Social Correlates of Autonomy among University Students in the Philippines, United States, and Africa*

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An earlier study by the authors focused on the social correlates of autonomy for samples of Nigerian university students (A. P. Hare and Rachel T. Hare [in press]).[1] In that research, a balanced scale of 36 items derived from the Omnibus Personality Inventory (University of California at Berkeley 1962) was constructed with the aid of criterion groups, and then given to samples of students at three Nigerian universities. Given together with the autonomy inventory was a questionnaire covering those social-background characteristics expected to correlate with autonomy.

Contrary to expectations, the tests did not reveal differences in autonomy between Yoruba students and Ibo students. As predicted, however, Protestant students scored higher on autonomy than Catholics, at least among the Ibo. Younger students and students whose fathers were not farmers also scored high. Differences arising from sex were not tested, since there were very few females among the Nigerian students.

In the study reported here, an autonomy scale and a social-background questionnaire, essentially the same throughout, were administered to university students at the following institutions: University of Cape Town, South Africa; Gwelo Teachers College, Rhodesia; and the Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines. A shorter version of the autonomy scale was used at Makerere University College in Uganda, where the students came not only from Uganda but also from Kenya and Tanzania. This paper presents the

[1] Autonomy may be defined here as that personality trait which manifests any of the following qualities: resistance to influence or coercion, independent-mindedness and striving for independence, seeking of freedom (in a new location). It may even manifest itself at times as defiance of authority.

Its opposite is Authoritarianism, a personality trait characterized by repression of unacceptable motives, projection of blame on others, conventionalism, conformity, and power orientation toward others.

data gathered in these tests, as well as some data for a sample of students from Haverford College in the United States, a sample used as a comparison group in the first study.

Method and Limitations

The typical subject completed a 52-item inventory by indicating whether or not he thought each statement was true or false; 36 of these items formed the autonomy scale. To receive the highest possible score for autonomy, 18 of these items would have to be answered "true" and 18 "false." The following are two sample items, together with the answers required for a high score on autonomy:

(1) Society puts too much restraint on the individual. (True)

(2) We should respect the work of our forefathers and not think that we know better than they did. (False)

Four of the positive items were dropped from the questionnaire when it was administered to students in Capetown, South Africa, and Gwelo, Rhodesia, since it was feared that they might elicit controversy in those areas, which were very sensitive politically. Background questions were adapted to take into account the tribes, religions, occupations, and family patterns.dominant in the country.

The questionnaires were first developed by the authors in Uganda in 1963, with the assistance of H. C. Somerset of the Makerere University College, who was then involved in a large-scale study of school dropouts. A description of the trends in the social characteristics of students at Makerere University over a period of years was achieved through the use of the background questionnaire and the comparison of the data gathered with those of previous research (A. P. Hare, Rachel T. Hare, and H. C. Somerset 1964). The attitude inventory used in Uganda was later revised for use in Nigeria; only ten of its 20 items appeared in the longer 36-item Nigerian scale.

For comparisons within the sample of Makerere students, the short ten-item scale was used. For a comparison with other national samples, however, the scale scores were multiplied by 3·6 (see Table 1). Of the ten items in the Uganda scale, five had to be answered "true" and five "false" for a subject to achieve a high score on autonomy.

Although in each case the autonomy scale was "balanced" in an attempt to remove any influence of "yeasaying," on the average, the correlation between the sum of the "true" responses for all 52 items in the test and the autonomy score is about —·30. This indicates that there is a slight tendency for "autonomous" subjects to be also "naysayers." This may be accounted for by the fact that there is a greater variance in the responses to the negative items than

in those to the positive items—an effect also noted by Peabody (1961) for scales on authoritarianism (the opposite of autonomy) and other attitudes.

The samples of university students were not drawn randomly from the university populations, but consist mainly of those in the social-science faculties, with which the senior author was connected as a lecturer.

Findings

Cross-national comparisons. Table 1 shows the number of subjects and average autonomy score for each of the national samples of university students.

Table 1

Student subjects classified by university, crossclassified by sex and corresponding average autonomy score[1]

University	Male		Female	
	N	Average autonomy	N	Average autonomy
Haverford College, United States	36	27·25	0	no data
University of Capetown, South Africa	137	22·30	141	20·86
Yoruba student population at Universities of Ibadan, Ife, and Nsukka, Nigeria	262	18·33	0	no data
Ibo student population at Universities of Ibadan, Ife, and Nsukka, Nigeria	417	17·91	0	no data
Ateneo de Manila University, Philippines	145	17·58	0	no data
Gwelo Teachers College, Rhodesia	46	15·93	0	no data
Makerere University, Uganda	122	13·97	22	13·90

[1] All scores estimated from the 36-item scale, except for score of Makerere sample, which was estimated from the ten-item scale.

Where females were included in the sample, separate scores are given for males and females. In the case of Nigeria, separate scores are reported for the Yoruba and Ibo tribes. The nationalities have been ordered according to their autonomy scores, the highest at the top, and the lowest at the bottom.

Differences due to level of socio-economic development. On the average, students from the more developed nations were the most autonomous, with the exception of Filipino students. Though the students from the Ateneo de Manila were drawn from the highest social classes in the industrial area around Manila, the capital, their average score was lower than those of students from

many parts of Nigeria. This would seem to reflect a cultural difference which is not simply dependent on the level of socio-economic development. Other studies, such as those of Guthrie and Jacobs (1966), Hollnsteiner (1965), and Stoodley (1957), have also shown that autonomy is not a dominant value in the Philippines, where the stress seems to be on interdependence.

One indication of the level of development of a country is the proportion of university students in the sample whose fathers are farmers. No one had a farmer for a father in the Haverford and Ateneo samples, the majority of the students' fathers being either professionals or administrators. For the Cape-town sample, only six per cent of students' fathers were farmers. In contrast to the preceding samples, the percentage of students with farmer-fathers in most of the African samples was quite high: 43 per cent in Nigeria, 44 per cent at Gwelo, and 61 per cent at Makerere.

The level of socio-economic development may also be roughly indicated by the number of first-born children in a sample. Generally, the higher the level of development, the smaller the family size. Thus, a sample from a more developed country would contain a larger proportion of first-born children than a sample from a less developed one. Again, Haverford was highest, with first-born students constituting 83 per cent of the sample. Capetown came next, with 46 per cent, followed by Ateneo, with 44 per cent. The percentage of first-born children was lowest in most of the African samples, with 26 per cent in Nigeria, 28 per cent at Gwelo, and 20 per cent at Makerere.

Still another indication of the level of socio-economic development is the age at which a person goes to college: it may take students of the less developed areas more years to complete their education than students of the more developed areas. All students in the Haverford and Ateneo samples and 70 per cent of those in the Capetown sample were under twenty-one. Those under twenty-one, however, constituted only 12 per cent of the Nigerian sample, 29 per cent of the Gwelo sample, and four per cent of the Makerere sample.

It must be noted, however, that the educational systems in Africa and the United States are not strictly comparable. With the exception of Nsukka in Nigeria, the African universities from which the samples were derived followed a British model. In this system, the students spend only three years in the university—a period roughly equivalent to the last three years in the United States. The United States and Philippine systems also differ in that there is no junior high school in the Philippines; this results in Filipino college students being two years younger than their American counterparts. Thus, differences in the ages reported in the different samples may be due, not only to the level of socio-economic development, but also to the type of educational system.

The Nigerians' average autonomy scores were significantly lower than those of students from Capetown and Haverford, and significantly higher than those

of students from the Ateneo and Gwelo.[2] Differences between the Makerere sample and the other samples were not tested since the Makerere scores were estimates.

Differences by sex. Since the majority of the students in all samples were males, it was not possible to make comparisons between the sexes except within two groups, the Capetown and Makerere samples (see Table 1). When compared, males at Capetown scored significantly higher on autonomy than females;[3] there was, however, no difference between males and females at Makerere.

Ethnic differences. Within each university sample, the subjects were sorted according to tribe, language group, or hometown so that differences between ethnic or regional groups could be brought to light (see Table 2). In the Capetown sample, males who had parents with an English-speaking background were significantly more autonomous than those with an Asian background.[4] However, their autonomy scores did not differ from those students whose parents spoke Afrikaans or some European language. Although females with Afrikaans-speaking parents appeared to be lower on autonomy than other females in the sample, the difference was not significant.

There were no significant differences among language groups at the Ateneo. Nor were there any significant differences in the Gwelo sample, where the students were divided by the size of their hometowns—an alternative resorted to since all spoke some African language and could not therefore be differentiated on that variable. Differentiation of students speaking African languages was not possible at Capetown either, where students had been asked to indicate only whether or not they spoke some European, African, or Asian language.

At Makerere, students from Bantu-speaking tribes had higher scores than those from non-Bantu tribes. The difference, however, was only significant for those Bantus and non-Bantus from Kenya.[5] As for Europeans in the Makerere sample, they had the highest autonomy scores, but the difference between their scores and those of the Africans was not significant since the sample was too small.

[3] On at least the o·o5 level, using a "t" test.
[2] Probability less than o·o1, two-tailed test.
[4] Probability less than o·o1.
[5] Probability less than o·o5.

Table 2

Students classified by university and by parents' language, hometown size, or ethnic group, crossclassified by sex and corresponding average autonomy score.

University sample	Language of parents	Hometown size	Ethnic group	Male		Female	
				N	Average autonomy	N	Average autonomy
Capetown, South Africa	English			98	22·60	107	20·98
	Afrikaans			16	22·63	21	19·86
	Other European			12	22·58	11	21·45
	Asian			7	16·42	0	0
Ateneo de Manila, Philippines	Tagalog			69	17·81	0	no data
	Chinese			15	17·00	0	no data
	Ilocano			10	17·70	0	no data
	Other			44	17·41	0	no data
Gwelo, Rhodesia		Large town		10	16·00	0	no data
		Country town		28	16·75	0	no data
		Farm		7	13·71	0	no data
Makerere, Uganda[1]			Uganda Bantu	57	3·82	0	no data
			Uganda other	21	3·57	0	no data
			Kenya Bantu	19	4·37	0	no data
			Kenya other	5	2·60	0	no data
			Tanzania Bantu	21	3·76	0	no data
			Other Africans	10	4·10	0	no data
			Europeans	6	4·67	0	no data
			Unclassified	5	4·20	0	no data

[1] Data gathered on ten-item scale; given for both males and females.

Differences by religion. Like ethnic group, religion qualifies as a variable. Members of the same religion consciously share the same value system and probably identify one another as members of the same group. In contrast, persons who are first-born or belong to the same age group, or whose fathers are farmers, may not be aware that they share the same values. For this reason, we would expect differences based on ethnic group or religion to be stronger than those based on birth order, age, or father's occupation.

The data gathered, however, do not support this expectation. In the Nigerian sample, we found that among the Ibo, the Protestants were more autonomous than the Catholics. In the present study, however, those classified as "Other Protestants" in the Capetown sample scored lower, in three out of four cases, than Anglicans, Jews, or members of other religions. The differences, however, were not significant.

Table 3

Student subjects classified by university, age, and religion, crossclassified by sex and corresponding average autonomy score.

University	Age	Religion	Male		Female	
			N	Average autonomy	N	Average autonomy
Capetown, South Africa[1]	20 or less	Anglican	28	22·46	43	20·02
		Other Protestant	18	21·89	32	19·90
		Jewish	19	21·84	35	21·51
		Other religions	9	22·11	11	22·36
	21 or more	Anglican	15	22·20	7	21·29
		Other Protestant	16	21·50	4	21·00
		Jewish	17	22·94	6	25·33
		Other religions	11	23·00	7	22·71
Ateneo de Manila, Philippines	no data	Protestant	5	15·00	0	no data
		Catholic	140	17·64	0	no data
Gwelo, Rhodesia[1]	20 or less	Protestant	13	17·31	0	no data
		Other religions	12	17·25	0	no data
	21 or more	Protestant	7	14·29	0	no data
		Other religions	15	14·73	0	no data
Makerere, Uganda[2]		Protestant	65	3·94		
		Catholic	35	3·45		
		Muslim	6	4·50		
		Other	7	4·14		

[1] Capetown and Gwelo data, as well as data in some tables to come, have been simultaneously sorted on several variables in order to control sourcesof varia nce apparent in the data of the Nigerian study.

[2] Data gathered on ten-item scale; given for both males and females.

At the Ateneo, all but five of the 145 students were Catholic, the remaining being Protestant. Although the Protestants scored lower on autonomy, the difference was not significant. Nor was the difference between Protestants and Catholics significant at Gwelo and at Makerere, where the former scored slightly higher. The Muslims in both the Gwelo and Makerere samples scored highest, but the difference between their scores and those of the other religious groups was not significant.

Birth order differences. Only the males in each sample were analyzed on the variable of birth order. Although this was not the case with the Nigerian data, the first-born male was expected to be more autonomous than later-born males. Further, it was expected that the second-born male with an older brother would prove to be more autonomous than the second-born male with an older sister, as suggested by Dr. David Lavin of the University of Pennsylvania. The reasons for such an expectation were the following: The first-born male would score highest on autonomy because high position in the family promotes independence; the second-born male with an older brother would come next because of the presence of an older male-role model; the second-born male with an older sister would score lower than the first two types because he has a female-role model promoting dependence; finally, males following the first- and second-born males would score lower on autonomy than either of them.

However, results showed no trends in the expected direction for the Capetown, Nigeria, Gwelo, and Makerere samples. The only sample showing a trend coming close to our expectations was the Ateneo sample, where the first- and second-born males appeared in the expected order (see Table 4). This trend, however, was not significant;[6] in fact, males coming after both the first- and second-born scored higher than they did.

Table 4

Student subjects at Ateneo de Manila classified by birth order and corresponding average autonomy score.

Birth order	N	Average autonomy
First-born male	45	17·89
Second-born male with older brother	34	17·29
Second-born male with older sister	24	15·71
Later-born males	42	18·56

Differences by age. The findings on age differences were mixed since the conclusions drawn depended on the line set to separate "young" from "old." For the Nigerian samples, the young (ages 20 to 23) were found to be signi-

⁶ F Test.

ficantly more autonomous than the old (ages 24 to 28). This trend would also
seem to be evident for the Gwelo sample, where the young (less than 20)
scored higher on autonomy than the old (21 and over).[7] The trend for the
Makerere sample was not conclusive; the young (19–23) scored higher than
the old (24–29), but the "oldest" (33–39) scored higher than the young.
Nevertheless, differences within the Makerere sample were not significant
(see Tables 5 and 6).

Table 5

*Student subjects classified by university, field and year, and age, crossclassified
by sex and corresponding average autonomy score.*

| University | Field and year | Age | Male | | Female | |
			N	Average autonomy	N	Average autonomy
Capetown, South Africa	First-year sociology	20 or less	23	22·57	70	20·11
		21 or more	9	23·56	5	24·20
	Second- and third-	20 or less	8	21·88	31	20·90
	year sociology	21 or more	9	24·44	17	23·41
	Third-year medicine	20 or less	45	21·87	16	21·38
		21 or more	43	22·00	3	18·33
Ateneo de Manila, Philippines	no data	15	5	17·40	0	no data
		16	34	17·50	0	no data
		17	69	17·30	0	no data
		18	28	18·75	0	no data
		19	6	17·67	0	no data
Makerere, Uganda[1]	no data	19–22	28	4·29	0	no data
		23	14	4·00	0	no data
		24	13	3·76	0	no data
		25–26	19	3·26	0	no data
		27–29	20	3·55	0	no data
		33–39	20	3·90	0	no data

[1] Data gathered on ten-item scale; given for both males and females.

With the Capetown and Ateneo samples, however, the opposite trend seemed
to hold. Students 20 and under in the Capetown sample were *less* autono-
mous in five out of six cases; two of these differences were significant.[8] For
the Ateneo sample, students aged 15 to 17 scored slightly lower than those
who were 18 or 19; the difference, however, was not significant.

[7] The difference was significant only for Protestants (at the 0·05 level, one-tailed test).
See Table 3.
[8] At the 0·05 level, two-tailed test.

Differences by father's occupation. In Nigeria, students whose fathers were farmers had lower scores on autonomy than those whose fathers had higher-status occupations. While there was a slight trend in this direction among the African students involved in the present study, there was none apparent among students with European backgrounds in the Capetown sample and students at the Ateneo—areas in which the occupation level is generally higher (see Table 6).

Table 6

Student subjects classified by university and father's occupation, crossclassified by sex and corresponding average autonomy score.

University	Father's occupation	Male		Female	
		N	Average autonomy	N	Average autonomy
Capetown, South Africa	Farmer	6	22·33	12	22·25
	Unskilled and skilled	16	22·25	3	19·00
	Teacher and clergyman	11	20·36	8	19·95
	Clerk	9	23·89	19	20·00
	Shopkeeper	29	21·72	29	21·90
	Subprofessional	37	23·08	40	20·50
	Professional	25	22·00	29	20·79
Ateneo de Manila, Philippines	Professional	62	17·48	0	no data
	Administrator	60	17·80	0	no data
	Other	15	17·60	0	no data
Gwelo, Rhodesia	Farmer and traditional	20	16·35	0	no data
	Unskilled and skilled	17	14·94	0	no data
	Teacher and other	8	18·00	0	no data
Makerere, Uganda[1]	Farmer and traditional	54	3·65		
	Skilled	11	3·65		
	Clerk and shopkeeper	14	4·79		
	Teacher	8	4·00		
	Clergyman	8	3·75		
	Professional	10	3·70		
	Chief	7	4·00		

[1] Data given for both males and females.

In the Capetown sample, females whose fathers were farmers scored significantly higher than those whose fathers were either teachers or members of the clergy.[9] Though there was a similar tendency among the males, it was not significant. There were no other evident trends.

[9] At the 0·05 level.

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With the Ateneo sample, there were only slight differences among occupations, and they were not significant. With the Gwelo sample, students with farmer-fathers scored lower than students with teacher-fathers; the difference, however, was not significant. Also, those with unskilled fathers scored even lower than both of the preceding groups, with the result that the score for a combination of all other occupations was not higher than the score for farmer-fathers, unlike the case in Nigeria.

Table 7

Makerere student subjects classified by religion and age, crossclassified by father's occupation and corresponding average autonomy score.

Religion	Age[1]	Father's occupation			
		Skilled and higher		Farmer and traditional	
		N	Average autonomy	N	Average autonomy
Protestant	Young	14	4·57	11	4·18
	Old	8	3·75	12	3·17
	Older	5	4·00	8	3·62
Catholic	Young	5	3·40	13	3·46
	Old	2	3·00	7	3·14
	Older	1	3·00	5	3·60

[1] Young = 19 to 23 years; old = 24 to 28; and older = 29 to 39.

Students with farmer-fathers or fathers possessing traditional skills scored low on autonomy at Makerere (Table 6). The difference, however, was significant only between them and students whose fathers were clerks and shop-keepers.[10] There were other differences between occupations, but these were not predicted and were difficult to interpret. When the students were sorted by religion, age, and father's occupation, those with fathers with skills or in the higher occupational ranks scored higher than the others among Protestants but not among Catholics (Table 7). With small samples, the differences were not significant.

Summary and Conclusions

An autonomy scale and a social-background questionnaire were given to university students in South Africa, Rhodesia, Uganda, and the Philippines. The correlations of the autonomy scale and social-background characteristics achieved in this study were then compared with results of a previous study of Nigerian university students.

[10] At the 0·05 level, two-tailed test.

With the exception of the Philippine sample, the students from the more developed nations scored higher on autonomy than those from less developed lands. The students in the United States sample had the highest scores, followed by students with a European background in South Africa, then students from Nigeria, Rhodesia, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. In the Philippines, the high value placed on a dependent relation to older persons could be responsible for the low scores achieved by students of a nation relatively more developed than most of the African countries in the study. Compared with students from less developed lands, fewer of those from more developed countries had fathers who were farmers, and more of them were first-born—a reflection of smaller family size.

In most of the African samples it was not possible to test for differences in autonomy due to sex. At Capetown, however, where a great number of women go to school, men scored significantly higher than women.

Within national samples, expected differences among tribes, religious groups, occupational groups, and individuals of different birth-order positions did not appear consistently. Protestants, however, generally scored higher than Catholics in most samples. Also, students with farmer-fathers scored lower than others in the Nigerian sample.

The relationship of autonomy to age depends upon the nationality of the student. Among students with African cultural backgrounds in Nigeria, Rhodesia, and East Africa, younger students (20–23) were more autonomous than older ones (24–29). However, among students with European backgrounds in South Africa and students in the Philippines, the very young (20 or less) scored lower on autonomy than older students (21 or more). These findings could result from two different trends. In the less developed countries, the younger students may represent a "new breed"; that is, they may be more autonomous than older students, who have generally worked for some years before returning to school to finish their education. In contrast, the age range is much smaller in the more developed areas, and higher autonomy may simply be related to increasing maturity.

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