexamined postulate concerning relationship so long as it provides an excuse for measurements.

So that when Mead writes (p. 657) that “. . . the study of national culture does not involve documentary obligations of a historical, large statistical or survey nature; the task is to delineate pattern” the statement is debatable.¹ The *first* task—after examining the group behavior with the established means of the discipline—is to delineate pattern. The next and equally essential task is to use whatever historical, survey, or statistical documentations may be available to ascertain the degree of validity of the pattern so formulated.

Now ethnologists have not been as innocent of pattern verification as might be inferred from some of the statements in the paper. As a matter of fact we have long used a crude but, for its purpose, effective method of sampling and of verification, a method which is implicitly referred to in Mead’s paper.

The clue to this is given in the comparison (p. 655) between patterns in language and in “the rest of culture.” “In dealing with culture, the anthropologist makes the same assumptions about the rest of culture that the linguist makes about the language—that he is dealing with a system which can be delineated by analysis of a small number of very highly specified samples.” Such assumptions are justified only in a certain limited sense. Since language is restricted in production to the voice organs, since the function of communi-

cation is overriding among the functions of language, the patterns of language are more compulsive—to use Sapir's term—than generally are the patterns in other aspects of human behavior. Patterns of language tend to be produced and used with more nearly universal regularity within the society than is true for the patterns of economics, art or other aspects. Hence the analogy to linguistics applies only to those cultural patterns which are relatively compulsive or imperative responses to given stimuli. Such there are and they are undoubtedly important, but describing them does not by any means discharge all of the anthropologists' responsibility.

For in language as elsewhere in culture, the depiction of such compulsive patterns alone may provide some insight into the system of behavior at a given moment of time, but without attention to variation and scatter in the enactment of other patterns, the description of the language can only be a static one, giving little or no inkling as to direction of or potentialities for change. It is for this reason that S. F. Nadel so strongly stressed (in his remarks at the Symposium sessions) the importance of giving attention to variability in pattern observance. It has been an ethnographic tradition to focus on these compulsive patterns, whether in the term for mother's brother or in the arrangement of an altar, and to tend to slight or ignore alternatives and variations of either kinship or altars. This very fact, noticed and deplored by Sapir and others, was one of the factors in the development of the culture-personality interest. Hence advocacy of exclusive interest in compulsive pattern seems to be a regression, albeit in an expanded field of interest, to a method previously discarded as inadequate when used alone.

In ethnographic work there is a certain justification for determining the compulsive patterns early in the analysis. But the scientific rationale may have been secondary to the notion that primitives are simple in their society and culture and that therefore simple, uncomplicated, statements about their ways would do. True it is that Todas are fewer in numbers, have fewer sub-groupings and institutions than do Italians. But there is and has been a good deal of variation in Toda culture, there are many more choices and alternatives open to the Toda individual, than have yet been more than adumbrated in the literature. The notion, it may not be too unfair to call it the myth, of the simple primitive, like the myth of the noble savage, may not be a helpful one for us to perpetuate in its historic form.

If Mead's discussion of pattern and sample is understood to refer to those patterns which vary relatively little within a culture and society, then some of the more elusive statements in the paper may become clearer. Thus one of the assumptions of national character studies is given (p. 648) in these words. "Any member of a group, provided that his position within the group is properly specified, is a perfect sample of the groupwide pattern on which he is acting as an informant." A statistician might find it hard to believe that any member

could be a perfect sample unless $n=1$, but the point seems to be that any member of the group will exhibit certain regularities of behavior which are common in high degree among the other members of the society. For these patterns then, he may be said to be a perfect sample.

The proviso that "his position within the group must be properly specified" perhaps means a specification of the others for whom the pattern is compulsive. The sentence next following amplifies this proviso. It says that (the italicizing is in the original) a fresh Harvard graduate of Chinese-American parentage "is equally as perfect a sample of American national character as is a tenth-generation Boston-born deaf mute of United Kingdom stock, *provided their individual position and individual characteristics are taken fully into account.*" The best interpretation of this statement seems to be that the two are alike provided all their differences are subtracted. Perhaps so, but the pertinent question in regard to sampling is how the differences are known unless some kind of sampling is undergone.

A similar note is struck in the next of the listed assumptions (p. 648) ". . . the anthropologist samples in terms of the structure of the group he is studying . . ." Structure here also seems to mean indication of those who together manifest certain patterns of little variance. Presumably this lack of variance is judged both by the view of the participants and that of the observers.

Ethnologists have customarily taken both views into account. Impressions from observations and questions couched to elicit information on imperative patterns soon give clues as to the respects in which all are very much alike. As Ruth Benedict noted of her method in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (p. 16) "In such a study one quickly reaches the point where the testimony of great numbers of additional informants provides no further validation. Who bows to whom and when, for instance needs no statistical study of all Japan; the approved and customary circumstances can be repeated by almost any one and after a few confirmations it is not necessary to get the same information from a million Japanese."

Variation is not a principal interest in this book. Some reviewers of Benedict's work have noted that ideal patterns—verbal statements of proper behavior—tend in it to be in the foreground of the presentation, especially if they are elicited with high regularity, and not much is said about the variance between the ideal statements and actual behavior.

This is a simple but fundamental kind of sampling in which all instances that do not fit quite completely into the construct are ignored, or if the number of such instances becomes too large for the analyst to tolerate, the construct is abandoned and a new one tried. Mead recommends this familiar procedure in the study of culture for studies of culture-personality. The test of close congruence is noted (p. 659) in connection with testing for "intra-cultural and intra-psychic fit." "Every piece of cultural behavior is so over-determined in its

systematic relationship to every other piece that any discrepancy within the material should immediately demand a revision of the delineation hypothesis established so far." In other words, if *any* discrepancy is found with the formulation of pattern, the formulation must be revised. The net result of such a process will then be a presentation of only the kind of patterns which have been labelled in other writings as compulsive or imperative.

While such presentation has utility, although it does not by itself contribute much to the central problem of change, the paper is not consistent in its major emphasis on compulsive pattern in the study of national character. For example, we find that (p. 649) "Statements applying to a whole nation cannot be made until the pattern of differentiation is known, even though the detail may not be." Perhaps this means that the imperative patterns to be discerned for national character and culture are imperative only within subgroup limits. But if so, are they "patterns" according to the definition of this paper?

Further we find (p. 650) that, "When a group now classified as a subgroup, a unit within the larger society that we are attempting to handle as a whole, has played or is playing a particularly decisive role in the definition of national policy (either inter- or intra-nationally) special attention may be given to the culturally regular character of this subgroup and to its version of the culture." We can understand the appropriateness of special attention to a subgroup, but how can it be determined that a certain subgroup is "playing a particularly decisive role" save by the kind of sampling, testing for variability and degree of importance, which the paper abjures for anthropological investigation.

It seems that the important problems of degree of representativeness of patterns are formally abjured only in some parts of the paper and the insistence on absolute fit is not an absolute insistence. Because the paper contains such statements as this (p. 655), "The question of adding informants is, in the same way, a matter of the way a society is structured, the degree of representativeness which is shared among members of both sexes, different ages, classes, generations, and so forth." And the last paragraph summarizes the four principal steps in a study of national character in a way which seems at odds with the paper's previous strictures concerning "pattern" and "fit." The first and second steps are the development of initial hypotheses and their scrutiny in the light of various materials. Then follows "3, the determination by extensive sampling techniques of the prevalence and incidence of the behavior which have [has] been identified; 4, validation of the findings through prediction and experiment." These steps entail a familiar and accepted procedure, though one which is rarely realized in full. The kind of sampling referred to is apparently the kind ordinarily understood and not the special, supposedly anthropological kind postulated earlier in the paper. Hence the final mention of sampling in the paper ends well although the ending does not fit well with the rest of the discussion.

The problems of sampling in national character studies will undoubtedly receive further attention as the research develops. The size of unit selected for special study is closely related to the principal goals of the research. Research aims and size of research unit must be considered together. In such consideration, many of the appraisals of Mead's paper will be very useful, even if reservations are entertained concerning her present views on anthropological sampling, and her points of emphasis concerning psychological theory and applied anthropology in relation to national character studies.

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NOTE

¹ Stronger debate on this point than that forwarded here is by Ralph Linton, who writes: "The sheer labor required to establish the existence or otherwise of national character norms by scientifically valid techniques would be staggering. It would involve the best sampling methods and statistical treatment of an elaborate sort." ("The Concept of National Character"; in *Personality and Political Crisis*, edited by A. H. Stanton and S. E. Perry, p. 140, Free Press, Glencoe, Ill., 1951.)

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