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Symbolic Civic Awareness: A Study of Political Socialization in the City of Grand Forks

Richard J. Hardy

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SYMBOLIC CIVIC AWARENESS: A STUDY OF POLITICAL
SOCIALIZATION IN THE CITY OF GRAND FORKS

by
Richard J. Hardy

Bachelor of Arts, Western Illinois University, 1970

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

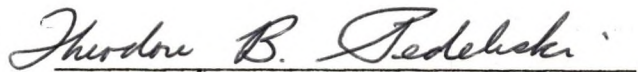
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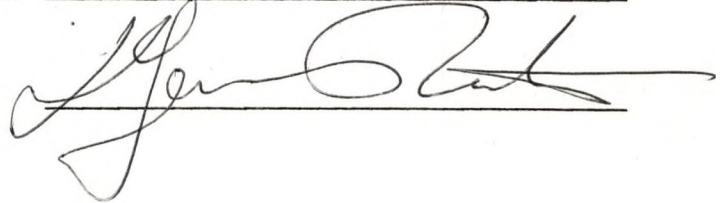
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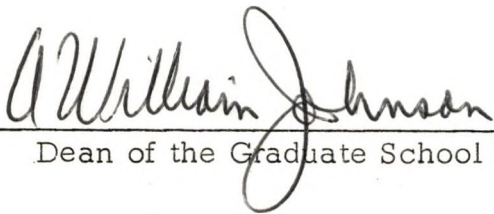
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This Thesis submitted by Richard J. Hardy in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota is hereby approved by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done.


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Department Political Science

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PREFACE

This writer has hypothesized that children at a very early age become aware of the symbols which represent their government; and it is, therefore, the purpose of this thesis to determine if and at what age elementary school children develop a symbolic awareness of their government. This study is based upon an analysis of data obtained in six Grand Forks, North Dakota, elementary schools. Although the six schools were paired according to socio-economic, philosophic, and religious variables, it was not the author's purpose to analyze or criticize the various educational systems, but rather to attempt to establish a representative sample of elementary school children in the City of Grand Forks.

The study of children and their acquisition of political attitudes has always been one of the most interesting and rewarding fields within the discipline of political science. From the time I first conceived of the idea to study the symbolic awareness of elementary children to the present, I have accumulated many debts. In general, I would like to thank the Political Science Department at the University of North Dakota, and in particular, graduate advisors, Dr. Henry Tomasek and Mr. Theodore Pedeliski for their invaluable advice, criticism, and support

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ABSTRACT

Numerous studies in political socialization have suggested that the child's political world begins about the age of three and is basically completed by age thirteen. Using this finding as a guideline, the author proposed in this study to determine at what age elementary school children develop a symbolic awareness of their government.

Based on a format similar to that used by Greenstein, Hess, and Easton, a study was made in the City of Grand Forks involving 951 children in grades one through six. To achieve representativeness and control, six elementary schools were selected based on socio-economic, philosophic, and religious variable.

Applying both the normative and behavioral approaches, a series of twenty slides, containing four symbols each, was projected in mass to each classroom. Following the showing of each slide, the children were asked to respond by completing a standard answer form.

The first set of slides tested cognitive development by asking the children to identify personal and political party symbols. The second set involved the association of verbal and pictorial symbols with the symbol of the political community. The third set tested affective development in relation to abstract impersonal symbols. And the last

set sought to solicit affective responses to the authoritative political symbols.

Results indicated that children were aware of many of the normative political symbols as early as grade one. Children in all grades could identify the President, but it was not until grade five that they could consistently identify the Vice President, Governor, and political party symbols. In regard to symbols of the political community, younger children identified more with personal symbols, while the older children identified with the impersonal symbols. In all cases children were able to discriminate American symbols from those of other nations.

In reference to the abstract impersonal symbols, it was found that nearly all children affectively identified with condensation symbols, more so than the civil rights symbols. Authoritative symbols were associated with specific authority figures in all grades. Finally, only minor differences were found between religious, philosophic, and socio-economic variables.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Political Socialization

If a political system is to maintain itself, it must take steps to weld its members into a cohesive or integrated political unit.¹ In short, if a political unit is to be perpetuated, it must socialize its members. Prewitt and Zisk² define political socialization as the set of experiences which ushers an individual into the world of politics. Froman³ describes political socialization as simply the learning of social positions, while Almond and Powell⁴ believe it to be the process by which a child learns about the political culture in which he lives.

¹David Easton and Robert D. Hess, "Youth and the Political System," in Culture and Social Character, ed. by Seymour Martin Lipset and Leo Lowenthal (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1961), p. 227.

²Kenneth Prewitt and Betty H. Zisk, "Political Socialization and Political Roles," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXX (January, 1967), 572.

³Lewis A. Froman, "Personality and Political Socialization," Journal of Politics, XXIII (May, 1961), 342.

⁴Gabriel A. Almond and G. Bingham Powell, Jr., Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 24.

Throughout this paper, political socialization will be defined as the process through which children learn the values, norms, and symbols of their political community. This definition, therefore, refers to a developmental process which proceeds over a period of time and which is geared to the acquisition of age-appropriate political behavior.

Until recently, there existed little precise information on the role of political socialization. Indeed, it was as late as 1959, when Eulau and associates stated, "we know next to nothing about 'political socialization'" ⁵ One of the first, however, to realize the potential importance of the study of political socialization was Merriam. In 1925, he hinted that "the examination of the rise and development of the political ideation and the political behavior of the child was in store for us much of value in the scientific understanding of the adult ideal and conduct." ⁶

In one of his early studies on cross-cultural political learning, Merriam conceived that political socialization was not only a process of childhood learning but also of a constant reinforcement and learning

⁵Heinz Eulau, John C. Wahlke, William Buchanan, and LeRoy C. Ferguson, "The Political Socialization of State Legislators," in Psychology and Politics, ed. by LeRoy N. Riselbach and George I. Balch (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1967), p. 135.

⁶Charles E. Merriam, New Aspects of Politics (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1925), p. 85.

throughout life.⁷ Yet, despite Merriam's concern, his study remained basically impressionistic and involved little or no direct observation of the developmental process.

In the late 1920's and early 1930's two studies were conducted on elementary and secondary school civic education. The first involved a collection of studies sponsored by the American Historical Association which placed its emphasis on the formal aspects of civic education in the United States.⁸ And a second study, compiled by Burton, involved the accuracy of children's textbook learning.⁹ However, both studies took the institutional approach and were basically confined to the cognitive rather than the perceptual aspects of civic development.

In 1959, the first major breakthrough was made in the study of political socialization. In his review of literature and study of high school students, Hyman discovered that, by the time the adolescent reached the age of sixteen, he had acquired a set of attitudes difficult to distinguish from those of mature adults coming from similar

⁷Charles E. Merriam, The Making of Citizens (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931).

⁸Representative volumes are Bessie Louise Pierce, Civic Attitudes in American Textbooks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930); Charles E. Merriam, Civic Education in the United States (New York: Scribner's, 1934); Truman L. Kelley and A. C. Krey, Tests and Measurements in the Social Sciences (New York: Scribner's, 1934).

⁹William H. Burton, Children's Civic Information (Los Angeles: University of Southern California Press, 1936).

backgrounds. And, furthermore, Hyman concluded that once the individual reached the age of twenty-one there was virtual stability in his political orientations.¹⁰

Yet Hyman's study of 14 through 17 year olds placed most of its emphasis on the assumption that it was only the adolescent who displayed the first glimmerings of interest in politics and political development. In 1960, two nearly simultaneous articles appeared which, for the first time, touched on the importance of young children in political socialization.

Hess and Easton,¹¹ in their Chicago study of elementary school children, found that the child's political world actually began to take shape before the child entered elementary school, and that the greatest increase in political socialization appeared to take place before the end of the elementary years. Greenstein¹² reached a similar conclusion in

¹⁰Herbert H. Hyman, Political Socialization (New York: The Free Press, 1959).

¹¹Robert D. Hess and David Easton, "The Child's Changing Image of the President," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXIV (Winter, 1960), 632-644. This study was conducted in an elementary school system in a middle-class suburb of Chicago and included 366 children in grades two through eight. They used a multiple-choice questionnaire which was designed to elicit the children's images of the President.

¹²Fred I. Greenstein, "The Benevolent Leader: Children's Images of Political Authority," The American Political Science Review, LIV (December, 1960), 934-943. This study tested 659 New Haven public and private school children from various socio-economic statuses and ranging from fourth through eighth grades. The data were obtained by use of open-ended questions pertaining to various political leaders.

his New Haven study. He found that, as early as age nine, children were firmly oriented toward their political community.

On the basis of these early studies, it has generally been assumed that political socialization in America begins about the age of three and is basically completed by the age of thirteen.¹³ More recent studies have corroborated this hypothesis.¹⁴ This is not to say that political socialization comes to a complete standstill after adolescence, but rather, as Hyman had discovered, it merely stabilizes. Figure 1 indicates the assumed pattern of socialization.

If the assumed pattern of socialization as indicated in Figure 1 is correct, then any attempt to study the developmental stage at which an individual acquires a symbolic civic awareness must be initiated either during the pre-elementary or elementary school years.

The Family Role in Political Socialization

There are many agents of political socialization; these include the school, the mass media, peers, the church, etc. But no other agent has such an impact on the way in which an individual develops as the family.

¹³David Easton and Robert D. Hess, "The Child's Political World," Midwest Journal of Political Science, VI (August, 1962), 236.

¹⁴See especially Fred I. Greenstein, Children and Politics (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965); Robert D. Hess and Judith Tourney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1967); David Easton and Jack Dennis, Children in the Political System: Origins of Political Legitimacy (New York: McGraw-Hill Co., 1969).

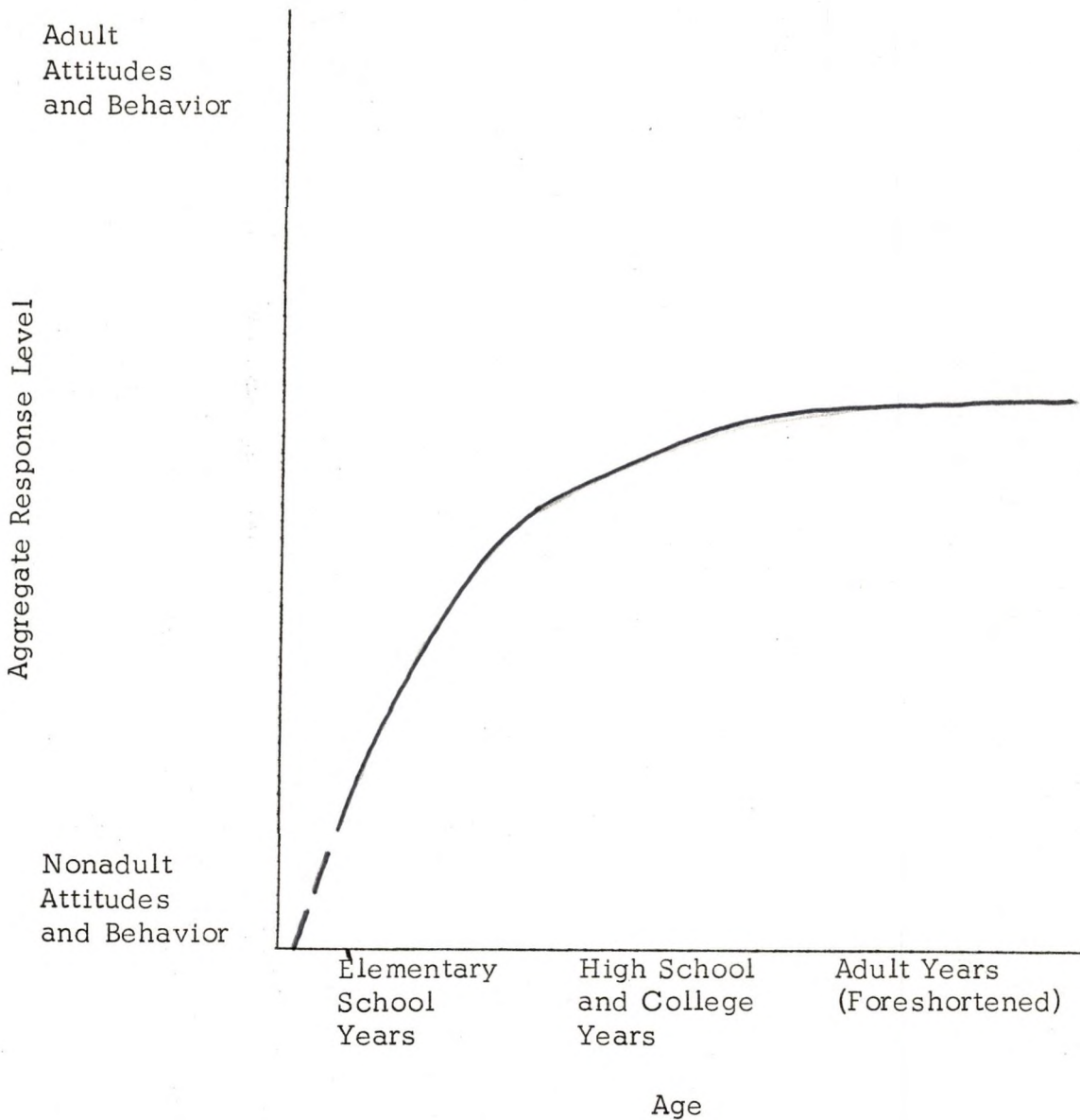


Fig. 1.--Assumed pattern of development of political attitudes and behavior¹⁵

¹⁵M. Kent Jennings and Richard G. Niemi, "Patterns of Political Learning," *Harvard Educational Review*, XXXVIII (Summer, 1968), 446. While not denying the importance of early political socialization, these authors state that in regard to political interest and the use of mass media, there is a noticeable increase once the individual leaves high school. But this study deals basically with interests rather than the acquisition of political values and norms.

As Davies profoundly puts it, "The family provides the major means for transforming the mentally naked infant organism into the adult; fully clothed in its own personality" ¹⁶

Sigel points out that the family is influential because (1) it is the family to whom the child is so dependent; (2) the family represents a system of values and norms which the young child can observe; and (3) families utilize specific techniques or rearing practices that often have a permanent effect on the child that will later influence his adult political behavior. ¹⁷ As Sigel goes on to state,

The family's importance lies in the fact that for many years it is the sole provider of the child's physical and emotional needs. The family's love and approval is crucial to him, and so are the material benefits as well as the status it has to confer upon him. Being so dependent on the family and having few means for non-familial validation, the child readily identifies with its politics as well as with the rest of its value system. Just as he accepts his parents' explanation of death or of who made the world, so he accepts their views when they tell him that Republicans are better than Democrats or that union men are more trustworthy than management. ¹⁸

Hence, it is through this system of emotional and physical rewards and punishments that the child learns which political values and norms

¹⁶James C. Davies, "The Family Role in Political Socialization," Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, Political Socialization: Its Role in the Political Process, CCCLXI (January, 1965), 10.

¹⁷Roberta S. Sigel, Learning About Politics: A Reader in Political Socialization (New York: Random House, 1970), p. 103.

¹⁸Ibid., p. 104.

are acceptable to the family. It is the family which teaches the young child to respect authority and the rules of the group; and it is the family which transmits its feelings of loyalty, respect for the symbols of government (especially the flag, Statue of Liberty, and Uncle Sam), and the kind of behavior expected of the citizen (especially compliance to law).¹⁹

Goodman,²⁰ who studied nursery school children in a northeastern United States metropolis found that young children are often remarkably mature in their grasp of basic values of society. After extensive interviews, Goodman concluded that the majority of children learn in their first four years of life the values fundamental to good citizenship and respect for law.

Studies based on adult recollection of early childhood also reveal the great importance of the family. Prewitt and Zisk,²¹ in their study of state legislators and city councilmen, noted that more than half of the state legislators (52 per cent) and nearly half of the councilmen (45 per

¹⁹Hess and Tourney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 110.

²⁰Mary Ellen Goodman, "Emergent Citizenship: A Study of Relevant Values in Four-Year-Olds," Childhood Education, XXXV (January, 1959), 248-251.

²¹Prewitt and Zisk, "Political Socialization and Political Roles," 569-582. Their sample included 421 state legislators from four states and 129 city councilmen from twenty-three cities.

cent) reported early familial training as having had the greatest impact on their later political beliefs.

A similar four-state study by Eulau, Wahlke, Buchanan and Ferguson²² noted that state legislators recalled being exposed to the political environment at a very early age. A majority of the state legislators studied reported the family as having been the primary source of political party identification, while over one-third recalled their early childhood or grammar school period as the time when they first became aware of politics.

Hence, the importance of the family as an agent of political socialization cannot be denied. However, there does appear to be a number of cross-cultural variations. For example, Converse and Dupeux,²³ in their comparative study of American and French adults, found that over 80 per cent of the American adults could recall their parents' party identification, contrasted with only 30 per cent of the French adults. They suggested that this wide difference points to the fact that American parents communicate much more political information to their children than do French parents. They concluded that this may

²²Eulau, et al., "The Political Socialization of State Legislators," pp. 131-137. Sample included 474 state legislators from California, New Jersey, Ohio and Tennessee.

²³Philip Converse and Georges Dupeux, "Politicalization of the Electorate in France and the United States," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXVI (January, 1962), pp. 1-24.

be the reason why the French have had a consistently high proportion of uncommitted voters and a history of political instability.

Almond and Verba²⁴ also noted a wide cross-cultural variation in the way the family shapes the individual's political behavior. Results of their comparative study of the United States, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, and Mexico revealed that families which solicit or listen to their children's views help develop the habit of self-expression which emerges in later adult political life. They contend that the United States (along with Great Britain) ranks highest in levels of participation and democracy, which in part can be attributed to early family learning.

Thus, it would seem that in American political culture, the family plays a most vital role in the transmission of political values and the formation of stable patriotic loyalties.

The Role of Education in Political Socialization

Next to the family, the school has been found to be the major contributor in the development of civic awareness. Throughout history, great emphasis has been placed on the values of civic education. For Plato, education was at the heart of politics; depending upon the nature of civic training, a body politic would remain stable or it would undergo

²⁴Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba, The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1963).

change.²⁵ Rousseau also realized the importance of a civic education when he stated: "It is education that should put the national stamp on men's minds and give the direction to their opinions and tastes which will make them patriots."²⁶

Children enter the world as a "tabula rasa." They are born without values, beliefs, or symbols of their political community. Instead, these values, beliefs, and symbols must be learned if the child is to have any sense of political identity. As Napoleon commented in 1808, "as long as children are not taught whether they ought to be Republican or Monarchist, Catholic or irreligious, the State will not form a Nation."²⁷

Moreover, virtually all societies have recognized the need to educate their young, and it is the school which fulfills this basic task. As Sigel points out, civic training in all countries aims at creating (1) some knowledge of one's government, (2) expectations as to the behavior to engage in and to accept from its members, and (3) love and loyalty for the country.²⁸

²⁵Greenstein, Children and Politics, p. 2.

²⁶Jean Jacques Rousseau, Emile, trans. by William Boyd (2nd ed.; New York: Columbia University Press, 1962), p. 191.

²⁷David Thomson, Democracy in France (3rd ed.; London: Oxford University Press, 1958), p. 143.

²⁸Sigel, Learning About Politics, p. 312.

In the United States, it is the role of the individual states to prescribe what the child is to learn formally, and most state legislators have philosophically perceived the public school as the agency by which political values are to be transmitted. Since World War II, all of the states have passed laws which require the teaching of civics and American history, with emphasis on the promotion of patriotism and civic responsibility, as part of the elementary and secondary curriculum. However, most of the formal civic education in the United States has been concentrated not in the elementary school, but rather in the secondary school. As Cammarota points out:

In most cases, the social studies program of the primary grades (k-3) focuses on the home, family, and community. In the intermediate grades, children usually study about their home states, about the United States, about some foreign countries, and sometimes about the history of the Old World. In grades seven and eight, geography or community study and the study of the U.S.A. are the general rule. Examination of materials used through these grades, especially in k-4, shows that study of politics and government, when included, is often incidental rather than central.²⁹

Thus, most civic textbooks are written for the upper elementary and secondary levels. Based on content analysis of various elementary and secondary civic and history books used in the United States, four

²⁹Gloria Cammarota, "Children, Politics, and Elementary Social Studies," Social Education, XXVII (April, 1963), 205.

separate studies by Merriam,³⁰ Pierce,³¹ Newmann,³² and Andrain³³ have generally concluded the following:

1. Nearly all books give unrealistic accounts of American history and the workings of American government.
2. National heroes, such as Washington, Franklin, and Lincoln, are portrayed as being entirely altruistic.
3. The American nation is glorified as being the promised land of God's chosen disciples.
4. War is usually seen in a positive light as seeking to preserve freedom or national defense.
5. Social problems and differences of opinion are minimized.
6. References to abstract concepts such as freedom or liberty tend to contrast American democracy with Russian Communism.
7. There exists little information about how the American government really works, because most of the emphasis

³⁰Merriam, The Making of Citizens, pp. 211-283; and Merriam, Civic Education in the United States, pp. 90-120.

³¹Pierce, Civic Attitudes in American School Textbooks, pp. 113-126, 148.

³²Fred M. Newmann, "Political Socialization in the Schools," Harvard Educational Review, XXXVIII (Summer, 1968), 536-545.

³³Charles F. Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness: A Study in Political Education (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 23-24.

is placed on the legal and constitutional aspects of government.

8. And finally, stress is placed on the rather passive civic virtues of loyalty to the country, respect for the flag, and pride in the national history and the founding fathers.

Indeed, it would appear that American schools are generally better at generating love of country and instilling patriotism than they are at stimulating political knowledge. For example, Langton and Jennings³⁴ have demonstrated that the understanding and internalization of basic democratic beliefs did not vary in proportion to the number of civic courses taken in the public schools.

But perhaps even more important than the formal civic textbooks and curriculum is the informal learning situation which goes on within the individual classroom. As Hess and Easton point out:

The school teaches and reinforces attitudes toward law, government, and citizenship in a number of informal ways. Pledging allegiance to the flag, singing the national anthem, celebrating the birth of Washington and Lincoln, and observing Veterans Day are some of the most frequent occasions for teaching the young child respect for law and

³⁴Kenneth P. Langton and M. Kent Jennings, "Political Socialization and the High School Civics Curriculum in the United States," The American Political Science Review, LXII (September, 1968), 852-867.

a feeling of national loyalty and pride. By such informal and unsystematic means the school continues the process of political socialization begun in the home.³⁵

Political Symbolism

We live by symbols,
--Justice Holmes³⁶

Men have always lived by symbols, and throughout history symbols have pervaded nearly every aspect of society. Symbols are the tools which a society uses to indoctrinate its members, and without such tools a society could not exist. As Duncan points out, "society arises and continues to exist through the communication of significant symbols."³⁷

However, even though symbols can be found in all types of societies (clans, villages, tribes, etc.), political symbols are especially important to nations. Political symbols provide an emotional cement which unites members of a nation behind a common cause. These symbols personalize, as well as emotionalize, the often impersonal,

³⁵Robert D. Hess and David Easton, "The Role of the Elementary School in Political Socialization," The School Review, LXX (June, 1962), p. 257. Also see Robert D. Hess, "Political Socialization in the Schools," Harvard Educational Review, XXXVIII (Summer, 1968), 528-535.

³⁶Oliver Wendell Holmes, cited in Max Lerner, "Constitution and Court as Symbols," The Yale Law Journal, XLVI (June, 1937), 1290.

³⁷Hugh D. Duncan, Symbols in Society (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 44. Duncan defines "significant symbol" as a symbol which not only "signals" or "stimulates" another, but also arouses in one individual the same meaning as it does in others.

abstract nation; they offer a primordially-based warmth to the individual citizen.³⁸

Perhaps the importance of political symbolism can best be seen in regard to cross-cultural comparative studies. For example, Almond and Powell³⁹ stress that any government can display a flag or mold a statue (symbolic output), but in order to have a high symbolic capability, these symbols must be effectively transmitted and received by its citizens.

A prime example of a nation being materially weak but symbolically strong was Great Britain during World War II. Through judicious use and exploitation of popular political symbols (British flag, Churchill's speeches, etc.), the British government was able to gain acceptance of policies which ordinarily would have been impossible. By the same token, many developing nations have found it extremely difficult to maintain a high symbolic capability. An example is Uganda, where its young government has had difficulty instilling national pride and identification without history and national heroes.⁴⁰

Political symbols come in many varieties. Most familiar are the authoritarian and semi-authoritarian types of political symbols:

³⁸Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness, pp. 109-110.

³⁹Almond and Powell, Comparative Politics: A Developmental Approach, p. 200.

⁴⁰Kenneth Prewitt and Joseph Okello-Oculi, "Political Socialization and Political Education in the New Nations," in Learning About Politics, ed. by Sigel, pp. 607-620.

constitutions, charters, laws, treaties, and so on.⁴¹ Equally important are the verbal symbols. Included in these are patriotic songs, slogans, and national anthems--all of which are taught in schools and designed to communicate loyalty and respect. Also pervasive are the pictorial symbols such as flags, emblems, maps, and colors which best denote the existence of a group. And, finally, there are the personal symbols which portray national heroes such as Washington, Lincoln, Kennedy, etc. Personal symbols are generally most important to young school children.

The above political symbols may in turn be broken down into two functional classifications. Political symbols may either be referential or condensation symbols. Referential symbols are economical ways of referring to the objective elements in objects or situations: the elements identified in the same way by different people. Such symbols are useful because they help in logical thinking about the situation and in manipulating it.⁴² Statistics and colors are examples of referential symbols because they refer directly to the things they symbolize.

But the more important political symbols are the condensation symbols. Condensation symbols evoke the emotion associated with the situation. They condense into one symbolic event, sign, or act patriotic

⁴¹Harold D. Lasswell and Abraham Kaplan, Power and Society (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1965), p. 103.

⁴²Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics (Urbana, Ill.: The University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 6.

pride, anxieties, remembrances of past glories or humiliations, promises of future greatness--some one of these or all of them.⁴³ Therefore, throughout this paper a greater stress will be placed on the condensation symbols. It is the condensation symbol which, when effectively communicated, serves the crucial function of group cohesion.

The Approach to the Study of Symbolic Civic Awareness

Thus far, it has been pointed out that political socialization is a developmental learning process by which an individual acquires the knowledge and values of his political community, and that at least in the United States, this process begins and stabilizes at a very early age. Of the many agents of political socialization, the family and the school have been shown to play a most vital role in the communication of these values and knowledge. And last, it is by means of symbols that the agents of political socialization communicate and perpetuate the political system. A note of explanation should now be given in regard to the approach taken to the study of political symbols.

In order to analyze the symbolic civic awareness among elementary children, both the normative and behavioral approaches to politics have been taken. The normative approach, which involves the specification of what is proper and right, focuses on the values, norms, and political

⁴³Edward Sapir, Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (New York: Scribner's, 1934), p. 492.

symbols found in a society. These in turn direct and reflect the choice of behavior which others in the political community feel should be made.

Values will here be defined as a set of goals or purposes of beliefs in the political system, while norms will be referred to as rules indicating how the values ought to be realized. And, finally, political symbols (such as flags, national anthems, and popular heroes), give concrete expression to the more abstract values and norms.⁴⁴

While the normative approach deals with the limits placed by values on personal choices, the behavioral approach emphasizes the choices actually selected as well as the reasons for making particular choices.⁴⁵ Thus, the behavioral approach is concerned with the perceptual learning and its role in political socialization.

Regardless of which approach is discussed in this paper, both will be concerned with cognitive and affective political dispositions. Cognitive, on the one hand, refers to the acquisition of certain political facts, knowledge, and symbols. This includes the child's awareness of such things as the President, Congress; Supreme Court, and Constitution. Affective, on the other hand, refers to the internalization of certain political facts, knowledge, and symbols. An example of this

⁴⁴Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness, p. 17.

⁴⁵Ibid., p. 8.

would be the child who gets a cold chill when he hears the Star-Spangled Banner played.

The complexities and difficulties involved in an analysis of children's perceptions of political symbols are enormous. And due to the lack of psychological and empirical background data on all the possible inputs which go into the learning process (for example, mass media and peers), this study has placed its emphasis on "what" and "when" children learn political symbols rather than the "why." The model, therefore used, is one which measures political learning as a normative, grade-appropriate developmental process.

The Grand Forks Study of Symbolic Civic Awareness

On April 11, 13, and 14, 1972, a symbolic civic awareness study was conducted in the North Dakota city of Grand Forks which involved 951 school children from grades one through six.⁴⁶ To test the validity of the children's cognitive and affective grade-appropriate development, six schools were selected to achieve a representative sample of the city's school population. As Table 1 indicates, the schools were paired according to socio-economic, philosophic and religious characteristics.

The higher socio-economic population in this study will be defined as middle-class, white-collar and professional, while the lower

⁴⁶For a complete breakdown of the number of students in each class and school see Appendix I.

TABLE 1

SCHOOLS REPRESENTED IN THE STUDY

	Traditional	Less Traditional	Parochial
Higher Socio-Economic	Viking	Kelly	Holy Family
Lower Socio-Economic	Winship	Washington	St. Michaels

socio-economic population will be defined as basically lower middle-class and blue collar. The higher socio-economic schools represented by Kelly, Viking and Holy Family, are located in the newer section of the city within about an approximate eight block radius. Juxtaposed are the three lower socio-economic schools represented by Winship, Washington and St. Michaels. These three schools are located in the central and older section of the city.

The traditional schools will herein be defined as philosophically conservative, more formally structured and basically teacher-oriented. The New Schools will be defined as schools in which the individual teachers have received their educational training from the New School of Behavioral Studies in Education at the University of North Dakota.⁴⁷ The basic philosophy of the New School is "that the students learn, grow and

⁴⁷The New School has been operational since the fall of 1968.

achieve better in an environment where teachers talk less and students become more intimately involved in the educational enterprise."⁴⁸

Dr. Perrone, Dean of the New School, contends that the traditional classroom with its "ordered group environment militates against the natural learning inclinations of children."⁴⁹ Therefore, the emphasis in the New School on the study of humanities and social studies, represents an effort to broaden and enrich the educational backgrounds of elementary teachers in order that they may feel more comfortable and less structured in their relationships with youngsters.

The use of the above labels is not intended to be rigid classifications, but rather to be used as analytical tools. Whenever one attempts to place labels on a group or institution in society he runs the risk of not being totally accurate. It should be noted that the above groups are not totally homogeneous. For example, there may be a number of Catholic children who attend public rather than parochial schools, or there may be a "traditional" principal or teacher who may actually be very innovative. Hence, caution should be exercised in the above use of terms.

⁴⁸Vito Perrone, "Director Outlines Philosophy," The University of North Dakota New School Behavioral Studies in Education, I (July 25, 1968), p. 1.

⁴⁹Ibid.

An explanation should now be given about the methods used. A series of twenty black-and-white slides containing four pictures each, was projected in mass to thirty-six individual classrooms.⁵⁰ All students were given standard answer forms and were requested to write their names and remain quiet throughout the survey. To allow for individual reading abilities, the questions pertaining to each of the slides were read three times, at which time the children were instructed to circle the one answer which they believed best corresponded to the pictures shown.⁵¹

The following chapters will be divided into the particular content areas covered by the slides. Chapter II, in referring to both verbal and pictorial symbols, will focus its attention on the cognitive development in regard to children's awareness of the President, Vice President, Governor, and Democratic and Republican parties. Chapter III will deal primarily with the affective symbolic development of the sense of political community. Stressed will be the condensation symbols associated with "America," "The United States," "The Pledge of Allegiance," "The American Flag," and "The National Anthem."

⁵⁰Refer to Appendix II for the list of pictures and questions used.

⁵¹Because of the lack of time and the large number of students involved, the structured question technique was employed. As with any method, there exists certain limitations. In this case, the "intensity" and "why" questions were sacrificed at the expense of a convenient analysis.

Chapter IV, using the affective, normative approach, will seek to determine children's abstract conceptions of "freedom," "liberty," "peace," and "justice." And finally, Chapter V will look at children's cognitive and affective development in regard to "law," "law-making," and the "Constitution."

CHAPTER II

PERSONAL AND POLITICAL PARTY SYMBOLS

When the American thinks of his government,
he first thinks of the President as its symbol.
--Max Lerner⁵²

It has been generally established that the first point of contact children are likely to have with the overall structure of political authority is through their awareness of the President.⁵³ In their Chicago study of elementary children, Hess and Tourney pointed out that the young child's image of the national government was confined mainly to the President, and he was the figure about whom children believed they knew the most. Of the children sampled by Hess and Tourney, 95 per cent of the second graders reported seeing the President on television and knew his name.⁵⁴

⁵²Max Lerner, America as a Civilization (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), p. 377.

⁵³See Fred I. Greenstein, "More on Children's Images of the President," Public Opinion Quarterly, XXV (Winter, 1961), 648-654; Dean Jaros, "Children's Orientations Toward the President," The Journal of Politics, XXIX (May, 1967), 368-387; Roberta S. Sigel, "Image of a President: Some Insights into the Political Views of School Children," The American Political Science Review, LXII (March, 1968), 216-226.

⁵⁴Hess and Tourney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 42.

Greenstein's New Haven civic awareness test of fourth through eighth grades revealed similar conclusions. When asked to identify the name of the President and Mayor of New Haven, Greenstein reported that "all but a handful knew the names of the President and Mayor." By the fourth grade (the youngest group sampled), 96 per cent of the children knew the President's name, while 90 per cent knew the name of the Mayor.⁵⁵

However, both the Chicago and New Haven studies confined their awareness tests to simply asking the children the name of the particular office holders; neither involved a pictorial awareness test. Hence, this chapter seeks to find out whether children can identify the pictures of the President, Vice President and the Governor, and whether there is any noticeable difference between the pictorial and verbal responses. The children in this survey were first given multiple choice groupings of men and were asked to select the correct picture of the President, Vice President and Governor. Following each pictorial response, the children were read the names of well-known national and state figures and were asked to select the correct name of the President, Vice President and Governor.

⁵⁵Greenstein, "The Benevolent Leader," 937. The high awareness for the Mayor of New Haven might be due to the fact that he made it a practice to visit every classroom in the city annually.

As Figure 2 points out, by the time the children reached the first grade, they were well aware of what the President looked like. With the exception of the slightly lower score recorded by Winship in the first two grades, there was virtually no difference in the grade responses. The overall trend, however, was apparent. By the third grade nearly every child knew the President. The greatest increase appeared to be between

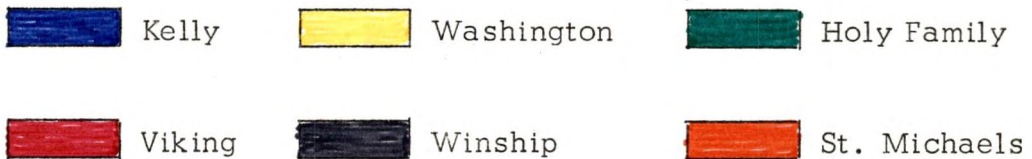
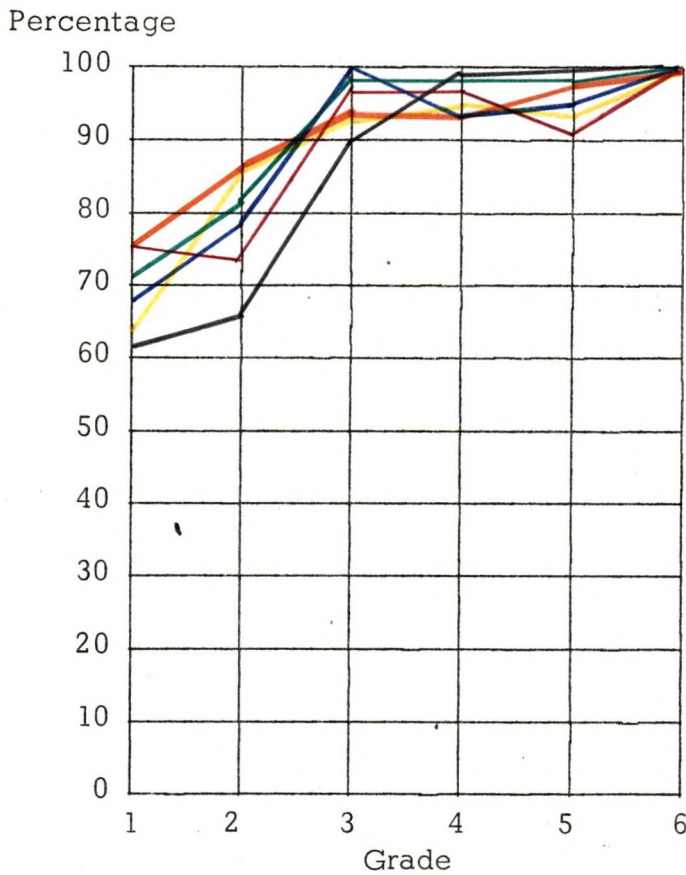


Fig. 2.--Percentage of children able to identify the President

first and third grades. Of the four pictures (Senator Hubert Humphrey, President Nixon, newsman Walter Cronkite and Senator Edmund Muskie), surprisingly enough the most frequently selected picture, other than that of President Nixon was that of Walter Cronkite. This in part suggests the important influence of the mass media.

The children were then read the names of Walter Cronkite, Hubert Humphrey, Richard Nixon and Willie Mays, and were asked to select the name of the President. Figure 3 shows that children in all grades were well aware of the President's name. Compared with the pictorial awareness, the overall percentage was virtually the same. The only noticeable difference was at the first grade where the scores were scattered between 45 per cent and 87 per cent, much more of a range than in Figure 2. Notice should be taken of the fact that, at the second grade, scores were considerably less than 95 per cent indicated by Hess and Tourney. In any event, it can be safely concluded that most children were aware of the President, and that by the end of the third grade nearly everyone knew his picture and name.

Symbolic Awareness of the Vice President

Although there have been many studies made on the civic awareness of the President, there has been next to nothing mentioned on children's awareness of the Vice President. Therefore, the children in this study were given pictures of Alabama Governor George Wallace,

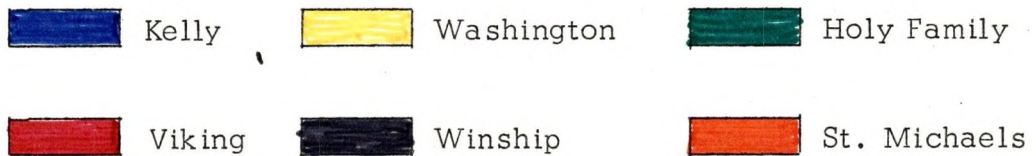
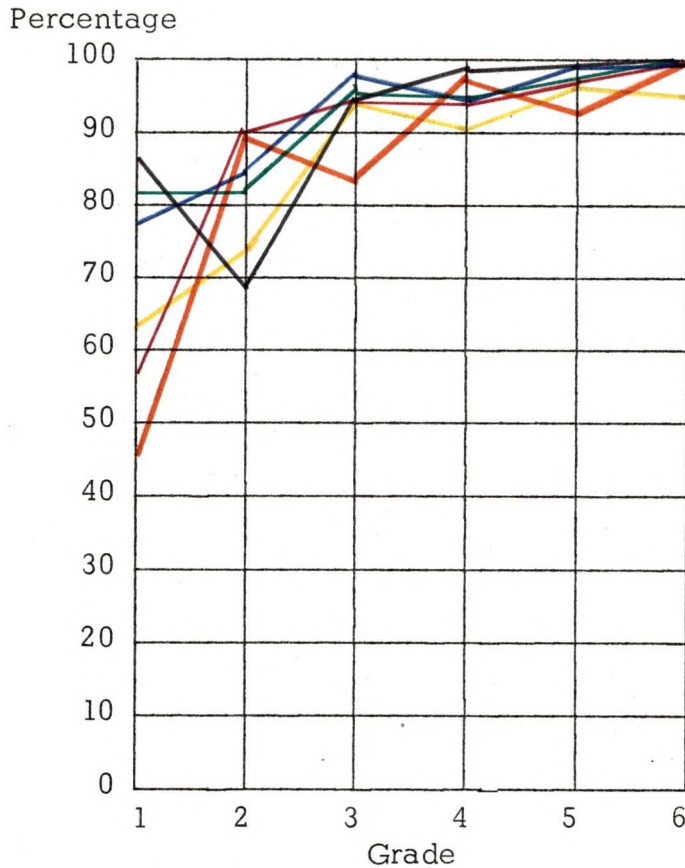


Fig. 3.--Percentage of children able to identify the name of the President

California Governor Ronald Reagan, Minnesota Senator Hubert Humphrey and Vice President Spiro Agnew and were asked to choose the picture of the Vice President. As Figure 4 reveals, there was a much lower saliency for the Vice President than the President. Between the first and fourth grades, the scores fluctuated widely between 16 per cent and

Percentage

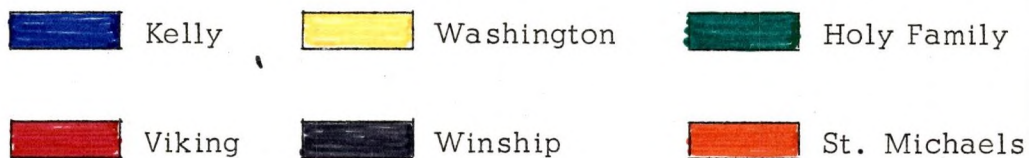
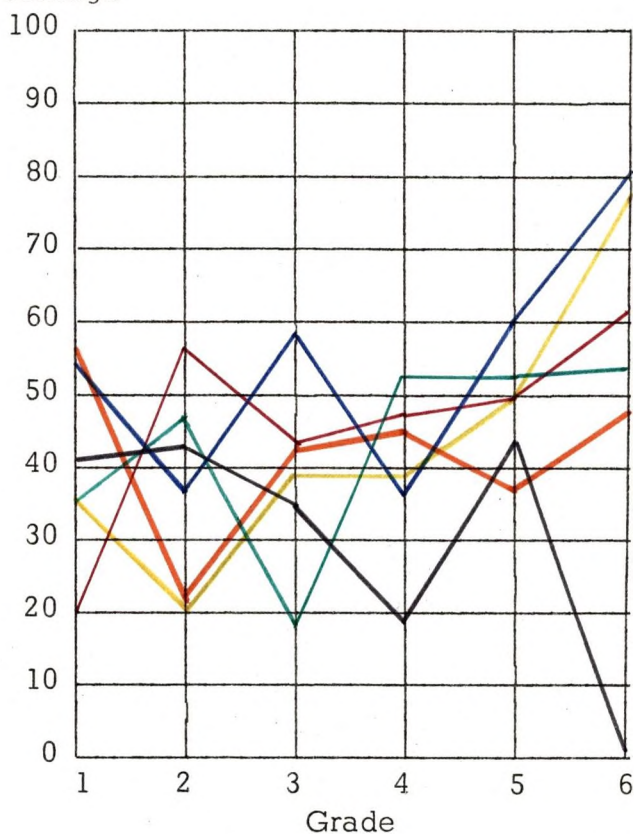


Fig. 4.--Percentage able to identify the picture of the Vice President

54 per cent, which in part suggests a great deal of uncertainty. It was only after the fifth grade that there was a noticeable trend upward. Although the scores were well spread out for all four men, Hubert Humphrey received the largest number of non-Agnew choices.

Generally, the children found it less difficult to identify the name of the Vice President than they did his picture, at least in the upper grades. However, Figure 5 indicates the difficulty children in the first four grades had in making the correct oral selection. There appeared to be an overall upswing over the six year span, but the upper

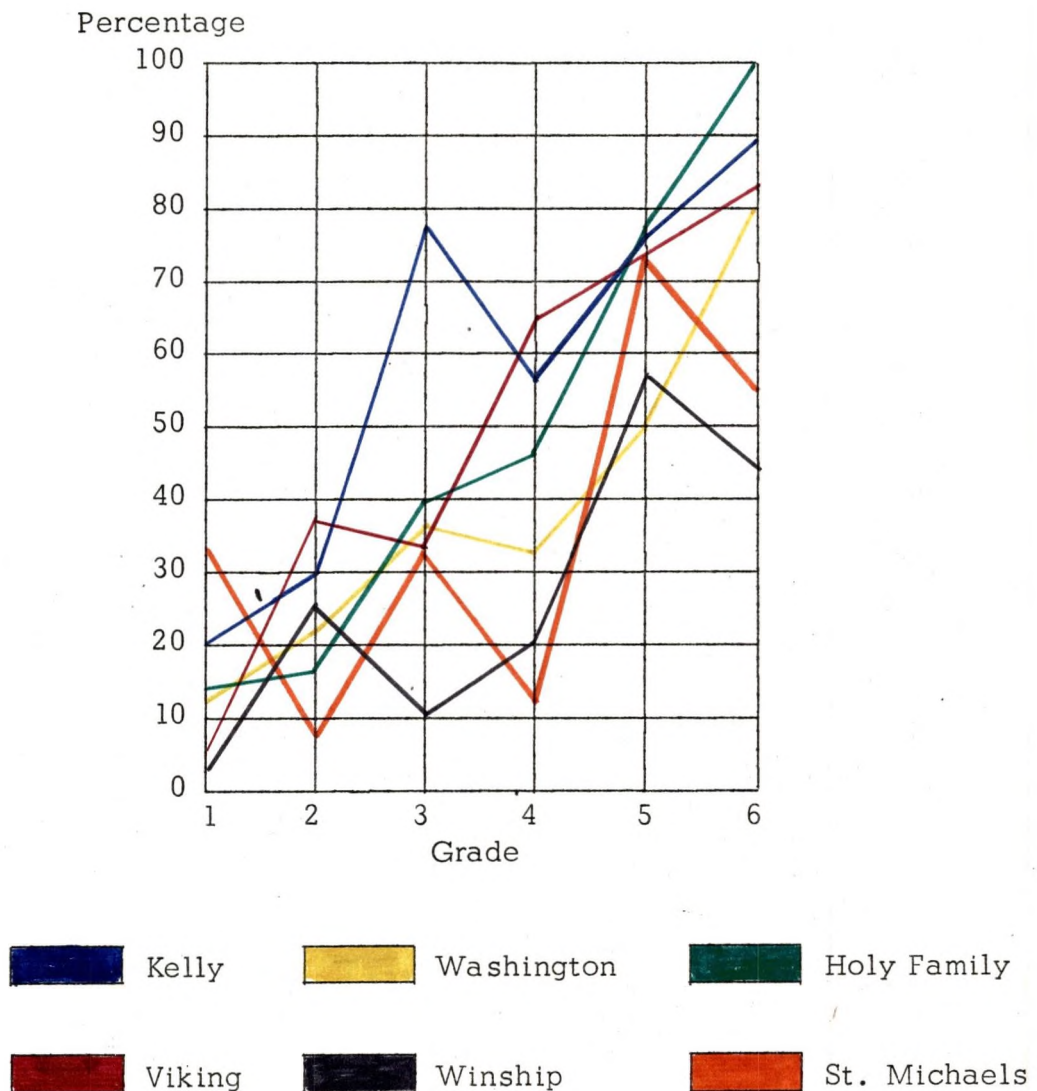


Fig. 5.--Percentage of children able to identify the name of the Vice President

socio-economic schools and Washington School appeared to do much better than either St. Michaels or Winship from the lower socio-economic grouping. It should also be mentioned that of the four names cited (Edward Kennedy, Spiro Agnew, George Wallace and Lyndon Johnson), the children in the first two grades selected Edward Kennedy most often. Once past the second grade, however, the scores became fairly well divided among Kennedy, Wallace and Johnson.

Symbolic Awareness of the Governor

Next the students were asked to select the picture of the Governor of North Dakota. Entries included pictures of North Dakota Governor William Guy, Minnesota Governor Wendell Anderson, North Dakota Lieutenant Governor Richard Larsen and Bismarck businessman Robert McCarney. As Figure 6 indicates, the first two grades (with the exception of Washington first grade), fluctuated around the 25 per cent mark. The scores then spread out widely at the fourth grade and then gradually moved upward through the remaining two grades. Of the six schools, the widest range of scores appeared to be between Kelly (highest) and Winship (lowest). Also the picture most often selected, besides that of Governor Guy, was that of Robert McCarney.

And last, the children were read the names of Robert McCarney, football star Dave Osborn, William Guy and Wendell Anderson and were asked to select the name of the Governor of North Dakota. Figure 7

Percentage

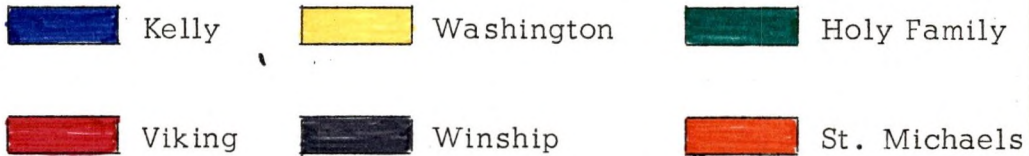
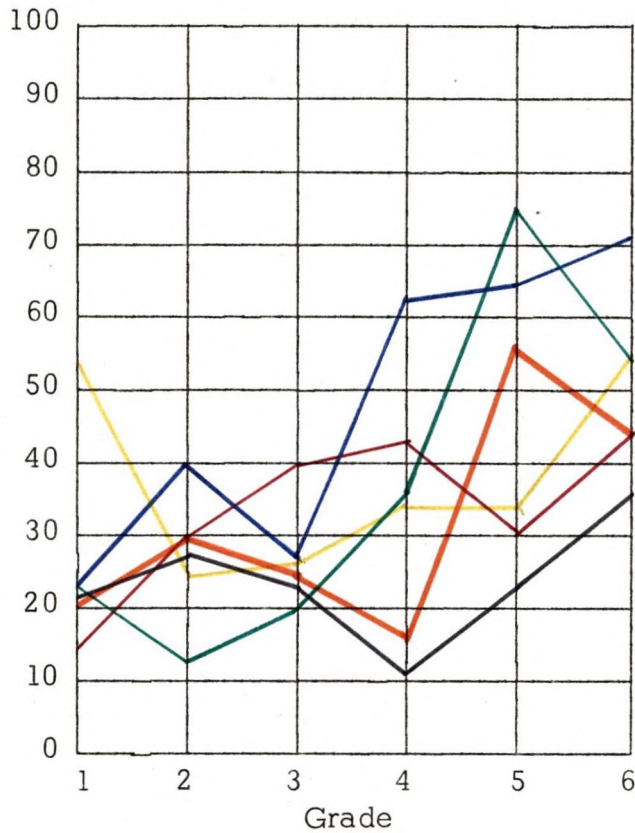


Fig. 6.--Percentage able to identify the picture of the Governor of North Dakota

points out that on this question the children scored not only much higher than they did on the pictorial awareness of the Governor, but they also scored higher than on either question in regard to the Vice President; scores generally ranged from around 20 per cent at the first grade to the

Percentage

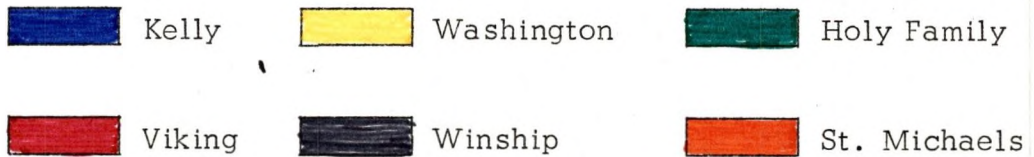
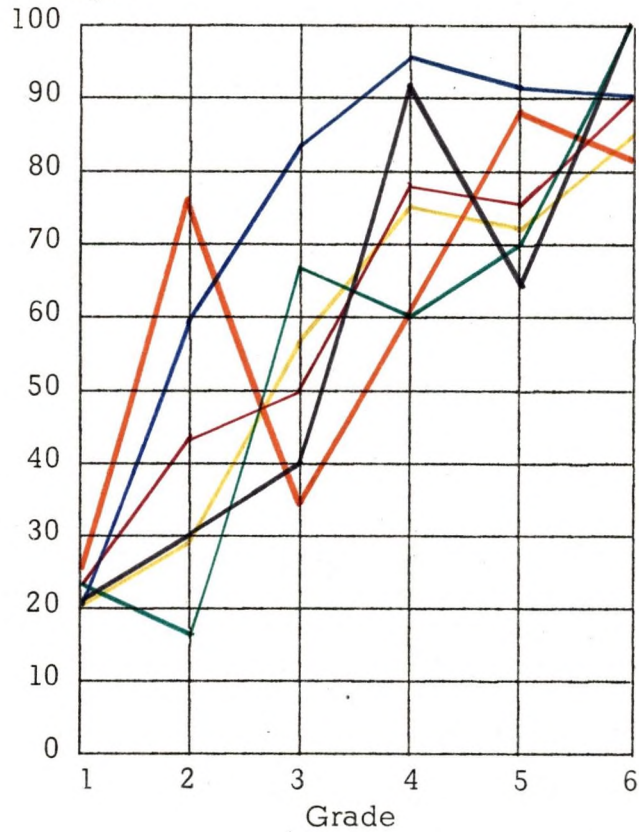


Fig. 7.--Percentage able to identify the name of the Governor of North Dakota

80 per cent and 90 per cent mark at the sixth grade. The greatest improvement was made between the third and fourth grades.

Political Party Symbols

Although not constitutionally established in the American form of government, political parties do pervade nearly every aspect of the political system. Ranney defines a democratic party as "an autonomous organization that makes nominations and contests elections in the hope of eventually gaining and exercising control of personnel and policies of government."⁵⁶ With the wide range of interests and cleavages in our country, the political parties serve to channel antagonism and divisions into a functioning part of the system. But perhaps even more important, political parties serve as convenient symbols for categorizing people in the political system.

Because of the degree to which a child hears his parents mention their party identification, it has been generally assumed that party identification is developed at an early age. Therefore, most research has been confined to verbally asking children their political party identification. To the present, however, there has never been a study on children's awareness of the traditional political party symbols, namely, the donkey and elephant. In this study the children's cognitive development was tested by projecting pictures of a donkey, a beagle, an eagle, and an elephant and asking the children to associate the correct animal with the corresponding political party. The questions were worded

⁵⁶Austin Ranney, The Governing of Men (Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1966), p. 332.

as follow: "When you hear the words 'Democratic (Republican) party,' which picture do you think of first?" Figures 8 and 9 indicate the symbolic cognitive development.

It is evident that young children are not aware of the traditional symbols which represent the respective political parties. It was not

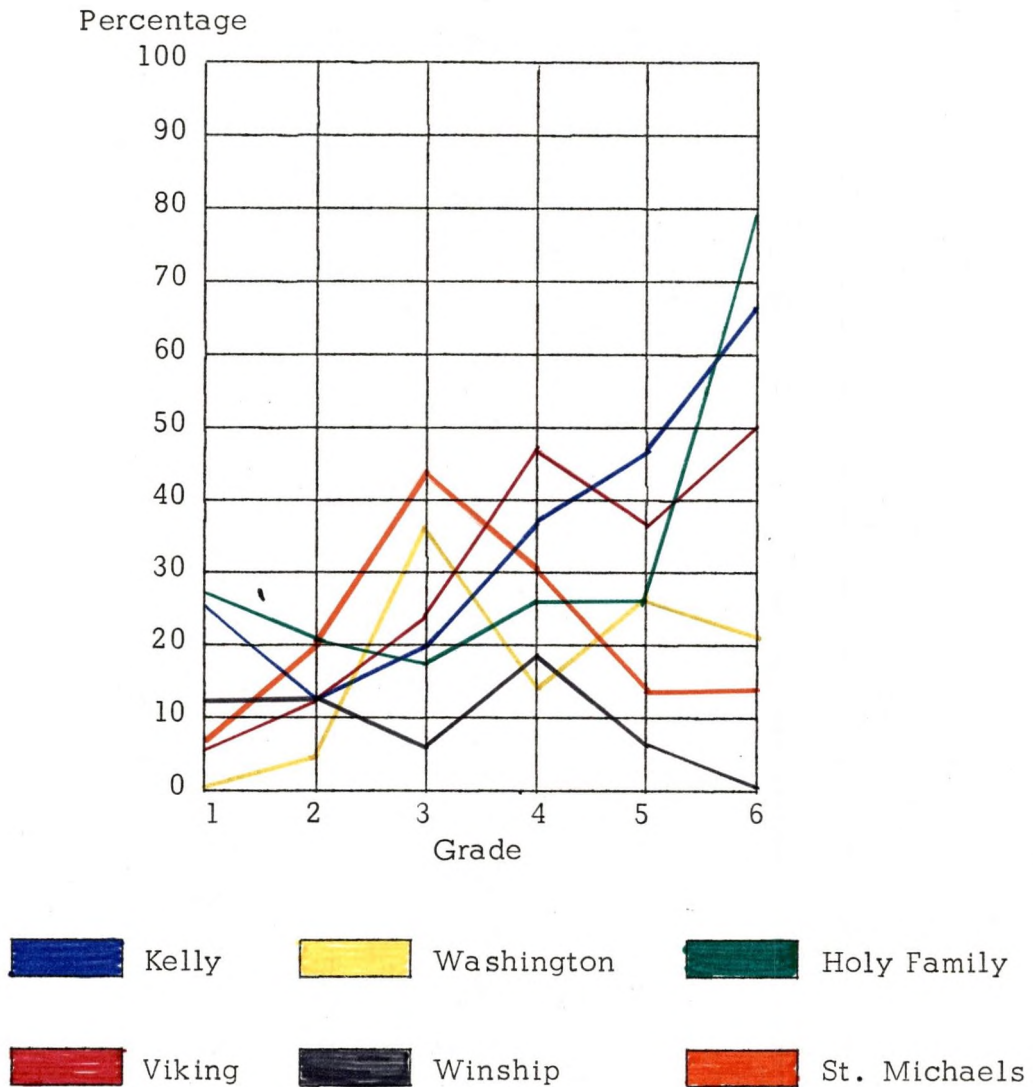


Fig. 8.--Percentage able to identify the Democratic party symbol

Percentage

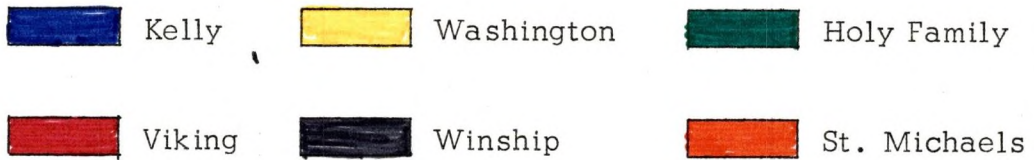
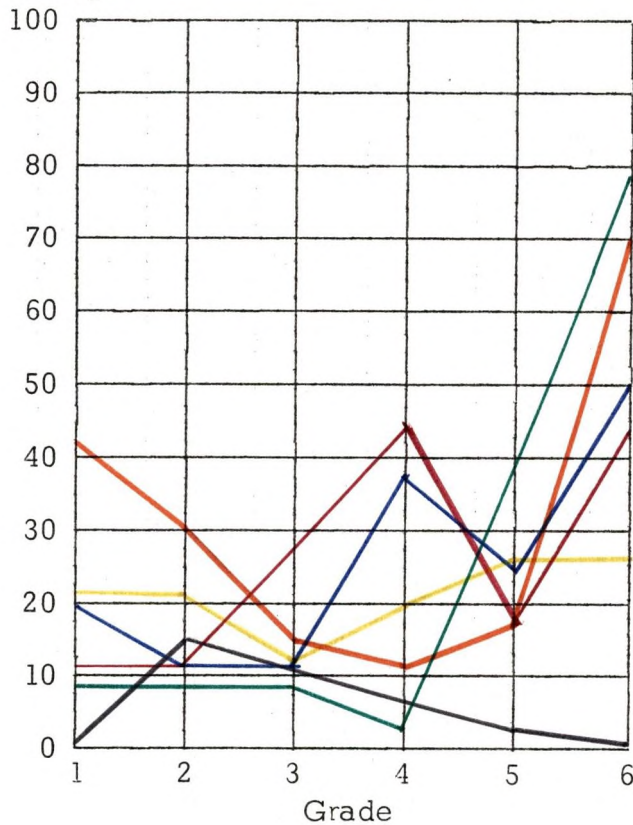


Fig. 9.--Percentage able to identify the Republican party symbol

until the sixth grade, if then, that children were able to associate the elephant with the Republican party or the donkey with the Democratic party. This is not to say the children were totally unaware of the fact that political parties exist. Rather, political parties were not associated with the normative adult symbols.

The possible explanation may lie in the fact that political parties are first associated with candidates who are identified as Democrats or Republicans. Just as children's first contact with government is the President, so might their first contact with political parties come when they label presidential candidates Democrat or Republican.

Summary

The results of the Grand Forks study indicate that by the end of their first year in school, children were well aware of both the picture and name of the President. Yet children in the early grades were only slightly aware of either the Vice President or the Governor. The greatest increase in Vice Presidential awareness was in the fourth grade for the verbal symbols and the fifth grade for the pictorial. The most surprising finding was the large number of children who knew the Governor's name by the end of the third grade. On the whole, there was a much greater awareness for the verbal symbols than the pictorial.

In regard to the traditional political party symbols of the donkey and elephant, it was found that few children before the sixth grade were aware of their symbolic importance. This is not to say that children were unaware of political parties. But it does prove that the traditional political party symbols do not serve the same condensation function for elementary children as they do for the adult.

CHAPTER III

SYMBOLS OF THE POLITICAL COMMUNITY

The sense of political community is the psychological basis of the nation's existence. This includes a general sense of belonging to a group which is characterized by an identification with a particular geographic area (America, North Dakota, etc.), a common history, language, literature, and culture.

Merritt⁵⁷ points out that there are six perceptual and behavioral patterns to a sense of group or community awareness.

1. There is the external perception of the group's existence; that is, people who are not members of the group recognize its existence and differentiate it from other groups through their terminology.
2. There must be a recognition of the group by its own members who begin to use certain collective terms in reference to their group.

⁵⁷Richard L. Merritt, Symbols of American Community, 1735-1775 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1966), pp. 15-17.

3. Members of the group share patterns of attention; that is, they pay attention to the same things and events.
4. There is a recognition that certain events or objects are of common interest to members of the group.
5. There is some probability that the members will in fact be able to coordinate their behavior in an effort to promote their common interests.
6. Finally, certain persistent structures or processes must exist to perform the function in the group interest, for example, a constitution.

Perhaps the importance of this sense of community can best be seen in regard to the American Revolution. Prior to independence, most American colonists considered themselves as being "British colonists" or "His Majesty's colonists." Few considered themselves to be "Americans." However, beginning with colonial protest over the Stamp Act in 1765, and continuing through 1775, many colonists found they had something in common and, therefore, began to refer to themselves more and more as "Americans."

Merritt's⁵⁸ symbolic content analysis of colonial newspapers, editorials, letters, and books between 1735 and 1775 reveals a high

⁵⁸Ibid., pp. 142-182.

correlation between colonial protest over British policies and the frequency of patriotic terms used. For example, Merritt found the term "American" appeared quite consistently after 1765. This in part suggests the importance that the sense of community played in causing the needed psychological break with the mother country.

One of the initial features of the child's political involvement is also this same sense of belonging to the political community. Easton and Hess⁵⁹ concluded that by the time most children reach the second grade, they have become firmly attached to the political community. They discovered that most children found it impossible to imagine living anywhere other than the United States.

Thus, it appears that children in the United States learn at an early age that they are "Americans" and live in the "United States."⁶⁰ And it is also very likely that ceremonies and rituals such as the National Anthem and Pledge of Allegiance play an extremely important part in the indoctrination and reinforcement of children's conceptions of the political community.

⁵⁹Easton and Hess, "The Child's Political World," 236-237.

⁶⁰For an interesting discussion on how Swiss children develop both the cognitive and affective concept of the political community see Jean Piaget and Anne-Marie Weil, "The Development in Children of the Idea of the Homeland and of Relations with Other Countries," International Social Science Bulletin, III (Fall, 1951), 561-578.

Symbolic Concept of America

In reference to the above concept of political community, the children in the Grand Forks study were asked, "When you think of America, which of the following pictures do you think of first?" The pictures from which to select included an elephant, an eagle, a donkey and a black panther. Figure 10 indicates the percentage of children selecting the eagle. It may be safely concluded that by the end of the first grade the overwhelming majority of children associated the eagle with America. Of the remaining pictures, the beagle was the second most selected picture while the black panther received virtually no response.

Symbolic Concept of the United States

Next the children were asked, "When you think of the United States, which of the following pictures do you think of first?" The choices included pictures of George Washington, Jesus, the American flag, and Mao Tse-tung. Figures 11 and 12 denote the definite trend. On the whole, first and second grade children identified with George Washington while the upper grade children beyond a doubt identified with the American flag. This finding lends support to the Easton and Hess hypothesis that as children grow older, their warm feelings generated for personal symbols (in this case George Washington) are gradually

Percentage

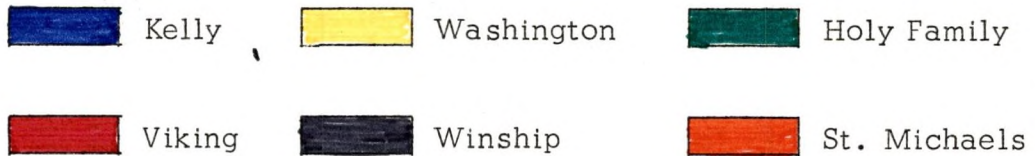
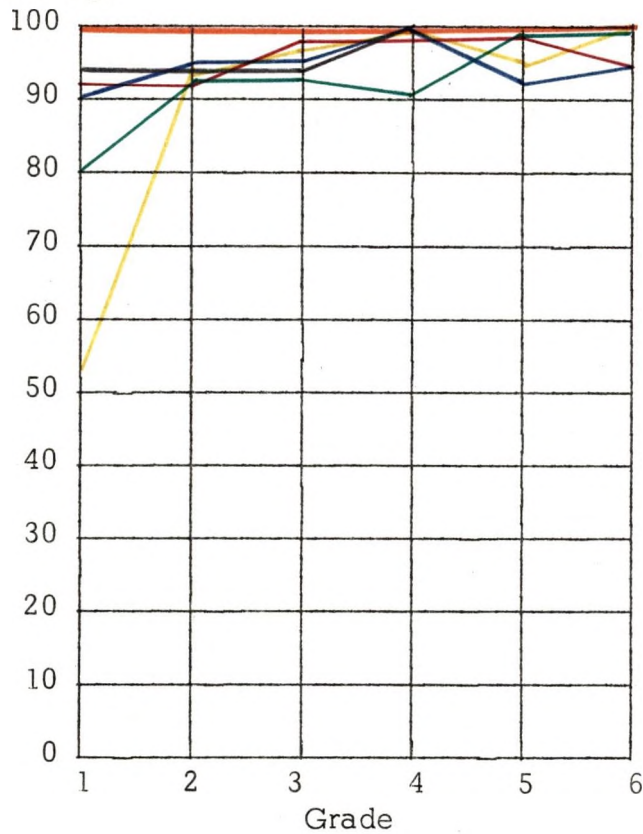


Fig. 10.--Percentage associating the eagle with America

transferred to impersonal objects (the American flag) which are more inclusive of the political community.⁶¹

Easton and Hess also found that young children often have difficulty disentangling God and country. They hypothesize that it is

⁶¹Easton and Hess, "The Child's Political World," 131.

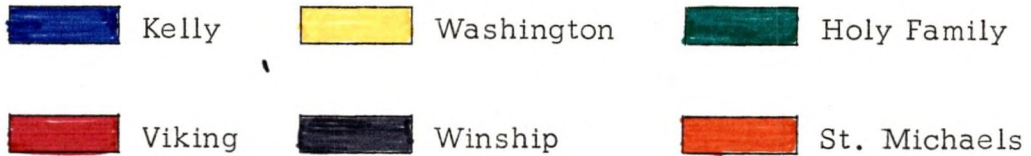
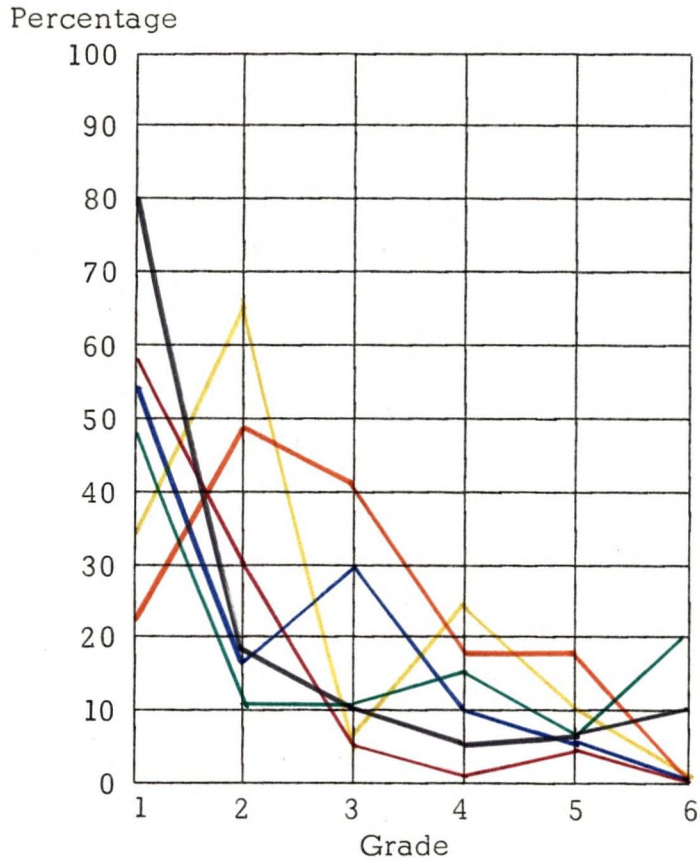


Fig. 11.--Percentage associating George Washington with the United States

the similarity between political and religious piety and ritual which accounts for this confusion.⁶² However, the Grand Forks study revealed only nominal association between the picture of Jesus and the United States. Finally, the picture of Mao elicited only a minute response.

⁶²Ibid., 138.

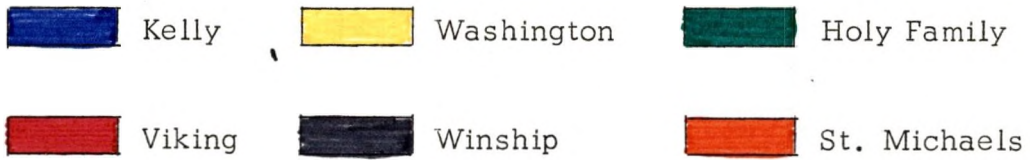
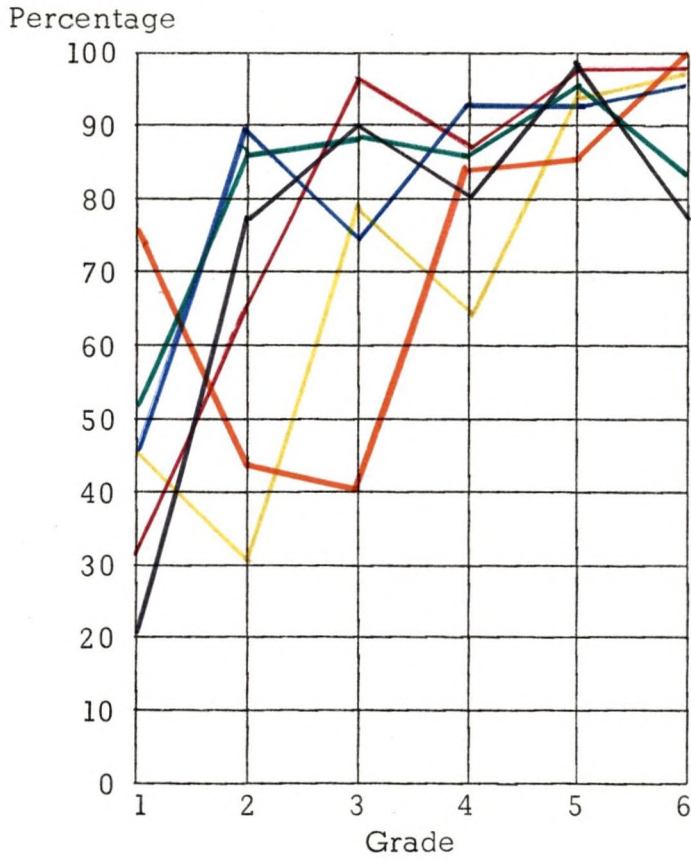


Fig. 12.--Percentage associating the American flag with the United States

Symbolic Concept of the American Flag

Throughout the history of mankind, symbols have exerted an impelling influence upon the lives of men. The Cross, The Flag are the embodiment of our ideals, and teach us not only how to live, but how to die.

--Lawrence Phelps Tower⁶³

The children were next asked, "When you see the American Flag, which of the following pictures do you think of first?" Choices included George Washington, Uncle Sam, a cross and the flag of the Soviet Union. As might be expected, the two personal symbols of George Washington and Uncle Sam were selected most frequently. Figures 13 and 14 signify the levels of response.

Figure 13 shows a proclivity to select the picture of George Washington up to the third or fourth grade at which time the percentage gradually dropped. By contrast, the picture of Uncle Sam (Figure 14), although widely distributed up to the third grade, became fairly stable in the fourth grade. After fourth grade, however, the number of children selecting Uncle Sam gradually but consistently moved upward from about 25 per cent at the fourth grade to 40 per cent to 55 per cent at the sixth grade.

Once again, few children associated the American flag with the religious symbol while even fewer associated it with the Soviet flag.

⁶³Lawrence Phelps Tower, Proudly We Hail: The Story of Our National Anthem (Fairfield, N. J.: The Economics Press, Inc., 1965), p. 18.

Percentage

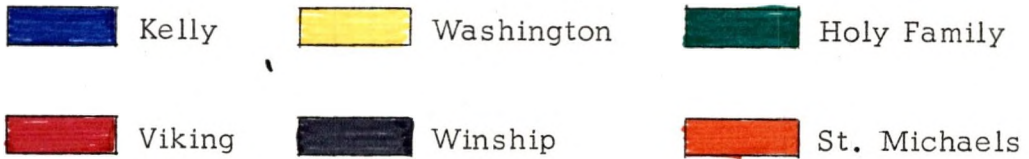
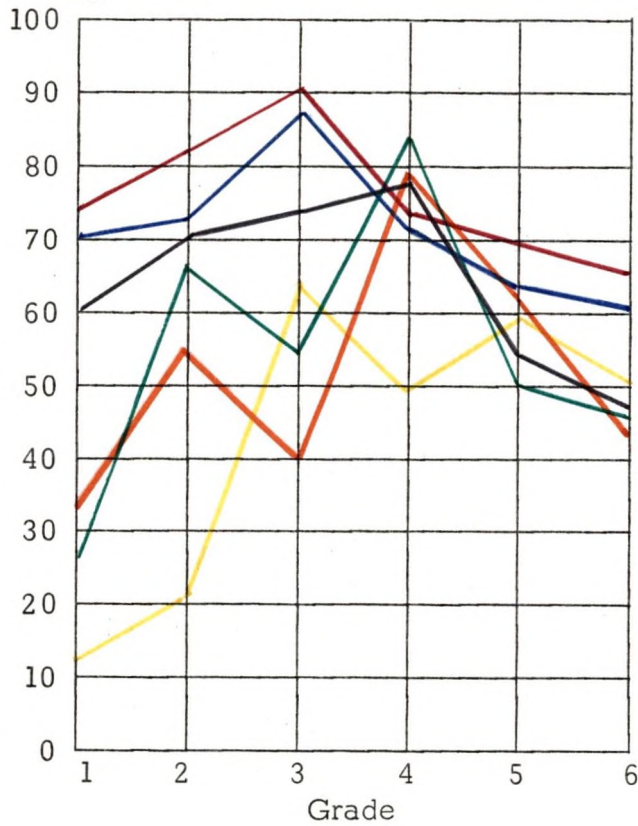


Fig. 13.--Percentage associating George Washington with the American flag

This latter finding closely corresponds to two previous studies on children's symbolic perception of the American flag.

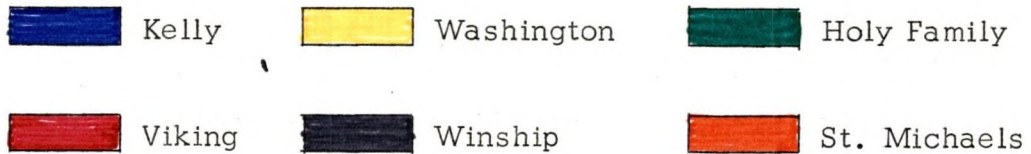
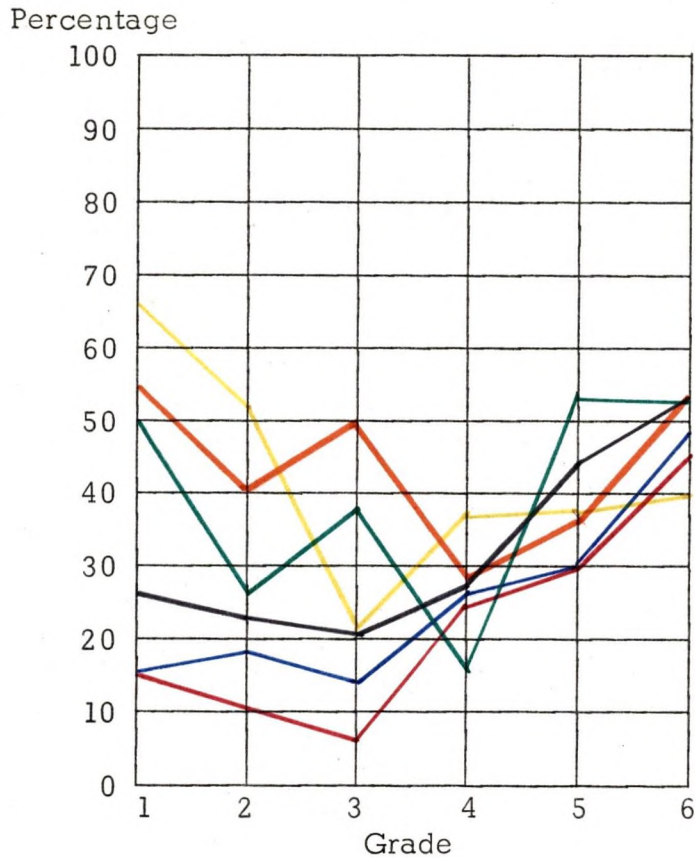


Fig. 14.--Percentage associating Uncle Sam with the American flag

Lawson's⁶⁴ New York study of elementary and secondary school children (kindergarten through twelve) found that when children were given a multiple choice of flags and asked to select the "best" flag, over

⁶⁴Edwin D. Lawson, "Development of Patriotism in Children--A Second Look," The Journal of Psychology, LV (April, 1963), 279-286.

70 per cent in all grades consistently selected the American flag as the "best." By contrast, the Soviet flag, was immediately and totally rejected.

Weinstein⁶⁵ discovered that pre-school children (ages four to five) had very little symbolic conception of the flag. One flag was generalized to stand for all flags. However, by the end of the first grade, Weinstein found that children began to exhibit the notion of another country. Hence, the conception of the American flag after the first grade was a matter of simple dichotomy; there were "good" flags and "bad" flags.

Symbolic Conception of the Pledge of Allegiance

To test their symbolic conception of the Pledge of Allegiance, the children were given pictures of an elementary classroom, Mao Tse-tung, Abraham Lincoln, and a map of the United States and were asked, "When you say the Pledge of Allegiance, which of the following pictures do you think of first?" Figure 15 shows the breakdown of all four responses in each of the schools.

As Figure 15 points out, the picture of Lincoln was selected by well over 40 per cent of the first grade children. Yet beginning with grades two and three, there was a steady and persistent drop in the choice of Lincoln until the fifth grade where (with the exception of

⁶⁵Eugene A. Weinstein, "Development of the Concept of Flag and the Sense of National Identity," Child Development, XXVIII (June, 1957), 167-174.

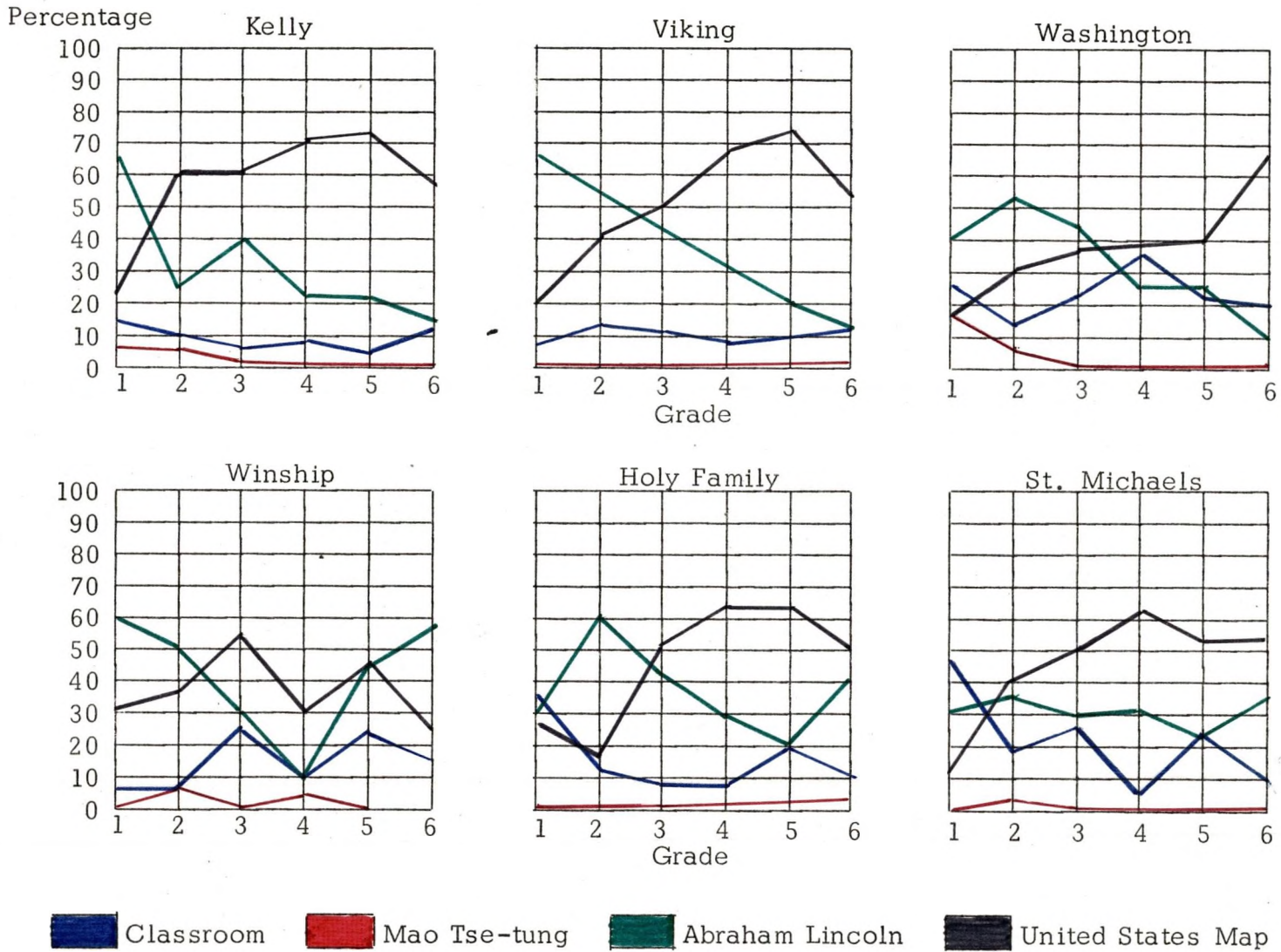


Fig. 15.--Percentage by schools of symbols associated with the Pledge of Allegiance

Winship) the percentage dropped well below 40 per cent. Note, however, should be taken of the slight, but unexplainable, shift upward in the sixth grade.

By contrast, the map of the United States moved from around the 25 per cent mark in the first grade to somewhere around 50 per cent and above by the sixth grade. The plausible explanation again may lie in the fact that the personal symbol (represented by Lincoln) gradually gave way with age to the impersonal and more abstract political symbol (the map of the United States). The third most frequent choice was the picture of the classroom with somewhat higher scores recorded for the lower socio-economic schools. And last, the picture of Mao received little or no association.

Symbolic Concept of the National Anthem

The final symbol in regard to the concept of political community was the National Anthem. Children were asked, "When you sing the 'National Anthem,' which of the following pictures do you think of first?" Alternatives included pictures of Uncle Sam, a crowd of standing people, the Bible, and a basketball game. It was assumed that the young child might tend to associate the National Anthem with some familiar event such as a basketball game or a standing crowd. However, as Figure 16 shows, by the first grade well over 50 per cent of the

Percentage

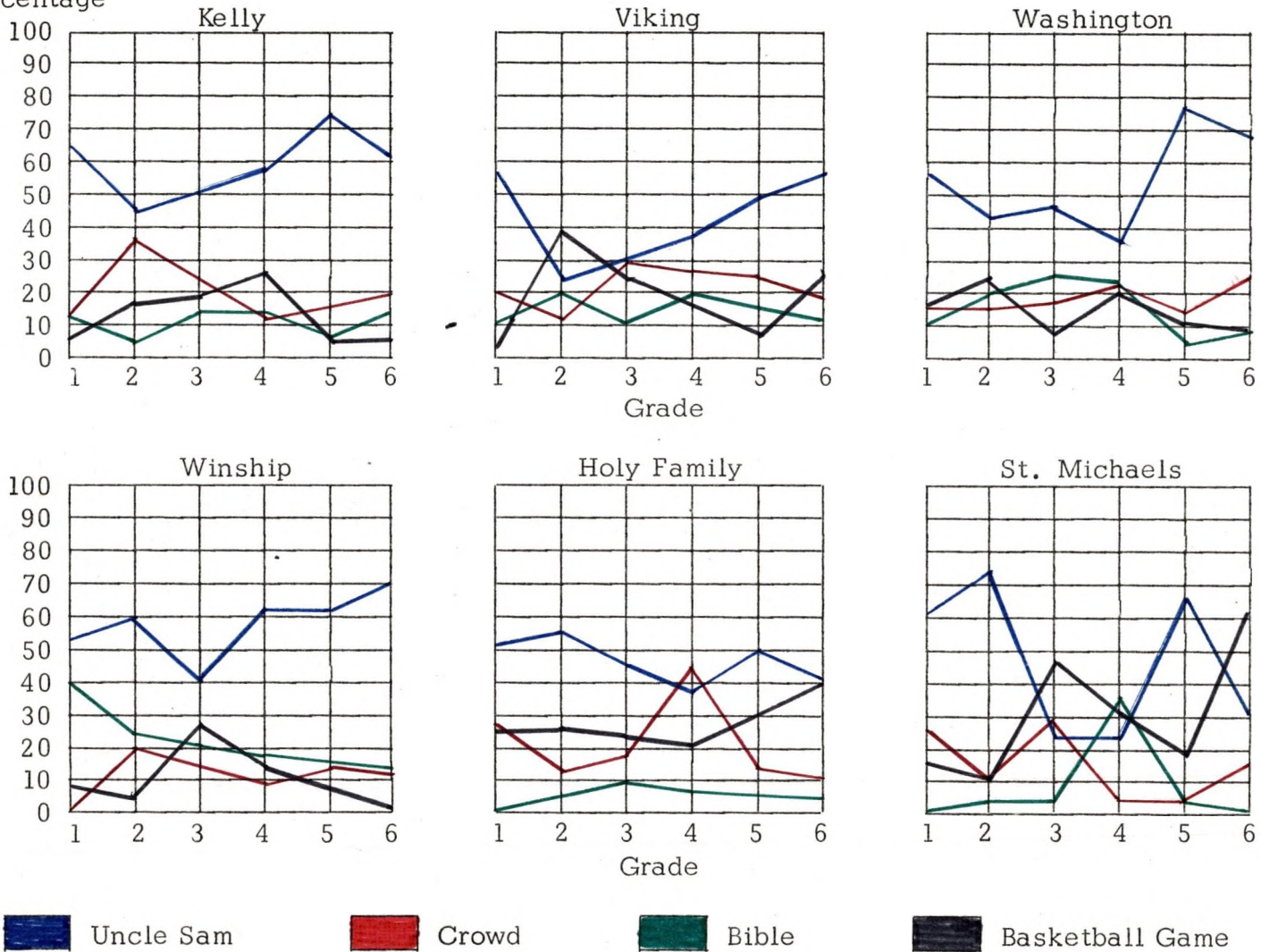


Fig. 16.--Percentage by schools of symbols associated with the National Anthem

children selected Uncle Sam; and, with the exception of St. Michaels, this remained fairly constant throughout the elementary years.

Of the remaining three choices (the Bible, crowd, and basketball game), there was no discernible pattern. The greatest fluctuation accrued in the two parochial schools, but the overall pattern was not too different from public schools.

Summary

It appears that children at a very early age affectively perceive the normative symbols which represent their political community. For example, an overwhelming number of children in all grades were able to associate the eagle with America, the American flag and George Washington with the United States, George Washington and Uncle Sam with the American flag, Abraham Lincoln and the map of the United States with the Pledge of Allegiance, and Uncle Sam with the National Anthem.

Young children identified early with personal political symbols (especially national heroes such as Washington and Lincoln). However, by the third grade these personal symbols were affectively transferred to the more impersonal political symbols (represented by the American flag and map of the United States).

Children in all grades were able to discriminate symbols of other political communities (namely, Mao Tse-tung and the Soviet flag). And

finally, few children beyond the first grade had trouble disentangling symbols of God and country.

CHAPTER IV

IMPERSONAL ABSTRACT POLITICAL SYMBOLS

Of the impersonal abstract symbols in our society, none are more pervasive than the concepts of "freedom," "liberty," "peace," and "justice." Indeed, these concepts appear in nearly every patriotic song, slogan, and pledge. Yet, Easton and Hess have suggested that the only impersonal abstract symbol which appears before the third grade with any regularity is that of "freedom." However, there remains little empirical information on how children perceive these lofty ideals.

Symbolic Concept of Freedom

In the Grand Forks study, children were given pictures of a swastika, a man voting, a crowd picketing, and the Liberty Bell. Then they were asked, "When you hear the word 'freedom,' which of the following pictures do you think of first?" As Figure 17 explains, the Liberty Bell was the overwhelming choice in all schools. In four schools (Kelly, Viking, Washington, and Holy Family), the percentage of children selecting the Liberty Bell rose steadily from between 21 per cent and 41 per cent at the first grade, to between 76 per cent and 91 per cent at the sixth grade. In contrast, the percentage of children selecting the Liberty

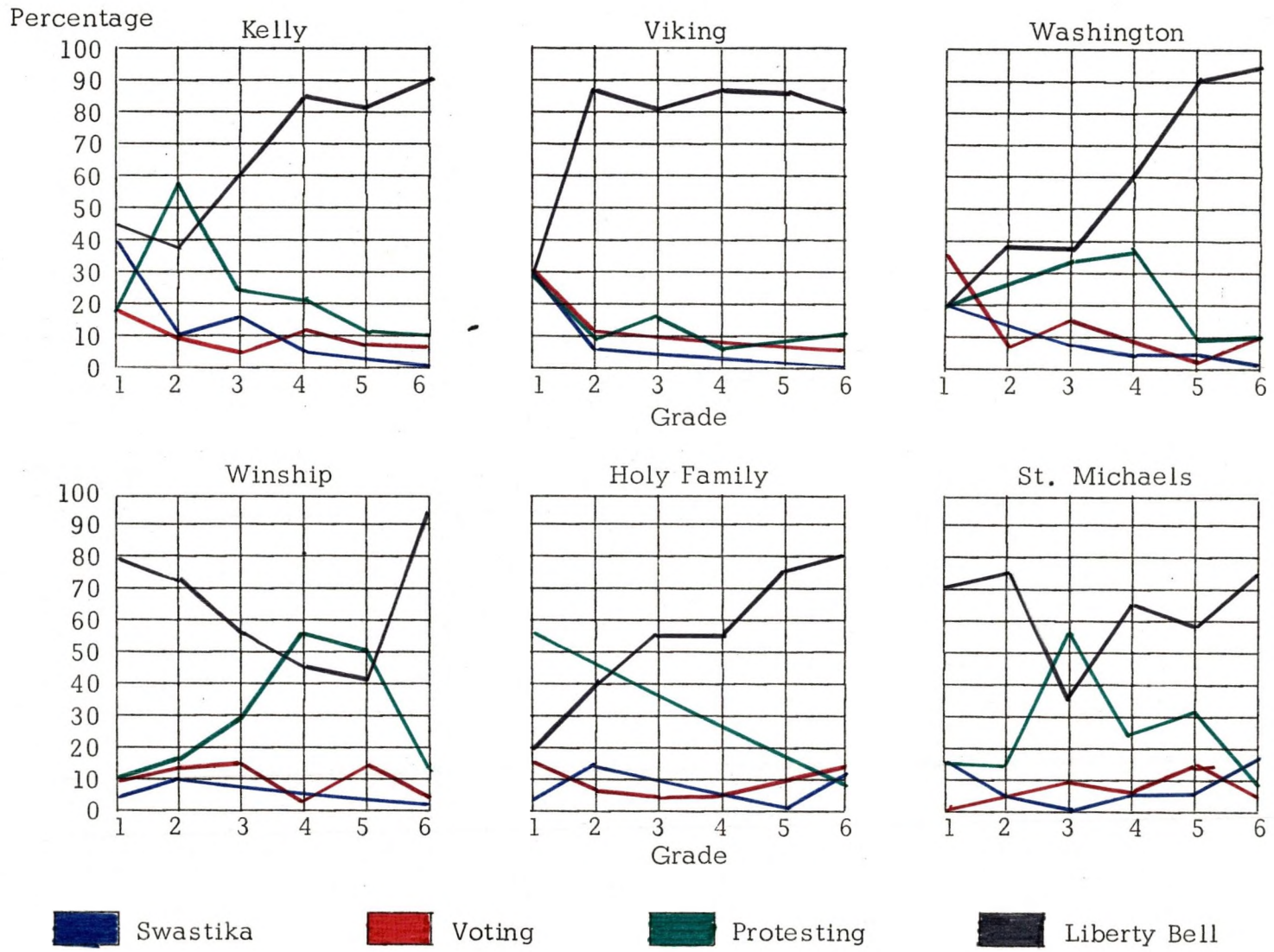


Fig. 17.--Percentage by schools of symbols associated with freedom

Bell in Winship and St. Michaels was extremely high for all grades (between 70 per cent and 89 per cent).

The second most frequent response was to the picture of the protesters. Scores reached the 50 per cent mark on several occasions (usually the middle grades), but dropped to 10 per cent or below by grade six. The scant response for the picture of the man voting seems contrary to earlier findings by Easton and Dennis.⁶⁶ In their study, children were given pictures of ten political symbols and were asked to select the symbol which best represented their government. Included were pictures of a policeman, George Washington, Uncle Sam, a person voting, the Supreme Court, the Capitol, Congress, the American flag, the Statue of Liberty and President Kennedy. Easton and Dennis found that the picture of voting was one of the four most frequently selected pictures (others were George Washington, John Kennedy and Congress).

If the Easton and Dennis finding is correct, then one would assume that the low percentage recorded in the Grand Forks study for the picture of a man voting was not due to a lack of cognitive awareness. Rather, it may be due to the fact that the Liberty Bell served more as a condensation symbol than either of the other pictures. Edelman puts forth a

⁶⁶David Easton and Jack Dennis, "The Child's Image of Government," The Annals of the American Association of Political and Social Science, CCCLXI (September, 1965), 40-57.

plausible explanation for this tendency to associate freedom with the Liberty Bell:

The words a group employs and on which it relies to evoke a response can often be taken as an index of group norms and conceptual frameworks The word "liberty," . . . is apparently preferred by groups espousing individual freedom from state control and deprivation, as in "civil liberty." At the time of the Revolutionary War "liberty" evidently aroused some of the connotations "freedom" does today, and so we have the "liberty bell." We are sufficiently conditioned to the current usages that each word serves as a cue for the appropriate set of norms, though not consciously so. It evokes a rationalization for a particular kind of behavior and an argument against another kind.⁶⁷

Symbolic Concept of Liberty

This same association appeared to hold true when the children were asked, "When you hear the word 'liberty,' which of the following pictures do you think of first?" Included were pictures of the Statue of Liberty, Mao Tse-tung, the flag of the Soviet Union and a continental soldier. Figure 18 shows that the Statue of Liberty was the overwhelming choice (with the exception of the Kelly and Viking first grades and St. Michaels third grade). Like the Liberty Bell, the Statue of Liberty appeared to be a very effective condensation symbol.

Of the remaining pictures, that of the continental soldier was the second most frequent selection. With the exception of Washington School, the scores were generally much higher in the early and middle

⁶⁷Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics, p. 122.

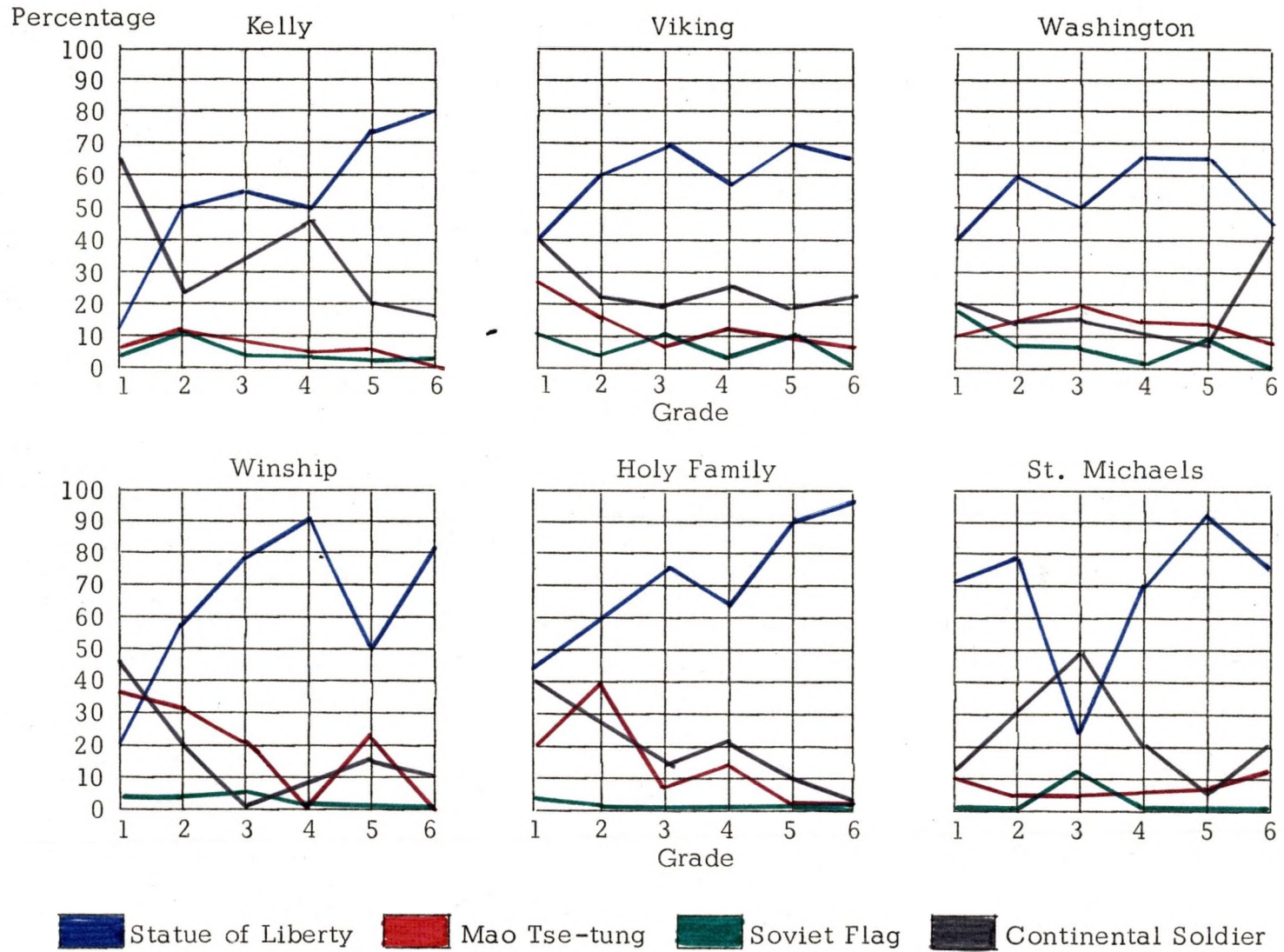


Fig. 18.--Percentage by schools of symbols associated with liberty

grades than in either grades five or six. The Soviet flag scored consistently the lowest while the picture of Mao faired only moderately better.

The Symbolic Concept of Peace

Several noteworthy studies have been made in regard to children's perception of "peace." Hawkes, in his study, found that elementary school children were even more likely than adults to approve of peace and reject power.⁶⁸ Andrain's California study reported that, whereas adults valued both peace and national security, children only valued peace. "Most students neither equated military power with greatness nor identified with its military leaders."⁶⁹ And finally, Hess and Tourney⁷⁰ asked elementary children, "Who does the most to keep peace in the world: The United States or the United Nations?" Results indicated that at the second grade the choice was overwhelmingly the United States, while by the eighth grade it was just as decidedly the United Nations.

⁶⁸Glenn R. Hawkes, "A Study of the Personal Values of Elementary School Children," Educational and Psychological Measurement, XII (Winter, 1952), 659.

⁶⁹Andrain, Children and Civic Awareness, p. 49.

⁷⁰Hess and Tourney, Development of Political Attitudes in Children, p. 36.

The children in the Grand Forks study were asked, "When you hear the word 'peace,' which of the following pictures do you think of first?" The pictures included Chinese Premier Chou En-lai holding his fingers in a "V" formation, the United Nations building, the United States Army, and President Nixon. Figure 19 indicates the remarkably high score recorded by Chou En-lai. Apparently, the formation held by the Chinese leader offered the most contemporary symbol of peace.

The remainder of the scores in the Grand Forks study closely correspond to those found in the earlier studies. The Army, scored well below 30 per cent in all grades (except for the Kelly first grade, and the second, third and fourth grades at Winship). President Nixon generally ranked second to Chou En-lai, while the United Nations ran a poor fourth. The poor showing by the United Nations may be due either to the fact that the children were cognitively unaware of the building or that they did not affectively associate the United Nations with peace.

Symbolic Concept of Justice

Finally, the Grand Forks children were asked, "When you hear the word 'justice,' which of the following pictures do you think of first?" Selections included pictures of a courtroom, the White House, Scales of Justice, and traffic signs. Figure 20 indicates that children repeatedly selected either the White House or the courtroom scene.

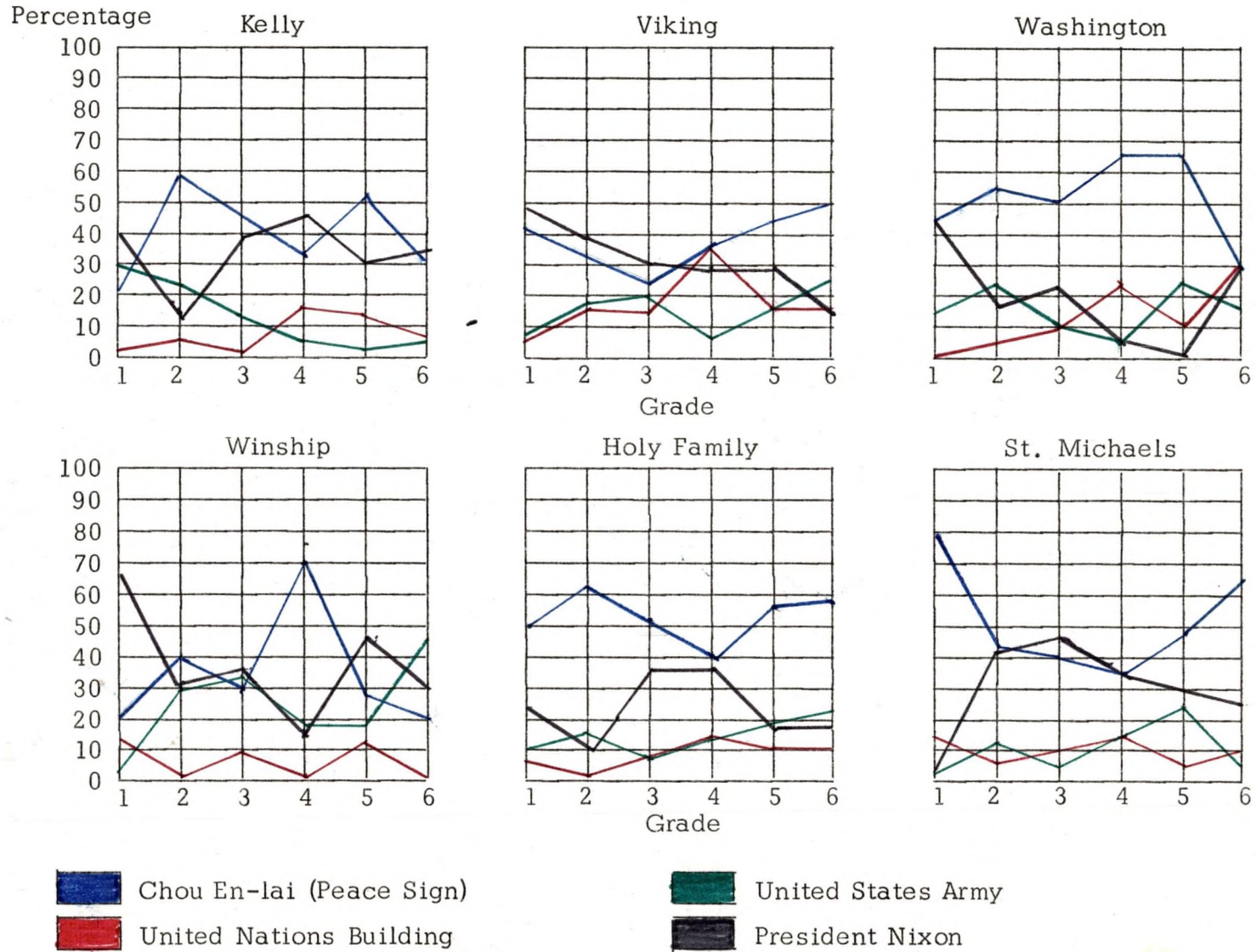


Fig. 19.--Percentage by schools of symbols associated with peace

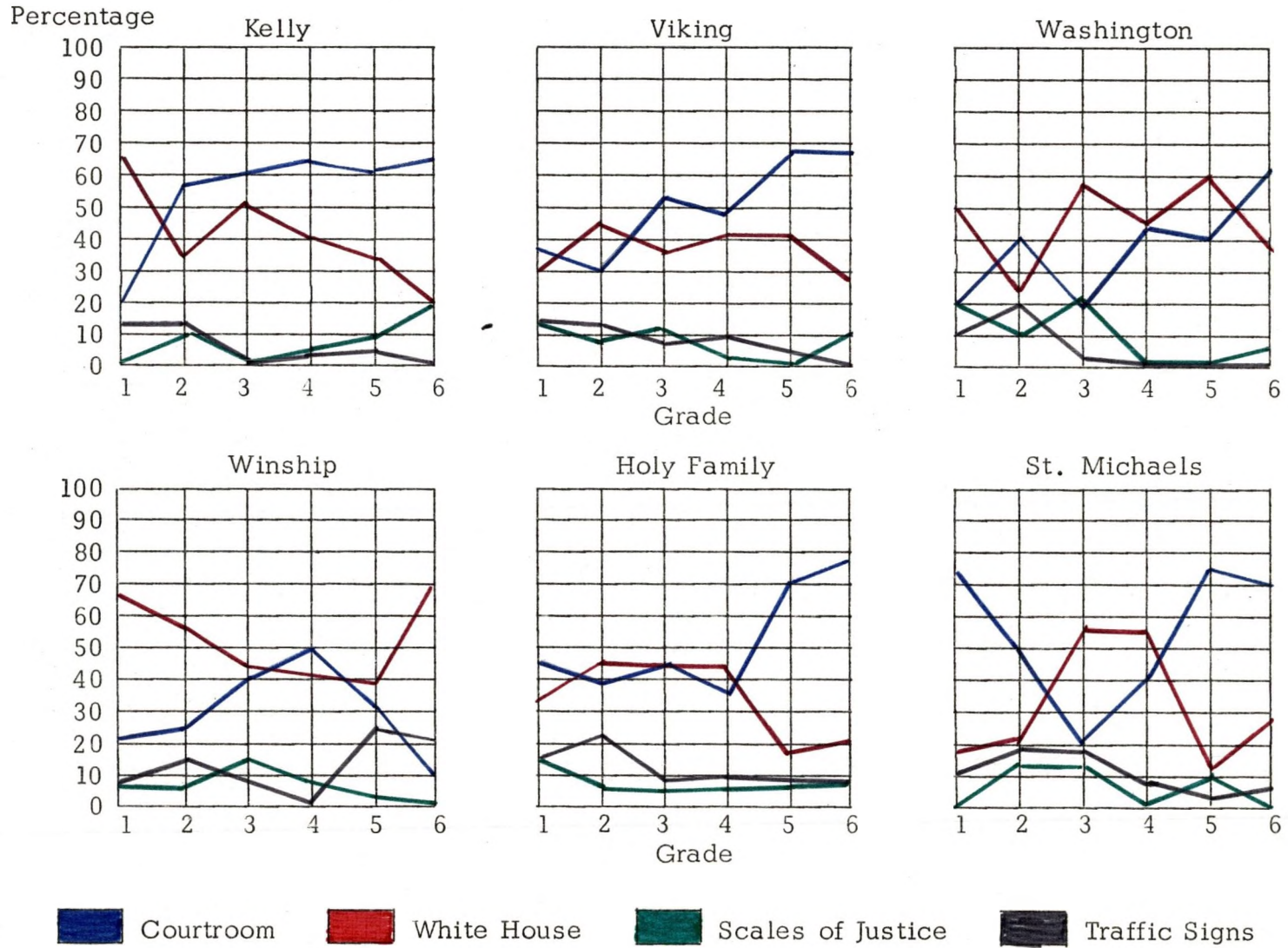


Fig. 20.--Percentage by schools of symbols associated with justice

Three first grades (Kelly, Washington, and Winship) overwhelmingly picked the White House, while the remaining three first grades (Viking, Holy Family, and especially St. Michaels) selected the courtroom scene. However, by grade six most children (excluding Winship) preferred the courtroom scene as being symbolic of justice. It should also be noted that few children selected the Scales of Justice (a normative adult condensation symbol) or the traffic signs.

Although this study did not set out to examine sex differences in political socialization, one important study should be mentioned pertaining to the concept of justice. Durkin's⁷¹ study of lower and middle class elementary children revealed that there were statistically no significant sex differences in children's concepts of justice. Ironically, in the Grand Forks study, the Winship sixth grade consisted of only girls, and judging from the wide difference in answers for Winship sixth grade as opposed to the other five schools (Figure 20), one may wonder if sex difference in children's concepts of justice do not in fact exist.

Summary

In regard to the concept of freedom, it appears that few children affectively perceived freedom in terms of civil rights (voting or protesting). Instead, nearly all children normatively associated freedom with

⁷¹Dolores Durkin, "Sex Differences in Children's Concepts of Justice," Child Development, XXXI (June, 1960), 362-368.

the Liberty Bell. And when asked to associate a symbol with liberty, the overwhelming number of children in all grades selected the Statue of Liberty. Thus, it seems that most children, at least by the end of their second grade, affectively perceived both freedom and liberty in terms of normative condensation symbols.

One of the most surprising results was the relatively large number of children who associated peace with the contemporary hand sign, despite the fact the hand was that of Chinese Premier Chou En-lai. President Nixon was associated with peace in the first grade (excluding St. Michaels) but dropped steadily in the remaining grades. Also discovered was the fact that for most children neither peace and power nor peace and the United Nations were synonymous.

Finally, the concept of justice was most frequently associated with the courtroom and the White House. In general, as the children increased in age, the courtroom gradually replaced the White House as the symbol of justice. And few connotated the Scales of Justice as a symbol of justice.

CHAPTER V

AUTHORITATIVE SYMBOLS

Symbolic Concept of Law

Hess has pointed out that laws are generally viewed by children as being powerful, benevolent, helpful, protective, just, and unchanging.⁷² Moreover, Hess found that most young children (grades two through five) believed laws were made a long time ago, and usually by the President. This lack of abstract comprehension of law was also noticed by Adelson, Green, and O'Neil in their study of adolescent conception of law. They found that not only were most eleven year olds quite immature in the understanding of the abstract principles of law, but also that it was not until the age of fifteen that there was any noticeable change in thinking from the concrete to the abstract.⁷³

In the Grand Forks study, children were asked, "When you hear the word 'law,' which of the following pictures do you think of first?"

⁷²Robert D. Hess, "Political Attitudes in Children," Psychology Today, II (January, 1969), 26.

⁷³Joseph Adelson, Bernard Green, and Robert O'Neil, "Growth of the Idea of Law in Adolescence," Developmental Psychology, I (July, 1969), 328.

Pictures included a policeman, traffic signs, the Constitution, and a judge. Figure 21 indicates the tendency for children to associate law with a policeman. What is even more surprising is the fact that it remained fairly high even through the sixth grade (with the exception of Winship).

The next most frequently selected picture was that of the judge. Note, however, the judge scored its highest percentage in the first four grades. By the sixth grade the percentage selecting the judge was considerably under 30 per cent (again with the exception of Winship). The traffic signs were the third most frequently selected item, but on only two occasions did the scores exceed 25 per cent (Winship second grade and St. Michaels fourth grade). And last, children in all grades showed little symbolic association for the Constitution, all of which lends support to findings by Adelson, Green, and O'Neil.

Symbolic Concept of Law-Making

Of the various functions which are associated with government, few rank higher than the making of laws. When children were given pictures of the President, Congress, and Supreme Court and asked, "Who makes the laws," Easton and Dennis found that up through grade five the President dominated. However, after grade five, children were increasingly prone to identify Congress as the chief source of laws.⁷⁴

⁷⁴Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System, p. 119.

A similar question was posed to the Grand Forks children. They were asked, "When you hear the word 'law-making,' which of the following pictures do you think of first?" Included were pictures of the President, the Capitol, Supreme Court, and a policeman. Figure 22 generally supports the earlier Easton and Dennis finding.

It appears that in the early grades children attributed most authority to the two personal symbols represented by the President and policeman. From second grade on, the image of the policeman as a law-maker steadily declined. The image of the President as a law-maker remained somewhat higher than that of the policeman (especially Winship and St. Michaels) but also had a higher degree of fluctuation (all but Kelly and Viking).

The picture of the Capitol, which scored very low in the early grades, gradually, but steadily replaced both the policeman and President by the sixth grade. The Supreme Court, on the other hand, made only a nominal gain in percentage over the six year interval.

Symbolic Concept of the Constitution

The Supreme Court as symbol goes hand
in hand with the Constitution as symbol.
--Max Lerner⁷⁵

⁷⁵Max Lerner, "Constitution and Court as Symbols," The Yale Law Journal, XLVI (June, 1937), 1293.

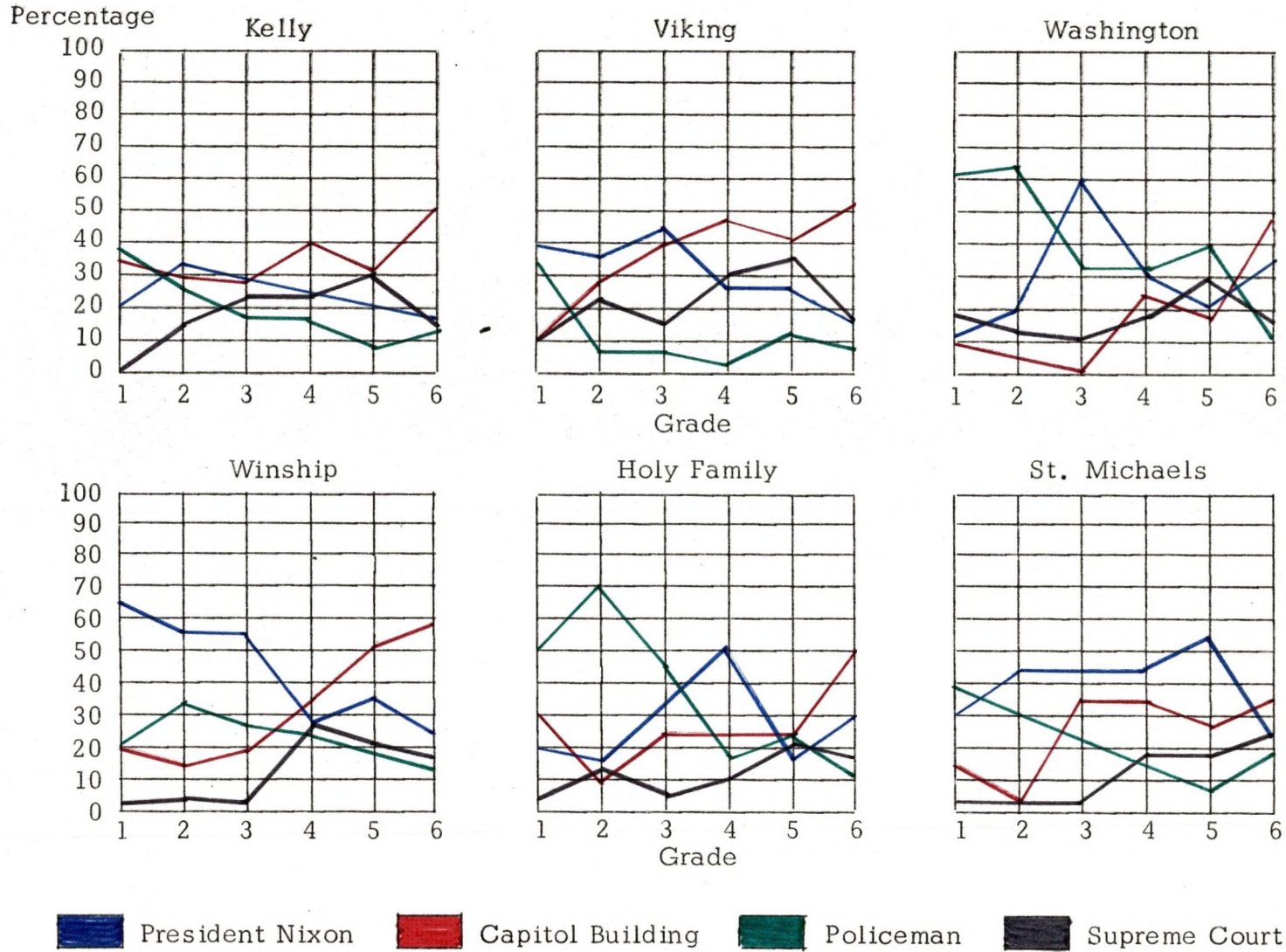


Fig. 22.--Percentage by schools of symbols associated with law-making

To test their awareness of the Constitution, the children in the Grand Forks study were asked, "When you think of the 'Constitution,' which of the following pictures do you think of first?" Included were pictures of the Supreme Court, the Bible, President Nixon, and Independence Hall.

Figure 23 denotes an almost total lack of understanding of the Constitution. This was evident from the total number of scores centered around 25 per cent. Thus the normative adult perception of the Constitution vis-a-vis the Supreme Court as Lerner had suggested was not apparent in elementary school children.

Summary

It appears that for most children, their first contact with the system of laws is through an association with specific authority figures, namely the policeman and President. By and large, most children's conception of law and law enforcement is undifferentiated. When asked about law-making, children in the first three grades overwhelmingly selected either the President or the policeman. It was not until grade six that the Capitol building emerged victorious over the President or policeman. Finally, it appears that few children were aware of either the Supreme Court or the Constitution as authoritative symbols.

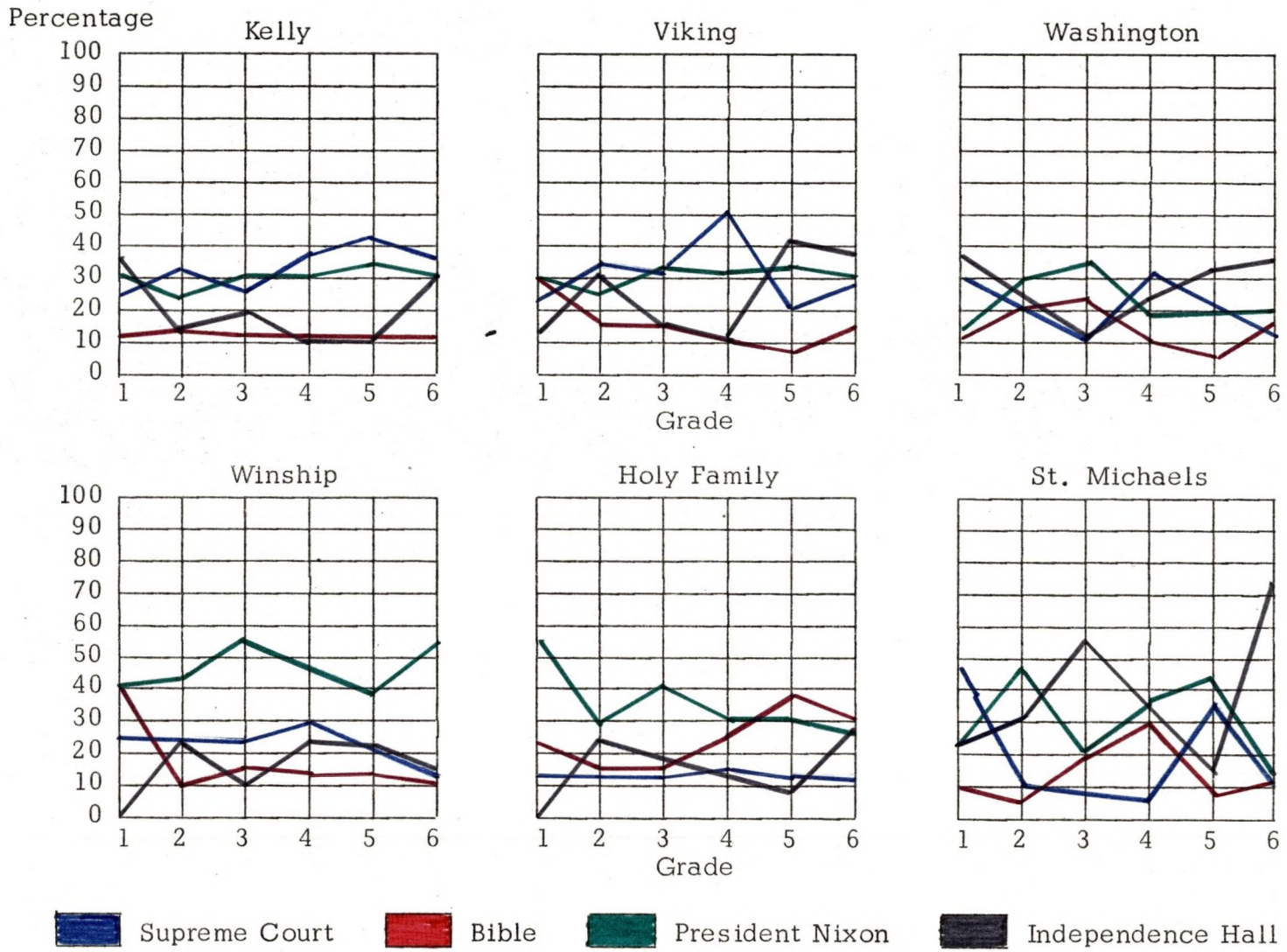


Fig. 23.--Percentage by schools of symbols associated with the Constitution

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

It has been pointed out that political socialization is the developmental process through which children acquire the values, norms, and symbols of their political community. Previous studies have shown that this process begins in the United States about the age of three and is basically completed by age thirteen. Of all the agents of political socialization, it appears that the two most important are the family and the school.

The family's importance seems to lie in the fact that it is the sole provider of the child's physical and emotional needs. Through a system of physical and emotional rewards and punishments the family is able to exert the type of pressures capable of making the child conform to the values, norms, and symbols which are acceptable to it. Above all, it is the family who teaches the child respect for authority, the rule of the group, and the type of behavior expected of him. These in turn are transferred to the political community.

Apart from the family, the school has been found to be the major contributor to the development of political behavior. In the United

States, the school has been philosophically perceived as the formal agent through which normative political behavior is to be transmitted. Thus, all states have required the study of history, social studies, and civics as part of the formal school curriculum. Content analysis of books used in these subjects throughout the United States has revealed that most tend to glorify the nation, overplay national heroes, and, in general, give unrealistic accounts of American history and government.

However, most of the formal civic education is concentrated not in the elementary but in the secondary school levels. For example, in Grand Forks, it is not until the fourth grade that children are formally introduced to social studies, but little if anything is mentioned about government or politics until about grade eight.

Thus, it would appear that, at least in regard to elementary education, it is the informal rather than the formal curriculum which accounts for the greatest increase in the political socialization of the young child. It is the informal learning situation within the classroom where the children learn that George Washington is the father of their country, or how to sing the national anthem, or where to place the hand when pledging allegiance to the flag. In short, it is the informal learning through which the school continues the process of political socialization which was begun in the home.

It has also been noted that symbols are the tools through which society educates and indoctrinates its members. There are a number of

political symbols and included are the authoritative, verbal, pictorial, and personal symbols. These may in turn be functionally classified as either referential or condensation symbols.

The purpose of this study was to examine the political socialization of children in the City of Grand Forks. The basic thrust of the study was descriptive in that the attempt was made to document and chart the growth of children's awareness of political symbols. Assuming (based on earlier studies) that political socialization begins early in life, and because of the limitations involved, the focus of the study was limited to children's awareness of political symbols rather than to the delineation of procedures through which they acquire this awareness. And finally, for the purpose of analysis and presentation of the data, this paper was divided according to the types of symbols associated with government.

Results of the Grand Forks study indicate that the first point of contact children are likely to have with the overall structure of authority is through their awareness of the President. By the end of their first year in school, children were well aware of both the name and the picture of the President, and the greatest increase in cognitive development accrued between the first and third grades. However, it was not until grade five that children could consistently identify the Vice President and Governor. On the whole, there was a much greater awareness for the verbal symbols than for the pictorial.

With respect to the traditional political party symbols represented by the donkey and elephant, few children before grade six were aware of their symbolic importance. Apparently, the traditional political party symbols do not serve the same condensation function for elementary children as they do for adults.

It appears that children as early as grade one were affectively able to perceive the normative symbols associated with their political community. For example, an overwhelming number of children in all grades were able to associate the eagle with America, the American flag and George Washington with the United States, George Washington and Uncle Sam with the American flag, and Uncle Sam with the National Anthem.

Young children identified early with the personal political symbols represented by Washington and Lincoln. However, by grade three these personal symbols were affectively transferred to the more impersonal symbols represented by the flag and the map of the United States.

Thus, it appears that children's attachment to the political community begins as early as grade one and remains positive throughout the elementary years. The United States was generally seen as ideal and superior to other countries as indicated by the fact that children in all grades were able to discriminate and reject symbols of other countries (namely, Mao Tse-tung, the Soviet flag, and the swastika). And finally,

few children beyond the first two grades had trouble disentangling symbols of God and country.

In reference to the abstract impersonal symbols ("freedom," "liberty," "peace," and "justice"), it was discovered that most children in nearly all grades affectively identified with the normative condensation symbols (especially the Liberty Bell and Statue of Liberty). Few associated these abstract concepts with civil rights.

This general lack of abstract understanding of the impersonal symbols was also very apparent with respect to the concept of law. Throughout all grades, children consistently identified the policeman with laws, while showing an almost complete lack of awareness of the Constitution or Supreme Court.

Judging from the Grand Forks study, it may be concluded that socio-economic, philosophic, or religious variables had relatively little effect on the overall symbolic civic awareness, or on the basic attachment to the country or government throughout the elementary school years. Although there does appear to be minor differences between parochial and public schools, traditional and new schools, and upper and lower socio-economic schools, no definite trend could be found.

Future studies in political socialization might do well to examine possible sex and intelligence differences, all of which were beyond the scope of this survey. Also conceivable would be a comparison between elementary school children and their teachers or parents. Perhaps, too,

results would have been greatly different had open-ended questions been employed instead of the method used.

Lipset and his associates once stated, "It is difficult, if not impossible to make any reliable estimate, on the basis of empirical evidence, of the age at which politics becomes meaningful to children or youth."⁷⁶ Perhaps this statement is true, but at least an attempt has been made.

⁷⁶Seymour M. Lipset, Paul F. Lazerfeld, Allen H. Barton, and Juan Linz, "The Psychology of Voting: An Analysis of Political Behavior," in The Handbook of Social Psychology, ed. by Gardner Lindzey (Cambridge, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1954), p. 1145.

APPENDIX I

THE NUMBER OF CHILDREN INVOLVED IN THE
GRAND FORKS STUDY BY SCHOOL AND GRADE

TABLE 2
 NUMBER OF CHILDREN IN THE GRAND FORKS
 STUDY BY SCHOOLS AND GRADES

School	Grade						Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Kelly	27	31	31	62	36	70	257
Washington	21	31	29	23	18	33	155
Viking	27	27	26	25	28	29	162
Winship	15	15	19	22	26	9 ^a	106
Holy Family	33	31	31	22	21	21	159
St. Michaels	<u>13</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>112</u>
Total	136	152	148	170	157	188	951

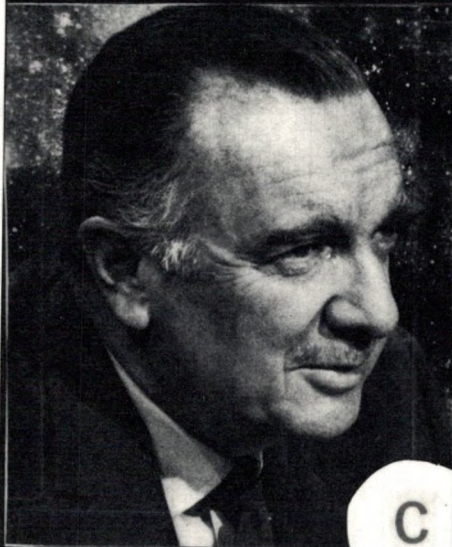
^aWinship sixth grade had no boys participating in the survey.

APPENDIX II

THE SYMBOLIC CIVIC AWARENESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Which of the following pictures is that of the President of the United States?
Choose only one picture.

1



2. Which of the following names is that of the President of the United States? Choose only one.
- A. Walter Cronkite
 - B. Hubert Humphrey
 - C. Richard Nixon
 - D. Willie Mays

Which of the following pictures is that of the Vice President of the United States? Choose only one picture.

3



A



B



C



D

4. Which of the following names is that of the Vice President of the United States? Choose only one.
- A. Edward Kennedy
 - B. Spiro Agnew
 - C. George Wallace
 - D. Lyndon Johnson

Which of the following pictures is that of the Governor of North Dakota? Choose only one picture.

5



A



B



C



D

6. Which of the following names is that of the Governor of North Dakota? Choose only one.
- A. Robert McCarney
 - B. Dave Osborn
 - C. William Guy
 - D. Wendell Anderson

When you think of "America", which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

7



A



B



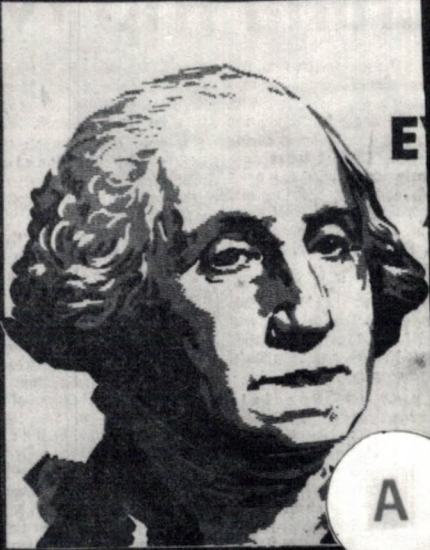
C



D

When you think of the "United States", which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

8



A



B



C

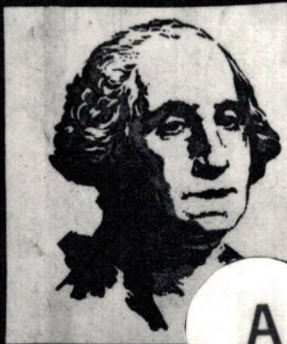


D



When you see the American Flag, which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

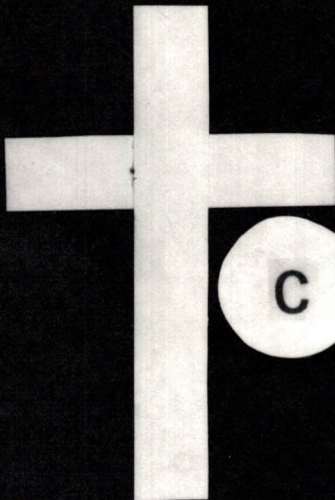
9



A



B



C



D

When you Pledge Allegiance to the flag, which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

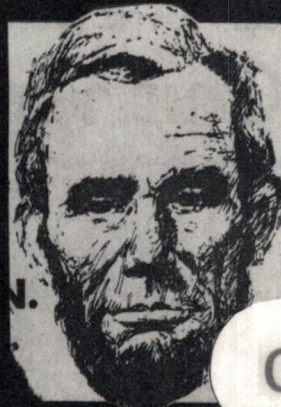
10



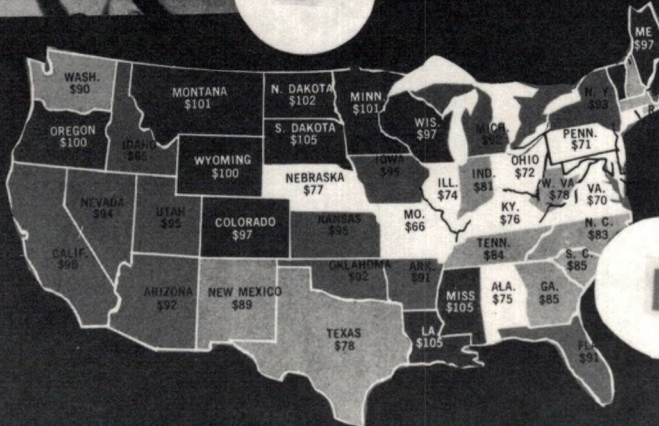
A



B



C



D

When you sing the National Anthem, which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

11



A



B



C



D

When you hear the word "Freedom", which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.



A



B



C



D

When you hear the word "Liberty", which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

13



A



B



C



D

When you hear the word "Peace", which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.



A



B



C



D

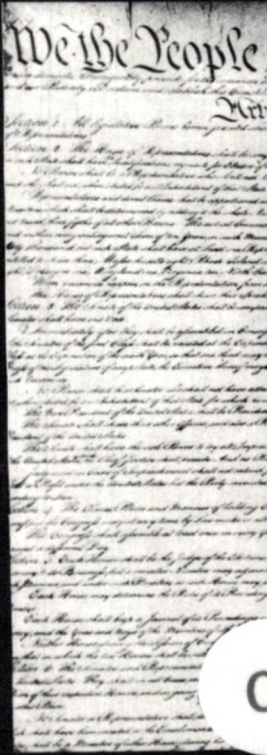
When you hear the word "law", which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.



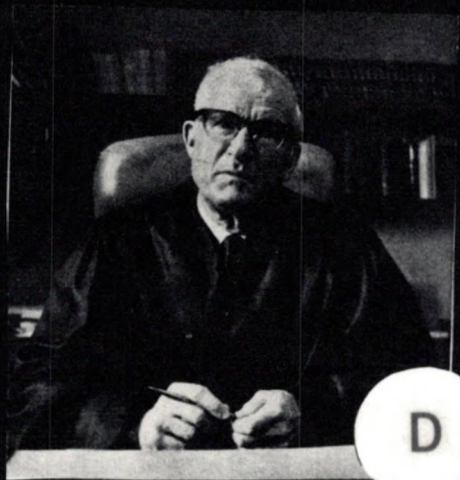
A



B



C



D

When you hear the word "Law-making", which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

16

A

B

C

D

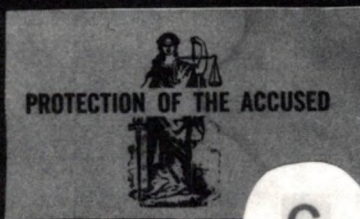
When you hear the word "Justice", which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.



A



B



C



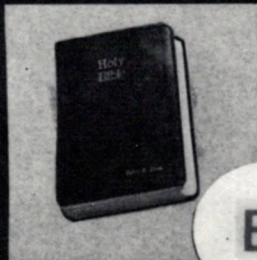
D

When you think of the "Constitution", which of the following pictures first come to mind? Choose only one picture.

18



A



B



C



D

When you hear the word "Democratic Party," which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

19



A



B



C



D

When you hear the word "Republican Party," which of the following pictures do you think of first? Choose only one picture.

20

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