

Cooperative and competitive behavior of urban and rural children in Kenya

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Abstract:

In an attempt to investigate the effect of social change on the development of competition, the present study tested 120 Kenyan children, aged 9 to 13, with a game played in groups of four that required cooperative interaction among them to obtain prizes. The children came from three subcultures: urban middle class, poor semi urban, and rural. All three subcultures cooperated adaptively under conditions of group reward. With a change from group to individual reward, urban children competed in a no adaptive manner, whereas the semi urban children cooperated throughout the game and the rural children were influenced by the competitive cues but were able to return to cooperation. These results, which were contrary to prediction, are compared to rural and urban differences in cooperation and competition in other countries and are discussed in terms of the effects of urbanization in Kenya