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SP-3019

PACIFIST BARGAINING TACTICS: A LABORATORY

ASSESSMENT OF SOME "OUTSIDER" INFLUENCES

AUG 9 1968

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March 28, 1968

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*The work reported herein was supported by SDC and contract DAHC15-67-C-0277, Advanced Research Projects Agency, U.S. Department of Defense, and was presented at the Western Psychological Association Convention, San Diego, California, March 1968.



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ABSTRACT

Pacifist bargaining tactics are predicated on a moral appeal: Efficacy of pacifist tactics is dependent on the adversary's view of the morality of the situation, in terms of the clarity of his perception of his pacifist opponent, and the persuasiveness of the pacifist tactics in attempting to change his behavior. Perhaps because of complexities surrounding it, pacifism has seldom been studied under controlled conditions. This report extends a series of laboratory investigations of pacifist bargaining strategy concerned with the basic conditions necessary for pacifist tactics, the general efficacy of the pacifist appeal to a belligerent adversary, and the differential effects of a variety of potentially influencing conditions: direct communication (vs. tacit bargaining); explicit characterization of the pacifist (vs. implicit characterization as reflected in tactical interaction); potential equality of outcome (vs. outcomes without equal share possibilities); and explicit guarantees of non-retaliatory tactics by the pacifist (vs. no explicit given guarantee). Against a background review of previous findings the present report is particularly addressed to the effects of two different "outsider" influences: cohort support for the adversary's position (vs. independent determination of position); and social context in terms of a third party reviewing, but not directly engaged in, the interaction (vs. a pacifist-adversary context with no outside audience).

These variables are studied in a mixed-motive bargaining game that is administered on-line by a computer. The game is characterized by a condition of unilateral fate control directly involved in the bargaining process: "Sharing" of outcomes requires that the bargainers pass control of the game back and forth to one another trial-by-trial; prolongation of control is potentially guaranteed but requires, in the face of passive resistance, that the controlling bargainer deliver a series of electric shocks to the other player. A wide variety of methodological techniques, including use of computerized questioning, were employed to gather relevant phenomenological and behavioral data. Results are reported on 238 male college students, all of whom (as adversaries) faced the same (simulated) pacifist player under the potentially influencing conditions outlined above.

Pacifist Bargaining Tactics: A Laboratory Assessment of
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This paper is a follow-on report to previous research concerned with the effectiveness of pacifist tactics in modifying an adversary's behavior in a bargaining game, (Shure, Meeker, and Hansford, 1965).^{*} The present studies focus on the potential effects of two "outsider" or third-party influences on the pacifist-adversary relationship: first, of adversary-cohorts (teammates) who provides encouragement in opposition to the pacifist, and second, by contrast, of an onlooker whose presence exposes the bargaining process to a party not directly involved in the outcomes.

To establish the proper context for the follow-on nature of the present paper, we must review our previous findings, and this means that there is a great deal of material to be covered. Even so, we would be remiss if we began directly with the details of the experiment without some introductory remarks about the general line of investigation.

The rationale for bringing pacifism into the laboratory is, of course, control. Outside the laboratory pacifists rarely function in isolation from others seeking the same ends; and the contamination is most marked when, more often than not, the pacifist shares a common cause with violent militants. In these circumstances, it is virtually impossible to determine the effectiveness of pacifism per se. Acknowledging this need for control, one might nonetheless object to the emphasis on "measured effectiveness," for this sort of test suggests that a basically moral position is being reduced to purely practical terms.

We, of course, do not assume that practical effectiveness is the sole criterion by which pacifism should be judged, but neither can we assume that it is irrelevant. An ethically motivated bargainer is not more indifferent to success than any other negotiator. By viewing pacifism as a bargaining tactic we are simply emphasizing the importance of the practical concern and its susceptibility to systematic investigation.

Turning then to the procedures of experimentation, it first should be noted that many bargaining situations and most experimental games do not have the requisite conditions for a singularly pacifist response. In a standard bargaining game, such as a prisoner's dilemma situation, a pacifist would have no

^{*}Details of game procedures are presented in this paper.

distinctive role--his tactics are predicated on a moral appeal. But such games by intent and definition, are, amoral in character. This is not to deny the obvious fact that subjects may, and often do, give a normative or moral interpretation to various aspects of these games; but since these norms are informally evoked by the subjects, their relevance and function in the bargaining interaction are only vaguely understood. Furthermore, even if evoked, the norms generally are not "brought into play" as a central concern because, characteristically, norm-evoking actions making for ethical concern are not provided in the game moves.

In order to provide the laboratory pacifist with the proper response repertoire, we need a situation involving not only a conflict of interests but also action that is ethically questionable. In our experiments, this ethically questionable action was represented by a mild form of physical violence: The most controlling and self-serving move in the game simultaneously required the player to deliver an electric shock to the other player under certain conditions.

The pacifist's general strategy in the game can be summed up as follows: He would seek a cooperative resolution of the bargaining conflict, but if his adversary insisted on a greater share of the outcome, the pacifist on his own initiative would force the other players to use the shock-associated action, until the player acknowledged the pacifist's claim for a fair share; in other words, the pacifist would seek to transform the issue of bargaining advantage into an issue of ethical concern. In this context, the pacifist's bargaining success would be primarily related to his effectiveness in making the ethics of the situation a salient concern to a noncooperative opponent.

In terms of procedural specifics, the basic bargaining situation used is a close analogue of the Deutsch and Krouss trucking game that we have employed in other studies (Shure, Meeker, Moore, and Kelley, 1965): formally, it is a two-person, mixed-motive, nonzero-sum game. The competitive aspect is obvious to the players, since they are physically opposed on either end of a common path to their respective goals; if both try to use the path at the same time they literally run into one another. And because there is a higher payoff from going first, the interests of the two players are visibly opposed. The cooperative potential is also apparent, since with repeated trials the players can compromise by alternating the favored first use.

In modifying this game for the study of pacifism, we amplified these relationships. We provided a means whereby dominance could be self-perpetuating, where the player who gained first use of the path could maintain that advantage on subsequent trials by using an action that effectively pushed the other player out of the way. This push-back move also delivered an electric shock to the other player--in the game it was labeled the "jolt-back" action. The dimensions of the common path required would-be dominators to use the jolt-back three times each trial in order to maintain their advantage, given that the pacifist would refuse to willingly allow the other player to go through the path first.

Players could see one another's moves, but there was no open communication. Each pair of bargainers played fifteen trials; payoffs represented actual monetary gains, and a player who dominated throughout could more than double his basic participation fee. Subjects were male students recruited from local colleges and universities. Subjects played against a simulated pacifist who followed a standard program of play: on the first trial he let the other player make first use of the common path, and if the other player reciprocated on the next trial, the pacifist would simply take his turn and then continue with a trial-by-trial alternating pattern. At any time that the other player did not reciprocate, the pacifist would enter the pathway and would refuse to leave voluntarily so that the other player could not continue to dominate without pushing the pacifist out of the way by using the jolt-back action.

Against this programmed pacifist's play we can readily characterize the subject's manifest behavior: he is cooperative if he alternates and he is dominant if he does not; and the effectiveness of pacifist tactics can be measured by the extent to which dominant players become cooperative. This raises a methodological problem. Since the effectiveness of the pacifist can be measured only against a dominant opponent, we would essentially "lose" all subjects who never dominated.

To deal with this problem, we introduced a team condition where each bargainer had two simulated teammates or cohorts. In the initial phase of the experiment, the subject's cohorts urged him to dominate--their rationale, of course, being that sustained dominance meant more money for them all. This team condition was held constant throughout our first experimental series.

Summary results from the first experimental series are presented in the Appendix, Figures 1, 2, 3, and 4. The graphs reflect observed behaviors sampled at four points in the experiment. The first point--pregame, before any communication with cohorts or any interaction with the pacifist--reflects the subjects' bargaining plans. Approximately half the subjects planned to cooperate before the game began, and we note with foreboding that at the end of the experiment--after fifteen trials of interaction with the pacifist--something less than half the subjects were cooperative.

This is an indication of the pacifist's overall effectiveness, but it needs to be qualified by the nature of the intervening behaviors. One might, for instance, consider Trial Five as a better baseline for evaluating the pacifist's effectiveness, since it would reflect any modifications in the subject's behavior after the period of urging by his cohorts to take the dominant position. Indeed, at this point nearly ninety percent of the subjects are using the jolt-back action to maintain the bargaining advantages they hold; and from this point on nearly one-third of the dominant players change to cooperative behavior. Further, this overall degree of effectiveness can be differentially related to a variety of experimental manipulations described in the following paragraphs.

Subject Knowledge of The Pacifist Position. Since open communication was not allowed during the bargaining interaction, one might question whether the subject reasonably could infer that the other player's actions were those of a "pacifist." To enhance the likelihood of this perception, we gave all subjects explicit information about the pacifist's beliefs. This was effected through an exchange of personal resumes that subjects had filled out prior to the experiment. Every subject, of course, received the same personal profile indicating that his opponent was a Quaker, morally committed to a position of nonviolence. This explicit information was given to half the subjects before any bargaining interaction; and it was withheld from the other half until midgame. As Figure 1 (relating to beginning and middle profile) indicates, the two sets of subjects are not distinguishably different in their behavior. Furthermore, ratings by the subject indicate the pacifist is perceived as moral and peaceful in intent. These findings suggest that confusion about the pacifist's motives was not a significant detriment to his effectiveness.

Guarantees of No Retaliation. Another possible source of interference might be the subject's fear of the pacifist's retaliation. Perhaps subjects could be induced better to cooperate if given guarantees that the pacifist would not retaliate by using the jolt-back on them--a risk they presumably would be taking if they were to begin alternating use of the path. At midgame, half the subjects received such a guarantee, and saw the pacifist exercise an option to give up the jolt-back action (to disarm). For the other half of the bargaining pairs, no such option was presented. As Figure 2 (relating to the disarm condition) shows, this guarantee against retaliation produced no significant differences in the pacifist's effectiveness.

Verbal Confrontation with The Pacifist. Comparisons between Trial Five and Trial Eight show a marked increase in cooperative behavior and this is related to an experimental manipulation involving communication. After Trials Five, Six and Seven, subjects in the communication condition exchanged written messages with the pacifist, whereas a contrasting set of subjects had no such intertrial communication. All changes to cooperative behavior during this period were in the communication condition, and the extent of the change is statistically significant. These results are shown in Figure 3.

Strict Equality of Outcome. The other positive effect of significance concerned manipulation of outcomes. In the first half of the experiment the adoption of an alternating, or cooperative, bargaining relationship would produce slightly less monetary gain for the subject than for the pacifist. Subjects operated with different payoff schedules that were "subject-selected" but "experimenter-controlled" to preclude any simple means for achieving exactly equal outcomes. Comparatively, either the subject earned a great deal more by dominating, or the pacifist earned slightly more by alternating. At midgame, half of the subjects shifted to the same payoff schedule as the pacifist, so that their outcomes then were strictly equal to the pacifist's. As Figure 4 indicates, compared with the no-change group, significantly more of the equal outcome group subsequently switched to cooperative behavior.

These findings, showing only moderate overall success for pacifist bargaining tactics, are clouded by the fact that all were obtained under the circumstance where the subject was urged by messages from his cohorts to dominate. Both Morton Deutsch and Anatol Rapoport, in reacting to these findings, have underscored this issue. Rapoport (1965) observes that the apparent lack of effectiveness of the pacifist tactics is open to question because "the experimental conditions were admittedly stacked against the pacifist." In the same vein, but more specifically, Deutsch, *et al.* (1968), interpret the "extremity" of our results as "undoubtedly due to [the Es] having 'fixed' their Ss into a dominating strategy by the group pressures under which the Ss were placed." Whether we agree with these evaluations or not, they are clearly a challenge to understand better the effects of our having cohorts urge the adversary to adopt a dominant position. Though the overt pressures ceased after Trial Four, the possible lingering effects of that experience could not be assessed without running a no-cohort group for comparison.

The results of this variation are given in Figure 5. Three points of this comparison are worth noting. First, the no-cohort group was less cooperative in their pregame plans; the difference does not reach statistical significance, but even a trend in this direction is surprising. Second, and as expected, significantly more subjects became dominant under urgings of cohorts than of their own accord; however in the no-cohort condition the shift is also toward more dominance. Third, and most telling, there are no distinguishable differences between the two groups in respect to rate of change to cooperation from Trial Five to the end of the experiment, indicating no apparent lingering effects from the cohort pressure. It appears that the findings of the first experimental series need not be drastically reinterpreted. Although the presence of cohort pressure does reduce the level of cooperation in the early trials (its intended effect), it does not appear to make the subject any more resistant to subsequent pacifist appeals than subjects who are initially uncooperative without exposure to cohort pressures.

In contrast to this situation, we considered the effects that a neutral and noncommitted third party might have on the bargaining interaction. Any effects presumably would be propacifist, since the effectiveness of pacifism is based on forcing the other player to decide between morality and self-interest; and the presence of an onlooker should serve to increase the saliency of the situation's ethics.* All subjects in the audience condition were told that their behavior would be monitored by an observer who would interview them after the experiment. As seen in the monitoring room, it was clear that the observers were senior in age to the subjects, but they were not characterized further. There was no communication between the subjects and the observers during the experiment.

*It is conceivable, of course, that in a Nietzschean or Nazi-like society, the presence of a third party might increase rather than decrease incentive to dominate a weaker party.

This condition produced two significant results as seen in Figure 6. First and most obvious is that more than twice as many of the subjects in the audience condition planned at the outset to be cooperative, and this is the point of greatest difference obtained between the two groups. From this point on, the difference narrows until at experiment's end they are not significantly distinguishable. The second major differential in the intervening behaviors is related to the communication period. Here, the no-audience condition shows a substantial increase in cooperation, while verbal confrontation fails to have any effect in the audience condition. This finding is singular in that Ss in the audience condition are the only ones that do not show a significant increase in cooperation during the communication period; in this sense the results are unexpected. A number of explanations might be advanced for these findings. We shall suggest two.

First, there may be some number of Ss who can be moved to a cooperative strategy by one method or another--by knowing that their opponent is a pacifist, by verbal confrontation, or by the presence of a third party--while the remainder would be relatively intransigent under any circumstances. If this interpretation is correct, then in the observer condition, reactions from the "potentially cooperative" group would generally preempt the effects of other manipulations, since the observer condition is temporally antecedent. As a result, one would expect relatively small effects from verbal confrontation since the "potentially cooperative" group would already be in a cooperative posture. On the other hand, these results may be seen as a substantiation of the repeated admonition by Ghandi and other proponents of nonviolent resistance, namely, that the pacifist should be mindful of his adversary's position: The embarrassment of socially admitting to a moral error may increase his intractability. Indeed, in insuring that the pacifist's position was clear and that his intent would not be misread--in our efforts to create a clear-cut pacifist program--we may have limited his ability to forestall his adversary's guilt.

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APPENDIX

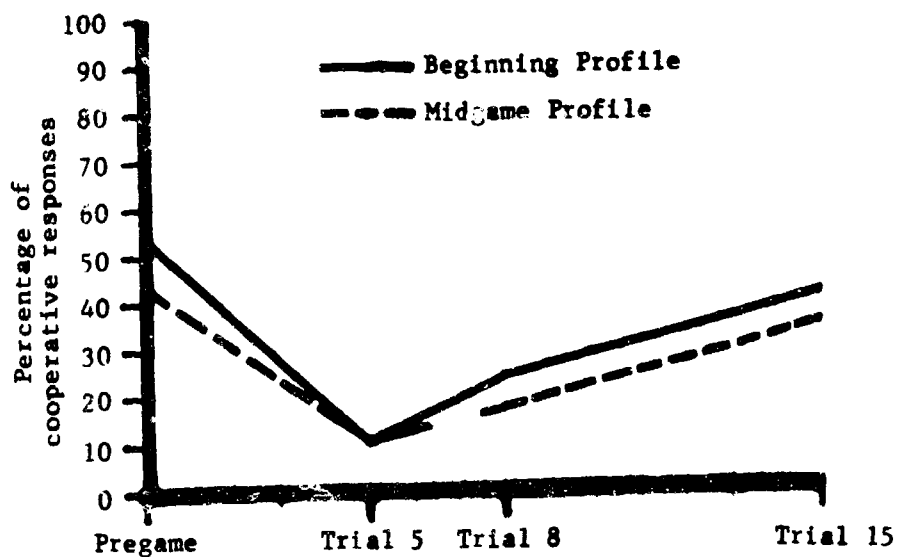


Figure 1. Levels of cooperation comparing Beginning Profile and Middle Profile conditions.

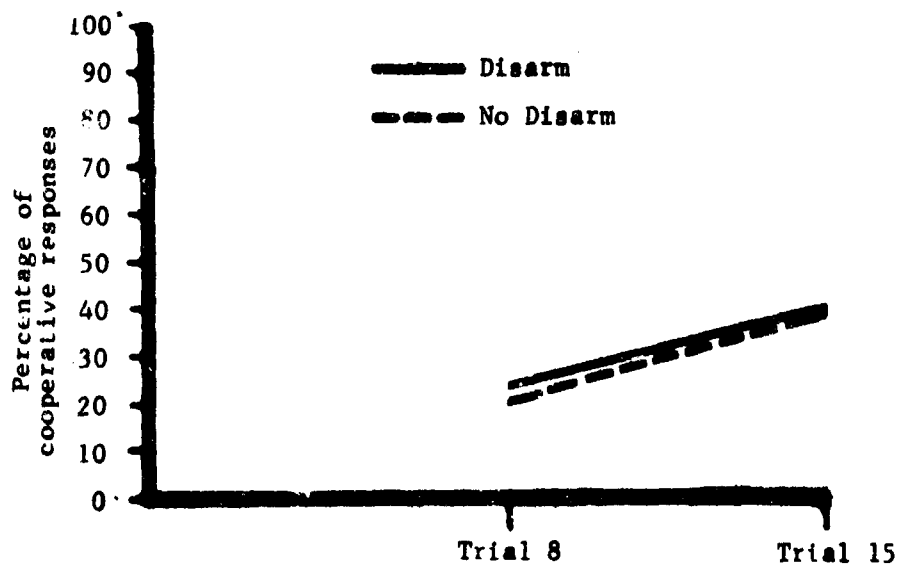


Figure 2. Levels of cooperation comparing Disarm and No Disarm conditions.

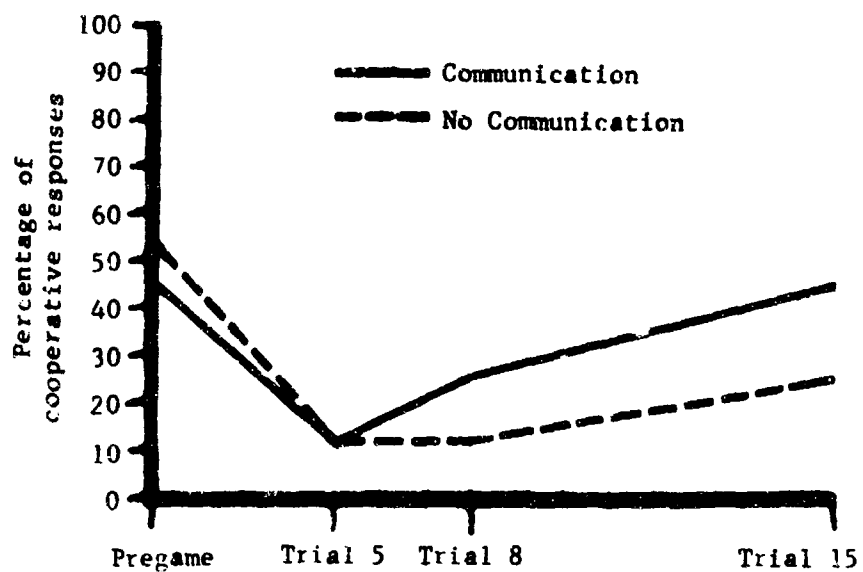


Figure 3. Levels of cooperation comparing Communication and No Communication conditions.

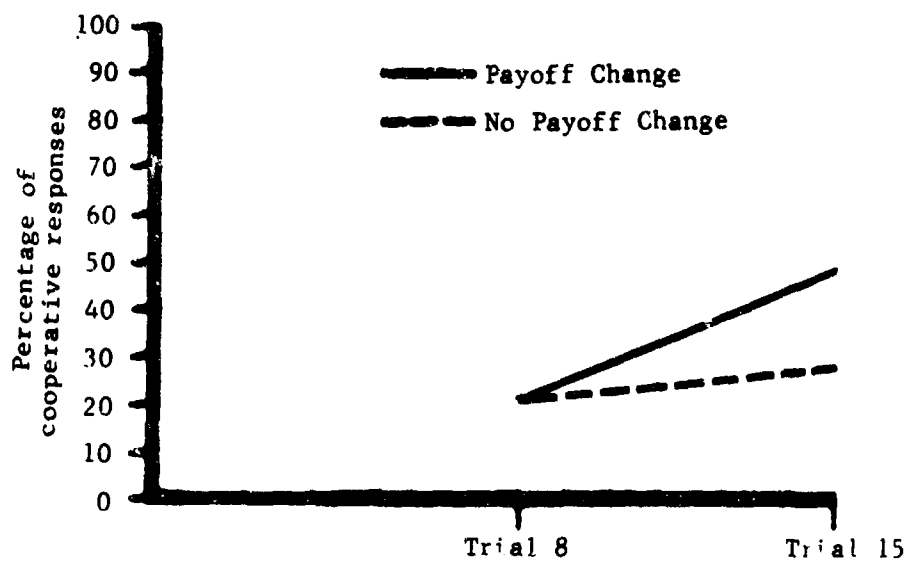


Figure 4. Levels of cooperation comparing Payoff Change and No Payoff Change conditions.

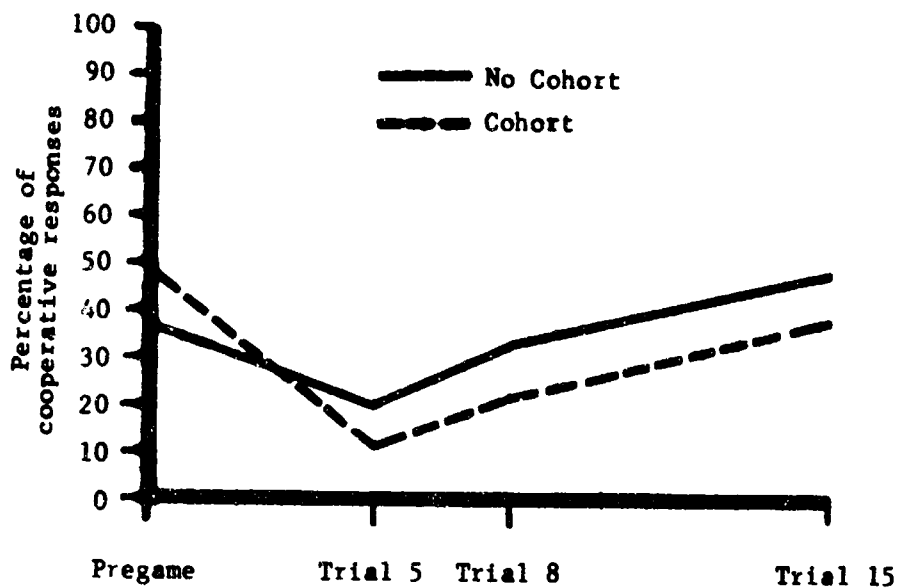


Figure 5. Levels of cooperation comparing No Cohort and Cohort conditions.

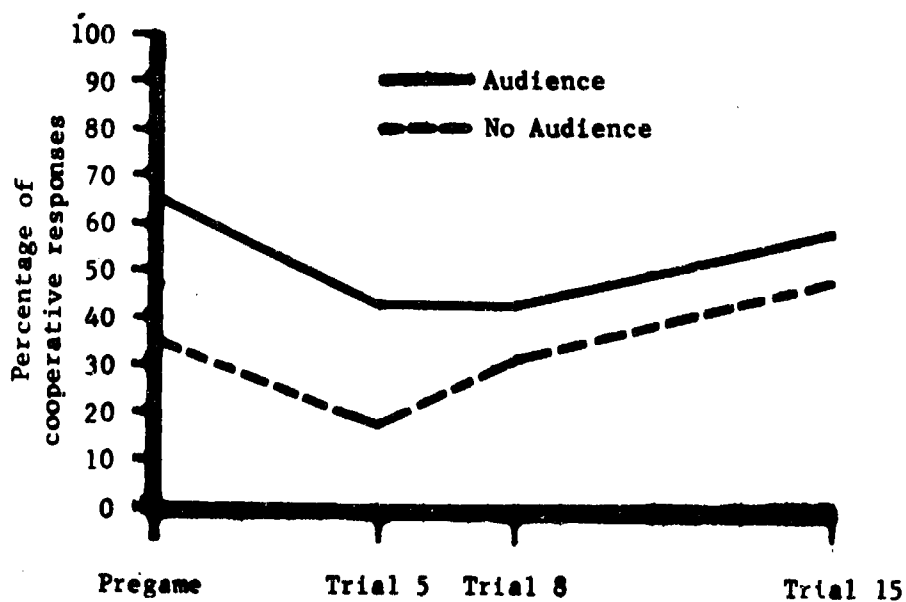


Figure 6. Levels of cooperation comparing Audience and No Audience condition; all No Cohort condition.

Unclassified

Security Classification

DOCUMENT CONTROL DATA - R & D

(Security classification of title, body of abstract and indexing annotation must be entered when the overall report is classified)

1. ORIGINATING ACTIVITY (Corporate author) System Development Corporation Santa Monica, California		2a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	
		2b. GROUP	
3. REPORT TITLE Pacifist Bargaining Tactics: A Laboratory Assessment of Some "Outsider" Influences			
4. DESCRIPTIVE NOTES (Type of report and inclusive dates)			
5. AUTHOR(S) (First name, middle initial, last name) G.H. Shure R.J. Meeker			
6. REPORT DATE March 28, 1968		7a. TOTAL NO. OF PAGES 12	7b. NO. OF REFS 4
8a. CONTRACT OR GRANT NO. ARPA DAHC15-67-C-0277		8a. ORIGINATOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S) SP-3019	
b. PROJECT NO.		8b. OTHER REPORT NO(S) (Any other numbers that may be assigned this report)	
c.			
d.			
10. DISTRIBUTION STATEMENT Distribution of this document is unlimited.			
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES		12. SPONSORING MILITARY ACTIVITY	
13. ABSTRACT This report extends a series of laboratory investigations of pacifist bargaining strategy concerned with the basic conditions necessary for pacifist tactics, the general efficacy of the pacifist appeal to a belligerent adversary, and the differential effects of a variety of potentially influencing conditions; direct communication; explicit characterization of the pacifist; potential equality of outcome; and explicit guarantees of non-retaliatory tactics by the pacifist. Against a background review of previous findings the present report is particularly addressed to the effects of two different "outsider" influences: cohort support for the adversary's position; and social context in terms of a third party reviewing, but not directly engaged in, the interaction. These variables are studied in a mixed-motive bargaining game that is administered on-line by a computer. A wide variety of methodological techniques, including use of computerized questioning, were employed to gather relevant phenomenological and behavioral data. Results are reported on 238 male college students, all of whom (as adversaries) faced the same (simulated) pacifist player under the potentially influencing conditions outlined.			

DD FORM 1473
1 NOV 65

Unclassified

Security Classification

14. KEY WORDS	LINK A		LINK B		LINK C	
	ROLE	WT	ROLE	WT	ROLE	WT
Mixed-motive gaming Pacifist bargaining tactics Computerized questioning "Outsider" influences						