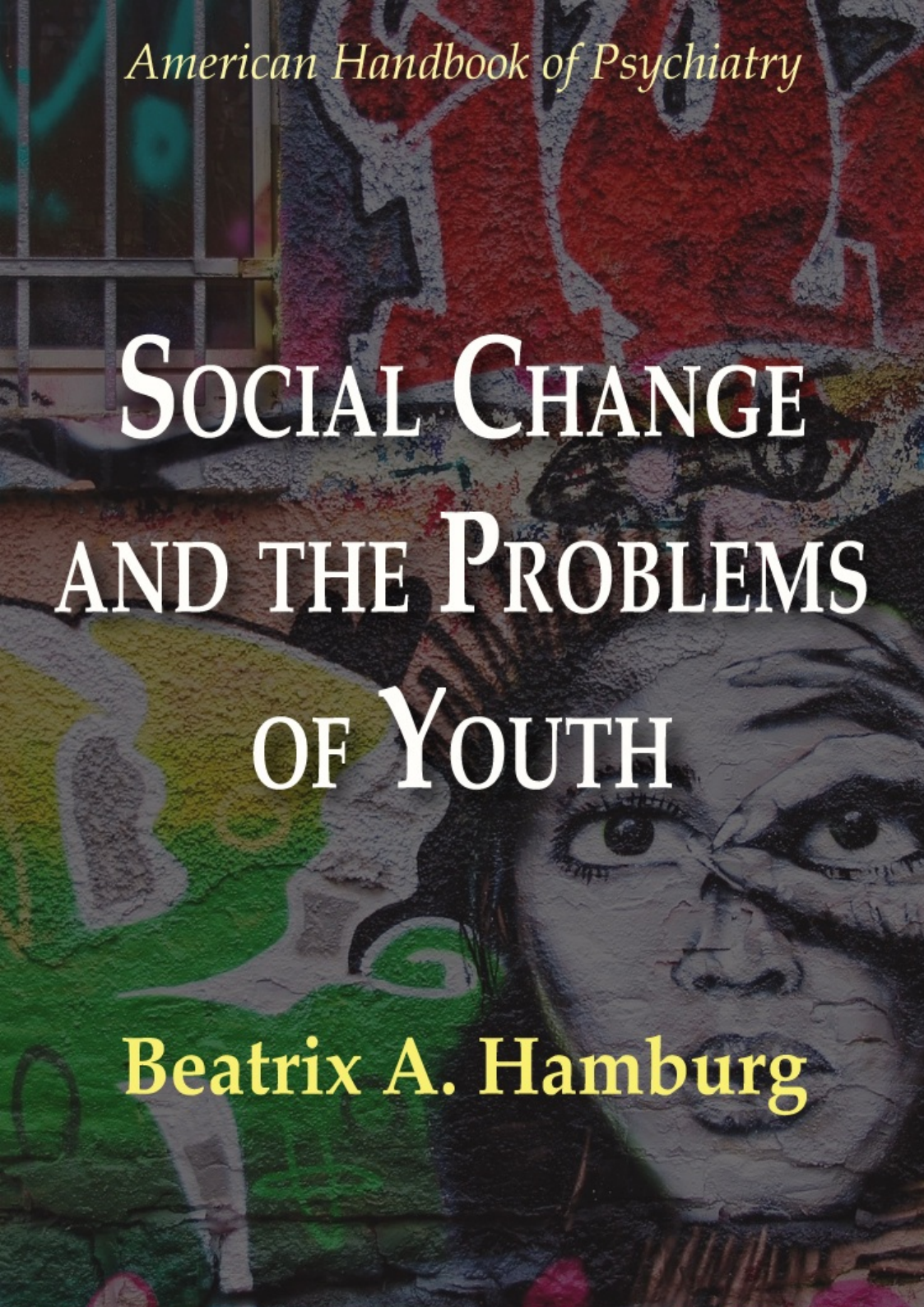
American Handbook of Psychiatry

Social Change and the Problems of Youth



Beatrix A. Hamburg

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SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE PROBLEMS OF YOUTH

Introduction

Change is not a new phenomenon for man. Over the span of evolutionary time, natural selection has favored structural and behavioral attributes that enhance man's adaptability to environmental and social change. In fact, it might be said that man's ability systematically to effect significant changes in his environment is the salient difference between man and other creatures. Increasingly over the years man lives in a man-made environment. It may give some perspective to realize that man's evolutionary history has been characterized by rapid change as compared, for example, to social insects who have remained static for fifty million years. There is evidence that man, as a distinct primate, has existed and has been evolving for two to three million years, although primates have existed for over fifty million years. Our own species, *Homo sapiens,* has existed for only about forty thousand years. Within that time man has radiated to all parts of the world and has shown a remarkable ability to adapt both to the most diverse kinds of ecological niches and to drastic environmental changes within a given niche. Man's ability to influence his environment depends on adaptations of brain, motor function, and behavior that enable him not simply to make tools but to use them in combinations and to store them for future use; that is to say, to command a mastery of technology. There also has been the unique and

powerful advantage of a command of spoken and, later, of written language.

The current view that technological change is a new and troublesome phenomenon may rest on our *historical* perspective. It is true that thousands of years passed in which simple tools changed scarcely at all and all of the main features of the hunting and gathering societies were remarkably stable. The advent of agriculture was eight or nine thousand years ago. It is believed that its worldwide adoption, in effective form, required several thousand years. The Industrial Revolution took place about two centuries ago. Although the full impact of the technological advances on a worldwide basis has not yet been fully attained, the Western world has had an industrial society for only several generations or about a century. The "postindustrial" society is largely in its formative stages and even in the most advanced countries was initiated within the past twenty years.

It can be noted in this brief resume that the fact of change has been constant in man's history, but the rate of change has been rapidly accelerating. This rate phenomenon is highly salient in one's perception of change and the ability to cope. We have moved from rates of change on an evolutionary scale of millions of years to the spread of agriculture in thousands of years, to changes in the industrial Revolution that took a couple of hundred years and now, in the postindustrial society, sweeping changes seem to be occurring from one generation to the next.

The question may be raised as to whether this current rate of change may be challenging the limits of genetically determined behavioral adaptation in a species in which the period of immaturity and learning is as prolonged as it is in man. It would appear, in a perhaps analogous vein, that man in affluent cultures has reached some other genetic limits, for example, genetically determined limits to height and maturational development. Tanner has evidence that the secular trends toward increase in height and decreasing age of menarche have shown a tendency to flatten out in the past couple of generations of affluent Western populations.

Contemporary rapid social change has been invoked widely as an explanation for problems of youth. However, from earliest recorded time there has always been an awareness of reckless, erratic, irritating, and often rebellious behavior of adolescents.

> They have high aspirations: for they have never yet been humiliated by the experience of life, but are unacquainted with the limiting force of circumstances. . . . Again, in their actions they prefer honor to expediency. ... If the young commit a fault, it is always on the side of excess and exaggeration. . . . They regard themselves as omniscient and are positive in their assertions; that is, in fact, the reason of their carrying everything too far. [pp. 18-19]

This quotation from Aristotle has a very contemporary flavor. The kinds of behavior that reflect the developmental status of the young person are, at times, interpreted as evidence of a “generation gap.” There is a need to

examine whether the problems of the youth of the past decade are, in fact, merely the most recent version of perennial “growing pains” or whether they instead represent a major discontinuity with the cultural institutions of the past century, i.e., a true generation gap. If the latter is so, it would suggest that our cultural institutions are no longer adequate to the task of socializing children for their adult tasks and challenges. This paper will attempt to look at these issues.

Social Change and the Problems of Contemporary Youth

There is no doubt that throughout the world youth rebellion was a dominant theme and major concern of the 1960s. In some cases it meant violent confrontations over social issues. In other instances, there was great concern about the alienated, often drug- abusing, dropouts from society. Many have viewed this generation with despair. A few have seen these kinds of behavior as evidence of social progress.'' In any case, on all sides there is a strongly felt need to relate the behavior of these young people to the social scene and to social change. Clearly, this turbulent decade is an important study in its own right. This paper will focus on the American youth of the sixties, but it will attempt at the same time to reappraise the relation of the individual family and society as well as look at the complex interplay of forces that determine the behavior of adolescents and young adults in any era.

There is a need to define the variables that are believed to be significant in contributing to the behavioral outcomes at adolescence. In any attempt to understand ongoing social change one must consider the forces and mechanisms of change, and also the nature of their impact in terms of magnitude of effect, quality, direction, and rapidity of change. The variables to be discussed are:

1. *Cultural institutions* of the past century especially as modified by advances in technology.

2. *Specific social context of the parental generation* as it affects their child-rearing goals and practices. It should be noted that cultural subgroups will have somewhat different patterns of socialization (culture transmission) in any given era.

3. *Contemporary youth*. Analysis of current social institutions with particular emphasis on drastically new developments that are likely to shift values and change social institutions. Some attention will be paid to the range of new solutions and their differential impacts across the generations and within the generation of contemporary youth.

Cultural Institutions: Trends of the Twentieth Century

Culture may be defined as the system of social institutions, ideologies, and values that characterize a particular social domain in its adaptation to the environment. It is also implicit in the concept that these traditions and beliefs

are systematically transmitted to succeeding generations. Culture is a dynamic concept and it is assumed that none but the simplest society has a single, static, all-embracing structure.

Any factor inducing significant environmental or social change will inevitably lead to a state of disequilibrium in at least one sector of the social system. In the twentieth century it is generally believed that advances in technology have played the major role in initiating social changes. Under the stress of change, the coping styles of individuals in a society will reflect the patterns of socialization that characterized their upbringing.

Behavioral responses cannot be exclusively predicted in terms of the nature of the stimulus or specific innovation. There is a continual interaction and interdependence of behavioral response and the technologies. There are those who believe that the major challenge currently facing man is to use scientific knowledge to guide processes and directions of technological change in the future. There is the belief that the rate of change will continue to accelerate and that in addition to coping with the current technological changes related to the physical sciences, we are now on the edge of a biological revolution whose impact may be even more dramatic in terms of the implications for man's future.-- The hope is that we will be able to mobilize "creative" behavioral responses rather than eliciting a preponderance of either passive or violent responses that seemed to

characterize the sixties.

Socialization is typically viewed as the shaping of the behavior of children by parents and by other significant adults. It is also true that the behavior and the values of young persons affect parents and significant adults and can, in turn, play a significant role in shaping adult behavior. Indeed, this may be a major primate social technique for adaptation to environmental change. There would appear to be an innate age differential in the preference for novelty.- When buttressed by a secure relationship with significant adults, children and juvenile primates exhibit a strong attractive for novel stimuli. Under these circumstances they will actively enjoy the exploration of novel aspects of the environment and new kinds of behavior are typically introduced into primate groups as a result of these juvenile "experiments." This socialization of adult primates by the juveniles has been well described in Japan by Itani and Tsumori. In contemporary America it is clear that new styles in clothing, hair, and music have been initially espoused by youth and later adopted into the general culture. This may also be true for certain basic-value orientations. For example, many adults report that their children were of significant influence in changing their attitudes about the war in Vietnam.

It is customary to divide this century into ten-year segments, the twenties, the thirties, the fifties, etc. This is probably related mainly to the practices of the federal census. In any case, there are evocative images that

have been associated with these decades and it is useful to continue to use them for purposes of our discussion of the major technological and social trends of this century.

The Turn of the Century—1900s

In 1900, the United States was a predominantly rural nation. At that time, two out of three Americans lived on farms or in small towns. There were stable communities with a network of social supports. The patriarchal family, with a large number of children and closely related extended family members, was the social unit. The salience of the father as a direct provider, earning a living for the family in clearly visible job roles, was still the norm. The father's work was still within range of the home, so that his presence was quite tangible through the day. The eroding effect of machine technology on the integrity of the family was just beginning to appear. The later outcomes of this development will be further discussed in relation to contemporary society.

Significantly, the U. S. Steel Corporation was organized in 1900. Steel was then, and continues in developing countries to be, a major symbol of economic progress. Steel had general utility as a basic construction material but little meaning, as such, to individuals or families. U. S. Steel dominated the economy for the next three decades.

The total population of the U. S. in 1900 was seventy-six million people.

The gross national product was roughly $20 billion. There were no motor vehicles, no radios or television sets. Telephones were rare (six per one thousand of the population). Only 6.4 percent of young Americans completed high school. Profitable economic participation in society was just beginning to be dependent on higher education. Values were stable and were transmitted to the young with certainty. America was seen as a land of opportunity where hard work would be rewarded with material success. Sex roles were sharply delineated and were generally accepted as valid. Only a few women even questioned their lack of voting rights. It was a male- and youth-oriented culture. It has also been characterized as an era of "rugged individualism."

Persons born in 1900 are now in their seventies. Some are still serving on or just retiring as chairmen of the boards of major corporations, chairmen of influential Senate committees, heads of labor unions, and members of boards of regents of major universities. Their decisions are still influencing the contemporary scene. These are the elder statesmen of today and the grandfathers of today's youth.

The Parental Generation—1920s

In the late 1920s, one generation later, the parents of today's youth were born. At that time steel was superseded by automobiles as the dominant industry and General Motors emerged as the major company. Unlike steel,

automobiles had a highly salient impact on individuals and families. It enormously increased their mobility, privacy, and, probably, their sexual freedom. The negative impacts of this technological advance were not confronted until the following generation, and they constitute an important contemporary problem. Only now are questions being raised about the extensive, costly, unattractive, street- and-road systems. Only now are the problems of parking, traffic congestion, air pollution, and auto junkyards beginning to be attacked. By the mid-1920s there were about eight million automobiles in America, and the population naively enjoyed them, oblivious of the potential for destructiveness to man and the environment.

Charles Lindberg made his dramatic solo flight across the Atlantic Ocean in May, 1927. This event received worldwide attention and it was a great stimulus for aviation. But air travel was still a hobby, not a means of transportation nor a force for shrinking the size of the world.

In 1920-1930, the population was continuing its shift away from the South and Midwest. Urban centers along both East and West coasts were becoming prominent. In the 1930s only about half of the population was still residing in rural settings. There was a notable migration of agricultural workers of all colors and ethnicity due to increasing automation of the farm. John Steinbeck movingly wrote about the migrant workers in 1940 in *The Grapes of Wrath.* A large and less visible sector of this displaced group moved

to urban slums where they settled into a "culture of poverty." It was still largely true, however, that even in big cities there tended to be cohesive neighborhoods where people felt linked to each other and acted as a network of support, interpersonal modeling, and controls for each other. Information and values acquired by youth were largely filtered through the cohesive group of parents and neighborhood. There was certainty about values and a national pride related to America's participation in World War I and to our worldwide industrial leadership.

Most persons born in the 1920s experienced the depression of the thirties in their early years and participated in World War II as young adults, some as soldiers, others as war workers in industry at home. Rationing and shortages of food, commodities, and services were felt by most.

The spirit of this generation has been poignantly conveyed by Vice Admiral James F. Calvert, Superintendent of the U. S. Naval Academy.

> The most vivid memory of my childhood is being told by my mother that my father was, as we used to say in those days, "laid off." Like all ten year old boys I thought my father was the brightest, most capable man I had ever known. If he could not make a living, how would I ever hope to do so? . . . We worried about having enough to eat during the depression . . . and then later as we were getting started in our professions all of us went away to war. It (the war) took us and scattered us throughout the world. When we came back in 1945 and 1946 we were a different breed . . . We wanted stability and affluence. We wanted the privileges, the quiet, the stability for our children that we never had. We worked hard to give it to them.

Indeed, that generation built more schools, hospitals, and libraries than all other previous American generations combined. The biomedical professions made striking inroads on disease. The material prosperity and leisure time in the American people showed similar gains.

The beliefs and values of this generation were chiefly derived from their parents. Pride in family and nation was fostered and, for the most part, deeply held. This generation was fortified by these beliefs as well as by the toughness that was bred into them through coping with war and depression. Memories of the deprivations of the depression give salience to the value of seeking security and the acquisition of material possessions for themselves and their children. This value has paved the way for the "affluent society." There was confidence in the productiveness of America to satisfy the material and social needs of the total population. A strong current of idealism about the importance of equality in our pluralistic society was also prominent. These latter two values were to be the basis of the "revolution of rising expectations" that has come to characterize value systems of the current generation very strongly.

The Nineteenth Amendment, giving the vote to women, was passed in 1920. Although this was a notable event and climaxed the efforts of a dedicated band of feminists, it did not usher in a new era for women. There was simply a liberalization of the institution of voting. Actually, women at that

time usually voted in accordance with their husband's preferences and showed virtually no independence in political thinking. No restructuring of social institutions occurred nor was there significant alteration in society's view of woman's traditional role of homemaker and mother.

In 1920 the population of America was 106 million persons. The gross national product was $88 billion. There were now sixteen million telephones or roughly 139 per one thousand of population. There were eight million motor vehicles, and one and a half million radio sets, but no television as yet.

The persons born in this decade are now near their fifties, constitute the "establishment" and are the parents of contemporary youth.

Contemporary Scene—1970s

Today's youth was born in the 1950s. In 1950, the population of America was 151 million. Thirty-four percent of young Americans completed high school. The gross national product was $285 billion. There were fifty-six million motor vehicles. Forty-five million families owned radio sets. There were fifty million telephones, or 312 per one thousand population. Transcontinental television was first broadcast September, 1951. By 1953, there were nearly twenty-one million families who owned TV sets. By 1955, there were thirty- four million sets in use. The growth in popularity has been phenomenal. Today TV sets are in virtually every home in America. This is the

first TV generation.

The affluence of America, as indicated in the gross national product, was reflected in the rise in the standard of living, i.e., acquisition of material possessions, and also in a mass movement of the affluent out of the cities and into the suburbs. These suburbs have tended to be characterized by isolation, age, race, educational and socioeconomic homogeneity. The necessity for the husband to commute into the city tended to significantly diminish his role as husband and, particularly, as father. Mothers living in these suburbs have had far less support from family and community than their mothers or grandmothers. The burdens on these mothers have been enormous and only recently is there appreciation of the difficulties of raising children single-handedly in a residential ghetto, cut off from the main currents of the larger community.

Benjamin Spock published a popular, inexpensive book, *Baby and Child Care.* When it was reprinted in paperback, this volume became the handbook, almost "bible," by which this generation of children was raised— at least in middle-class families. Parents were encouraged to be permissive and child-centered. The burdened and insecure mothers were eager to rely on this benign expert. There was a parallel shift in the advice given in *Infant Care,* a handbook issued by the U. S. Children's Bureau that was the other popular "authority" on child rearing. In the successive editions of *Infant Care* between

1914 and 1951, Wolfenstein charted a shift from the strict, authoritarian approaches to childrearing in the twenties to a permissive approach by 1950. Children were given more freedom for self-determination. There were also conscious efforts at early independence training. There may have been some maternal reaction to their own early experiences because these permissive parents themselves had been raised in the "Watsonian" era of the 1920s and early thirties when rigid schedules were the accepted practice.

On the industrial scene there was a dramatic development in the technology of information processing through computer systems. IBM now has the same dominating and salient position that General Motors and U. S. Steel occupied in earlier eras. This was the beginning of the postindustrial or "technetronic" era. The implications of computer technology for increasing diversity and rates of change in all spheres of life are just beginning to be appreciated.

The launching of Sputnik by Russia in 1957 had a profound impact on the American educational system. There was a sharp shift in emphasis away from the humanities to scientific technology. The traditional format and regimentation of schools remained the same, however.

The Parental Generation: Child-Rearing Practices and Goals

Throughout history in most societies, the nuclear family has been the

basic social unit within which care of the young has been rooted and where cultural traditions, beliefs, and values have been transmitted from generation to generation.

The nuclear family exists as a unit but is also an integral part of the total social structure. It has membership in the wider kinship network of the extended family, subcultural groups of religion, ethnicity or social class, the local community, the nation and, in recent times, the "world community." The nuclear family tends to orient the developing child to the various elements of this social fabric in roughly the same sequence of ever-widening groups just cited.

From time to time there has been the suggestion that this traditional role of the family has been so depreciated and diminished that the "family is dead." There is general agreement that this demise has been prematurely reported, but it will be worthwhile to examine the reasons for concern about the strength and viability of the social institution of the family, particularly since this concern had been loudly voiced in relation to the families in the generation now under scrutiny, that is to say, the parents of contemporary youth. We will be discussing individuals who started their families in the late 1940s and the early 1950s.

Generation Gap

Before examining some of the details of changes in the social climate that have had significant impact on the social institution of the families of the fifties, it is worth reexamining the concept of the generation gap. This concept refers to an alleged sharp discontinuity between the practices, aspirations, and values of parent and child. Such a discontinuity would proclaim that the traditional role of the family as a transmitter of culture had failed. In the literature and the press this "gap" has been discussed chiefly in relation to elite youth who express vocal, often violent rejection of prevailing adult values and roles. They appear to be disaffected from all aspects of the society. However, careful study of this alienated group has shown that while these young people may be rejecting traditional American values, they are generally expressing the values of their own parents. Even for them there is, in fact, no generation gap. When adolescents of the middle and lower classes are studied, there are comparable findings of an absence of a generation gap. "The bulk of the students in the survey studies- come from the nonprofessional white collar' and 'blue collar' families who are moderately affluent and are traditional in their orientation. They and their children tend to expect a continuity of generations in terms of values and occupational niches. There is a mutual expectation of conformity and very little early striving towards autonomy. By and large these individuals live in stable communities and the children respect and wish to emulate their parents. Religious values and affiliation tend to be stronger than in the surrounding

classes." Douvan and Gold have observed that " 'rebellious youth' and 'the conflict between generations' are phrases that ring; but so far as we can tell, it is not the ring of truth they carry so much as the beguiling but misleading tone of drama."

Later on in the discussion of contemporary youth, it will be important to discuss the *"intra-generational"* gaps, that is, the several distinct contemporary youth cohorts who feel themselves in conflict with others of their own age in achieving their specific goals. At the present, it is sufficient to underscore the fact that in a pluralistic society American families are continuing, by and large, to transmit basic value patterns to their children without any sharp discontinuities.

This does not imply, by any means, that the observed behavior of young people is necessarily in total conformity with that of the adults. Careful studies have shown that adolescents do tend to conform to the basic values of parents and are usually more influenced by parents than peers in making long-term or otherwise significant decisions. They tend, however, to be autonomous in their decisions, or heavily influenced by peers with respect to matters of personal style such as hair, dress, music, and hobbies, and they are heavily influenced by peers in issues pertaining to peer relations. In the terminology of Merton and Rossi, the parents are used as the comparative-reference group, or the group that is salient in making value judgments, while

peers are used as the normative-reference group, or the group that is emulated and supplies norms of overt behavioral styles.

Structural Characteristics of the Families of the 1950s

Although the value orientation of each parental generation had its roots in the preceding generation, the particular version of these values has been significantly shaped by interactions with the technology and cultural influences impinging on individuals in their formative years. It is therefore worthwhile to try to understand the social context into which contemporary youth was born. Also, an effort will be made to understand the composite of influences that was affecting their parents in their childrearing period and influencing their socialization practices. An American value handed down from generation to generation has been the belief in the importance of the individual, coupled with the conviction that hard work would be rewarded with success. There has also been a commitment to goals of material and social progress. These are value patterns which imply an active adaptation to environmental and social conditions. It also implies a belief in society as an evolving and developing rather than a static entity. Therefore, for most of these parents, there has been a positive evaluation of change both in terms of technological advances and social mobility. This does not imply a uniform acceptance of change in different spheres or all sectors of the population. It is not a positive valuation of change for its own sake.

Shrinking of the Family

The families of the fifties were functionally much smaller than those of prior generations, despite the fact that they were often not smaller in terms of the numbers of children. The parents of the fifties had been born and raised in the depression when their parents were aware of the problems and burdens of caring for a large number of children, and the birthrate in their era was at an all-time low. In contrast, when they grew up, to become parents, they participated in the post-World War II "baby boom" that raised the birthrate dramatically. The implications of this dramatic demographic shift will be explored in the discussion of the contemporary scene, particularly in relation to college population.

There was, however, constriction of the family of the fifties through the loss of the extended family and, thereby, a diminution of the number of total persons, particularly adults, in the intimate orbit of the child. Mobile, uprooted nuclear families were out of regular contact with grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, etc. The age range and variety of role models were greatly constricted by this loss of extended family. There was also a tendency to have children in close succession so that the age spread of the children was narrow and there was, therefore, less opportunity to use siblings over a range of ages as foils, models, or parent surrogates.

In middle-class families servants who were quasi-members of the family

and intimate parts of the household had usually disappeared. They had been replaced by labor-saving machines and had themselves been attracted away by jobs in industry.

The net result was a small nuclear family in which the emotional intensity among the members was heightened, but the repertory of actors to fill the needed range of roles was sharply diminished. The effects of the shrinking of the family were compounded by mobility and urbanization. These families were in need of nonfamilial supports.

Structural Isolation

The small nuclear family was now an urban or suburban phenomenon. Neither suburb nor city in any way duplicated the richness of the social network of the stable small towns of the prior generations. This has been documented by systematic research on the daily life of children growing up in a small town as compared with the lives of children in a modern city or suburb. Small-town children from their earliest days onward interact with a substantially greater number of adults in different walks of life. In contrast to urban and suburban children, small-town children are more likely to be active participants in the adult settings they enter. In cities there are large numbers of impersonal contacts with strangers perhaps enhancing a sense of alienation. Inadvertently, urban children were increasingly isolated in society

and cut off from the supports, models, and constraints of meaningful personal adult models. The role of TV and age-segregated peer groups in filling this vacuum will be discussed later.

Decline in Parental Authority

The decline of patriarchy as a function of industrialization was mentioned previously. As Galdston stated:

> It removed man from field, workshop and home and harnessed him to the factory machine. It took over the vital domestic operations of the woman, so that she no longer spun, wove, sewed, baked, preserved and otherwise served her husband and children in the multitude of ways that had made her so essential to their life and well-being. It disorganized the intra-familial relations and dependencies of husband and wife, parents and children. The concept of "fatherhood" lost its power. . . . The deterioration process is now irreversible.

Other factors have also contributed to the decline of patriarchy. An important element has been the increase in the number of working mothers. In 1948, 13 percent of mothers with children under six years of age were in the labor force. By 1969, this figure had nearly tripled and over 30 percent of such mothers were working. In 1948, 31 percent of mothers with children over the age of six years were working. By 1969, 51 percent of such mothers were employed.

In families where the mothers were fulltime housewives, they tended to

take a more subservient role and ascribe decision making and authority to the husband. In homes where wives were working, they tended to take a more decisive and authoritative stance with respect to all family decisions, including child-rearing values and practices. These motherless found support in *Infant Care* and Spock both for emphasis on independence training in their children for its own sake and as a help to them in lessening child-care responsibilities. The actual care of their children was, of course, increasingly delegated and, depending on the socioeconomic group, the child often spent considerable time in front of the TV set or with baby-sitters rather than with an actively participating parent. There were also a substantial number of women who were not working but had vocational aspirations. Many of these dissatisfied women, although full-time mothers, were found to have child-rearing difficulties.

Paternal Deprivation

For a long time there has been great concern about the deleterious effects on children of maternal deprivation. There is just beginning to be general appreciation of the impact, particularly on boys, of paternal deprivation. Paternal deprivation is widespread and increasing. As was previously mentioned, in large part it represents an insidious by-product of urban, technological society.

For the affluent, this decline in the role of the father was related to time demands of the job, commuting, social and community obligations: the things one has to do to get ahead. For the poor, it was often the demands of having to work long hours for low wages, or even to hold two jobs, that claimed parents at mealtimes, evenings, and even weekends. Among the poor, fatherless families are prevalent.

While the effects on girls of this trend toward paternal deprivation is not explicit, cross-sex identity has been thought to be significant.- On the other hand, substantial evidence points to the positive effects on boys of the presence, attention, and support of their fathers. Grinker and his colleagues emphasized the history of strong identification with father and father figures in the cluster of conditions found in his sample of emotionally healthy college freshman males. Similarly, Rosenberg has found a strong correlation with parental interest (same sex in particular) and high self-esteem.

Studies from both the United States and Norway confirm the negative impact of a father's absence on the development of the male. Several lines of evidence support the concept that parental interest, guidelines, and support, particularly of the same sex parent, offer the most effective child-rearing context. It has been noted that where these are weak, or fathers missing, the adolescent males often tend to adopt styles of exaggerated masculinity including hyper-independence, high risk- taking, and aggressive behavior. In

adolescents, if there is a lack of firm guidance and availability of the same sex parent as a model and coping resource, an urgent need exists for the individual to uncritically seek peer support and adopt the badges of peer group conformity, regardless of the potential risk of antisocial outcomes.

Independence Training of Children

Children of the fifties were socialized for independence rather than the obedience training of the turn of the century. Children were encouraged in exploratory and assertive behavior. This served to increase their sense of efficacy. It was very useful to the household, and the mother in particular, when children could take responsibility for self-care and household chores. Also, it increased the child's awareness of his own desires and goals. In the context of the democratic ideals of the parents and the emerging pattern of mothers, whether employed or not, who wished to more fully express themselves, there were the beginnings of a modification from the "child-centered" family to the value of personal happiness and self-fulfillment for all of the members. The implications will be discussed further with respect to contemporary youth and their views of family structure.

Delegation of Parental Authority

In the 1900s, the family was a largely self- sustaining social unit. One

important reason why values could so easily be transmitted to children by the parents was the fact that information, and evaluations, were filtered by the parents, relatives, and close friends. Children had very little direct access to information before the advent of TV and the development of the mass media. Educational and recreational activities were all family-centered and family-directed.

In contrast to this earlier pattern, the parents of the 1950s, for the reasons discussed, had far greater need for extrafamilial support than any preceding generation. In response to this, old institutions such as the schools have been given new responsibilities for the non-academic education of children: dress codes, sex education, drug education, etc. Schools have responded to perceived paternal deprivation by an effort to increase the number of male teachers, particularly in the early grades. In addition, there has been the emergence of many new formal and informal organizations to meet familial needs in spheres such as child care, health needs, special education, social needs, and recreation. The range of influences upon the child has been greatly extended as outside supports were employed. For the disadvantaged, the welfare bureaucracy deals with virtually all sectors of their family functioning. In general, the family has taken on a new role as the mediator between its members and external organizations. Each of these organizations can and often does function in defining and transmitting values. Furthermore, the parents are no longer seen by the child as being in major

control of the resources that are of importance to him.

Concomitant with this development, although perhaps not the cause, there has been the rise of age segregation in the society. The most notable examples are the "retirement communities" and the "youth culture." Much more will be said of the youth culture in the following section.

In summary, by midcentury the shift in America from a predominantly rural nation to a predominantly urbanized and industrialized nation was well established. In the 1950s, the impact of this shift in family structure, value systems, and role relationship within the family was clearly evident and affecting, in turn, the socialization of contemporary youth. In general, the effects of shrinking family size, isolation, and the decline of parental authority have been most strongly felt and pervasively exhibited in a bipolar distribution, that is, in the upper and upper-middle classes, on the one hand, and in the lowest socioeconomic groups on the other. "Middle America" continues to show a relatively high percentage of families with traditional structures, values, and roles. There are some changes in these families and when they occur they are in the same direction, if not to the same extent, as in the highest and lowest classes.

Contemporary Youth

During the sixties the traditional American accent on youth turned into

a national preoccupation with the student protesters and the hippies. There was confusion, alarm, and, at times, anger over their behavior. The idealized images of youth that had been profitably fostered by the advertising industry were rudely shattered.

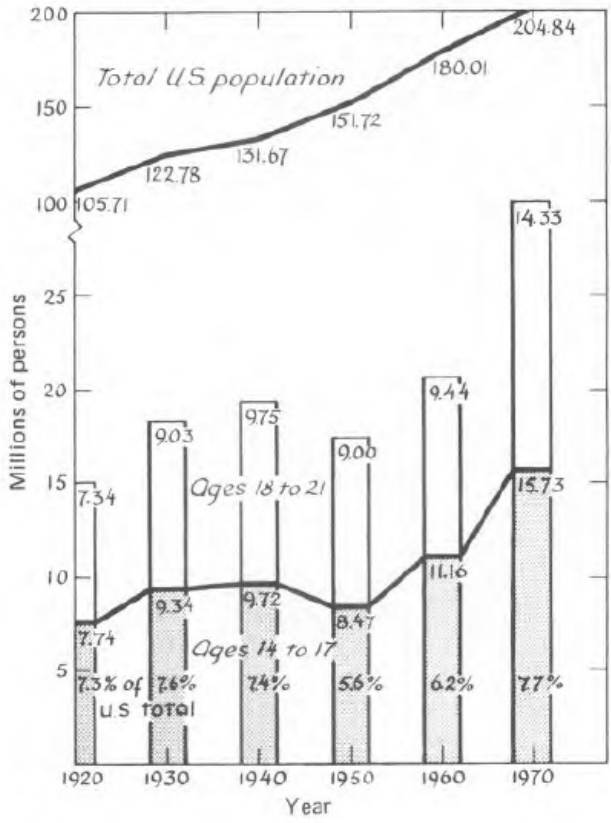

Figure 18-1.
Numbers of early and later adolescents in the United States over the past fifty years. Source: U.S. Census (1971:5,8).

Another striking change occurred in the sixties, which received less publicity. This was the dramatic increase in the total youth population in that decade. Youth became important in our contemporary society because of

sheer numbers.

Figure 18-1 relates the total number of adolescents to the total population of America over the past fifty years. It is clear that both of these populations have nearly doubled in this time span. Whereas the total population has shown a steady, slow increase in growth, the major increment in youth population has occurred in the past decade, the 1960s. Prior to i960, the adolescent population was fairly stable for several decades, averaging around eighteen million with a moderate dip in 1950 to seventeen million, reflecting the lowered birthrate during the depression years of the 1930s. The postwar baby boom is reflected in the increase in youth population in the sixties when there were thirty million adolescents. Increases in the percentages of adolescents in the population have shifted the median age downward, despite the medical advances that have increased longevity. Figure 18-2 shows this effect in a graph of the median ages of the population for the past sixty years. The most youthful population reported was in 1910 when the median age was just over twenty- four years of age. The median age rose steadily to a high in 1950 of over thirty years. With the youth-population explosion of the past ten years, the median age has steadily dropped and is currently at 27.6. The same graph also projects population trends, assuming four different reproductive rates from zero population growth to 3.1 children per female. All of these predict a secular trend toward an increased median age of the population. Several years ago the most accurate predictor was

thought to be the 2.45 children per female figure, and this series projects a steep rise in median age to nearly thirty-three years by the year 2020. There is, however, interesting data on the actual current birthrates.

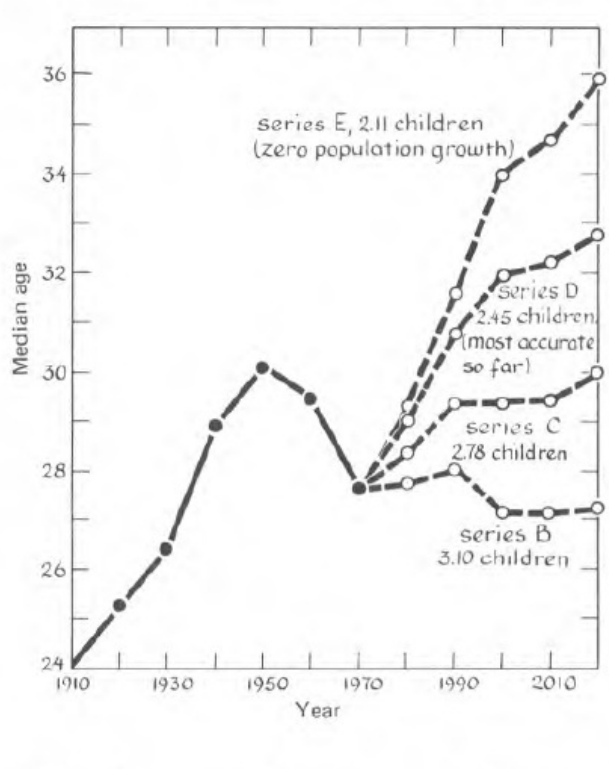

Figure 18.2
Actual and predicted median ages for the total United States population, 1910 to 2020. Source: U.S. Census, 1971: Table 2; 1970: Table 2.

Reports from the National Fertility Study, the Census Bureau, and the National Center for Health Statistics, as reported in the *New York Times* by

Rosenthal, show that there has been a recent dramatic drop in the birthrate average number of children born to women of childbearing age. The average rate reported for the first eight months of 1971 was 2.2. This drop is especially notable because the number of women of childbearing age is at a record high. This recent 2.2 figure is the lowest since the mid-depression years when the rate was roughly the same. The highest rate was in 1957 when the post-World War II baby boom peaked with a rate of 3.8. Over the past three generations there has been a generational swing of the pendulum from bust to boom and now, apparently, back to bust again. Some persons are already beginning to speak of a projected "birth dearth." Some of the contemporary conditions and attitudes that may be influencing the fertility rate will be discussed shortly.

In any case, at the present time the youth population is at a peak and is a potent factor affecting every aspect of American society. In general, it has led to massive demands for public services from a group of minimally economically productive citizens. In particular, there has been a notable strain on the educational system. Businessmen, on the other hand, have seen advantages in the consumer potential of this large pool of young people.

The extent of the youth explosion in the decade of the sixties can be seen in the following figures. In i960, youth (14-24 years) comprised 15 percent of the total population as compared to 20 percent of the total

population in 1971. The absolute numbers of youth in 1960 was 27.1 million persons, in 1970, 41.6 million persons. A demographic breakdown of this group shows the following:

	1960	1970
Total Youth (14-24 years)	27.1 million	41.6 million
Enrolled in college		
Total	4.6 million	7.4 million
White	4.3 million	6.8 million
Negro	234,000	522,000
Other	72,000	132,000
Employed		10.8 million
Unemployed		1.3 million
Armed Forces		1.9 million

Several things are worth noting at this point. First, the tremendous jump in college enrollment during the sixties. Secondly, the fact that currently the total working population of youth exceeds the college-attending population of youth by three million. Relatively little attention has been given to this large employed group of young people. Both popular and professional writers have concerned themselves predominantly with college youth.

Youth and Universities

It is clear that college attendance has rising salience in our society. In an increasingly technological world of specialized knowledge, increasingly higher levels of education are required to accomplish many necessary tasks. It is also widely believed by all sectors of the population that lifetime earning potential is positively correlated with level of education. Rightly or wrongly, typical figures show the college graduate is earning roughly $100,000 more over his working life than the high- school graduate and, of course, earning hundreds of thousands more than the dropout. The college degree elevates social as well as economic status. This outcome is prized in its own right by those seeking social mobility. Even if the income-education figures should be disproved, nevertheless some would continue to value college education just as highly as a passport to interesting, fulfilling kinds of careers. For others, the universities are seen as being at the center of society now that innovative and technological development is so highly dependent on professional expertise. For them the "knowledge industry" has become the major growth industry in America. This dependence on the university is seen in governmental as well as business spheres. It is well-known that each President relies heavily on panels of university experts to help interpret events and shape decisions. Roosevelt was both envied and derided for his "Brain Trust." The key role of Harvard professor, Henry Kissinger, in the Nixon administration is well-known. Finally, in the sixties attendance at college was a sanctuary for many young men who for either personal or

ideological reasons did not wish to serve in the war in Vietnam. College men were draft exempt until 1971 when the nation turned to a national lottery that had no education exemptions.

For a variety of reasons, therefore, the college and university population was at a record high in the sixties. Some social planners who were aware of the post-World War II baby boom, had forecast the problems of overcrowding and inadequate facilities that would confront colleges and universities when those boom babies grew up, but, for some reason, little action was taken on the basis of these predictions, and most colleges and universities were unprepared for the unprecedented arrival of so many new students. What was not foreseen was the potential for emotional reactions on the part of the students as a function of crowding of strangers, the confusion resulting from intimate contact with widely disparate groups, the competition for scarce resources (preferred classes, dormitory assignments, professorial time, etc.), and the frustrations brought on by inevitable bureaucratic failures of an overtaxed system. Although it has had little attention as a contributing factor to the student unrest and general turmoil of campuses of the sixties, it does seem likely that sheer numbers played a nontrivial role.

In each of the past three generations there have been significant changes in American colleges. There have been changes in the demographic characteristics of the student population, in the instrumentality of a college

education, and in the perception of the role of the university in the society as a whole.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, a university education was generally reserved for the elite. The university was perceived as a remote ivory tower, and, in many ways, it was. College was the final polishing process in creating young gentlemen whose careers and destiny had largely been predetermined by social status and family connections. It was used to broaden one's contacts with appropriate persons of the same class and often to find suitable marital partners. The college stood in loco parentis and continued to support the traditional values of the family. Academic demands and expectations were not rigorous. Getting into the right club or fraternity, proms, and football weekends was of greater importance to many students, than academic achievement. The students though often frivolous in their behavior, were basically quite conservative in their political views and values.

With the growth of the technological society, the role of education as a passport to career success became increasingly important. By the 1950s students were well aware of the practical importance of getting a college education and there was emphasis on competition for grades. In general, the students of the fifties were eager to achieve and task-oriented. They were quiet, serious, and worked as hard at their studies as they would later work at their jobs. They were neither frivolous nor protesting. Sometimes they were

called “the silent generation.” Some of their more liberal professors deplored the “passivity” of these depression-reared, post-World War II era students. The college had become a serious challenge to the individual. His success in life was perceived as less correlated with the status of his family of origin and more a function of his own efforts. College was no longer largely a province of the elite but a realistic pathway for upward social mobility for many students. More middle-class whites were in attendance and now some working-class students. There were also considerable numbers of women.

The students of the sixties and contemporary students were born in an era of affluence and the welfare state. By the time of their birth in the fifties, the Roosevelt New Deal programs had become an accepted American way of life. Embedded in these programs was the value mentioned earlier: of the right of all members of the pluralistic society to equal rights and the opportunity to share in material success (realization of the American dream). As was also mentioned previously, throughout their childhood these individuals had been socialized increasingly to see extra- familial organizations as in control of important resources. In particular, they had lived with the conviction that the federal government bore a heavy responsibility for the welfare and well-being of all citizens. These youths were more vehement in expressing the value of America as a land of opportunity for all than their parents. They were in the vanguard of the civil-rights movement.

Again, there was a class difference in the espousal of these liberal values. The small southern and mid-western colleges, particularly those with strong religious orientations, were much more conservative and traditional. They were not yet ready, for example, to support actively the Negro civil-rights movement of the sixties in the vocal and militant style of the students at elite colleges. However, it was true that most students, regardless of background, did share the same ideals of equality in the sixties, regardless of their degree of militancy. At all of the colleges these less active students constituted a large pool of recruits for crisis and polarized situations, and it was often surprising to see how many students shared the aims and goals of the militants even when they did not support the militant tactics. When their violence was met by establishment counter-violence, the vast majority of student support was with the fellow-student radical.

The student-protest movement in America in the sixties was spearheaded and largely implemented by students in the elite schools. There was particular impetus for the movement in those schools where a tradition of liberalism existed among a small group of the faculty, and where the students received substantial adult support and guidance. The best examples of this were the University of California at Berkeley and the University of Wisconsin. Lipset has pointed out that the radical-liberal history at Wisconsin goes back before World War I to when “the strength of Progressive and Socialist politics in the state contributed to the University’s aura.” Similarly,

Berkeley's history as one of the most liberal-left universities dates from the turn of the century and has been continuous. For example, at midcentury (1949-1950) Berkeley was the only major university to amass solid faculty support for an effective revolt against the McCarthy inspired loyalty oath that was designed to weed out Communists and Communist sympathizers from university communities.

It is probably not surprising that the first major student confrontations occurred at these institutions. At Berkeley in 1963, there were sit- ins to obtain equal-employment rights for Negroes. Many of the students were directly involved in the formation of the Free Speech Movement which received nationwide publicity under the leadership of Mario Savio the following year. At Berkeley there were experienced, dedicated, and well-organized groups to draw from in forming a radical group.

It was not true that they did not trust anyone over thirty. Such veteran, elderly radicals as Herbert Marcuse provided the intellectual capital for much of the ideology of the militant youth.

The spread of the student-protest movement to schools without this kind of supporting infrastructure may be in part credited to the media and TV and to the quick, easy mobility of modern transportation. Student protests received prominent, instant TV coverage that reinforced the protesters and

showed sympathizers “where the action was” in case they wanted to join in.

Even in a brief review of the forces influencing students of the sixties attention must be paid to the role of the civil-rights movement. As was noted above, sit-ins to obtain equal employment for Negroes was the issue around which the nucleus of students coalesced and it became the base for the Free Speech Movement. A great many Berkeley students had had a significant prior involvement in the civil- rights movement in the South. The civil-rights movement was a paradigm for the growth of the student-protest movements in many other colleges as well.

To review, in the 1950s there had been increasingly explicit application to the Negro of prevailing values of democracy, equality, and opportunity for all. This was particularly espoused by the affluent, college-educated upper- and upper-middle-class individuals. The legitimacy of the cause of the Negro was proclaimed with the landmark Supreme Court decisions of 1952 and 1954, pertaining to restaurant desegregation and school desegregation respectively. In the late fifties and early sixties thousands of white college students went south for personal involvement in the “cause.” Many were brutalized, a significant few were killed. For almost all of them there was the stirring of real political consciousness and a moral indignation at the society that for so long had condoned the legalized segregation of the South. It was the training ground for learning tactics of confrontation and for heightening

the sense of righteousness.

While the students were learning about their political power in the civil-rights movement, they also experienced a sense of failure. Some small successes were achieved in opening doors for Negroes that had been previously closed, but full equality for the Negro was certainly far from becoming a reality. They learned to use an issue with moral overtones as an attack upon the whole system of government. They learned that the civil rights of attackers are strongly defended, even when they violently assault, if the cause is deemed righteous. Later they learned that even a small minority can effectively shut down an idealistic and vulnerable institution such as a university that is loath to use force to protect itself.

When the full impact of the Vietnam War became apparent to the militant students, they had a prepared rhetoric, righteous stance, tactics, and organization with which to protest. In this issue, as in the civil-rights movement they had adult leadership and the large pool of less militant but highly sympathetic fellow students. Again, there was a very small but significant revolutionary radical group who were less concerned with Vietnam and more interested in using that issue as a wedge to attack the entire system.

The student-protest movement of the sixties has been of great interest

and there are a number of detailed and fascinating studies that describe and interpret these events in rich detail.-' I only wish to use this occasion to trace the continuity of values from the prior generation and show how the context of the contemporary scene influenced the explosive behavior of a particular group of student leaders.

Another factor that entered into the explosive mixture was the change in the demographic characteristics of the college population. Colleges were increasingly liberal in their admission policies. The student body was more widely representative than ever before. Not only were there more students in colleges of the sixties, but there were more kinds of students, including minorities.

Black-Student Movement

It was noted earlier that the population of black students in college doubled in the sixties. Just as the civil-rights movement had played a crucial role in creating the white- protest movement, it played an even more significant role in developing the black-protest movement. The failure of the white students' crusade on behalf of civil rights in the late fifties and early sixties was disillusioning for them and raised questions in their minds about the hypocrisy of the system. Of course, it was the blacks, directly affected and limited by policies of segregation, who had the most bitter reaction, and the

rise of black-protest movement was directly related to this. The substitution of the terminology black for Negro was a product of this movement. It was related to fostering a sense of black pride and new identity.

A key black group that grew directly out of the Civil Rights Movement was the SNCC (Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee). It was formed by a group of black college students in i960 in Raleigh, North Carolina. SNCC was started in the nonviolent tradition of Martin Luther King and it initially used the tactics devised and practiced by him. The course of the black-protest movement can almost be charted by the vicissitudes of SNCC. There was an initial period of great popularity and support for the SNCC. In the course of the decade SNCC moved orthogonally to a position of espousal of extremely violent rhetoric and tactics. As its positions and actions became more and more violent and extreme, support began to dwindle, particularly since the extremist tacts were found to be counterproductive in terms of achievement of realistic goals. In the last couple of years of its existence, the membership of SNCC declined to a tiny core of dedicated revolutionaries who had virtually no credibility with the general public. The organization was finally dissolved in 1972.

The sharp increase in the numbers of black college students was due to deliberate policies of liberal universities, aimed at rapidly increasing the percentage of black students with access to higher education. They

established preferential admission policies and generous scholarship aid for black students. Most of these black student recruits to the universities came from black ghettos. For many of them, the freedom, equality, and affluence of university life was unsettling and often guilt-provoking. They felt a strong need to prove that they still identified with the deprivations of the ghetto world and to demonstrate to those back home that they would use the forum of the university to attack racism in American society. In a sense, many of them felt an obligation to make their activities on campus a paradigm of the revolution they wished to achieve for blacks in the larger society. There was, therefore, an emphasis on "black power." This was expressed in "non-negotiable" demands and a push for significant areas of total control by blacks, i.e., black studies programs, black dormitories, choice of black faculty and administrators.

Paradoxically, in the sixties the university was probably the most liberal and democratic institution in American society with respect to the blacks and, at the same time, it was the target of the greatest destructiveness and violence. The academic traditions of tolerance, personal freedom, and a great reluctance to resort to counter-violence, even in its own defense, made it a vulnerable target for initial, easy successes in the campaigns of the attacking black students.

The height of violence in the black-student movement perhaps came

when Cornell black students armed themselves with rifles to defend their seizure of the Student Union building. In this episode, despite some sympathy for the initial grievance that triggered the events, the excessive nature of the response caused a loss of both black and white support.

This general response to extremist militancy had its counterpart outside the university in the responses to the Black Panther movement. The Black Panthers are now in eclipse and black-student protestors are still militant but more constructively goal-oriented, and there has been a sharp decline in violent tactics.

Young blacks are an important component of the *intra-generational* gap. They have now learned that their interests are not served by the elite white revolutionaries who had exploited black issues in the early sixties. Neither do they identify with the hippies, who, often from a position of affluence, reject the material values of American society. Finally, they are in a struggle, both on campus and off, with blue-collar youth, for status, housing opportunities, and, ultimately, jobs. Both of these latter groups want very much to obtain a share of the goods and services that are attractively displayed to them by the mass media. The young blacks have their own vision of America, and they are struggling to achieve it. They are not basically opposed to the system. They are angry and frustrated by their inability to participate fully in its benefits. They are eager to promote social change.

Blue-Collar Youth

It is worthwhile recalling again that working-class youth represents by far the bulk of the young people in America. Looking at the demographic breakdown previously cited, there are fourteen million young people of appropriate age who are not in college as compared to 7.4 million who are enrolled. It is true, however, that beginning in the sixties, colleges increasingly have come to represent a broader cross-section of the population. The percentages of women, minorities, and blue- collar youths have sharply escalated due to the mutual aspirations of universities and those target populations. This means that a significantly high percentage of college students come from working-class backgrounds at the present time.

Actually, the two student cohorts previously described represent very small minorities. A Harris Poll in 1968 estimated that there were one hundred thousand student activists or roughly 2 percent of the existing total population. The enrollment of blacks at that time was 234,000 or roughly 4 percent of the total. Even with the steady, calculated rise in black enrollments, the 1970 figure was only 522,000 out of a total of 7.4 million.

It is clear that the student activists and black-student protestors were differentially responding to the forces of social change and were themselves significant agents of further change in both planned and unplanned ways. The preponderance of blue-collar college youth were less subject to sharp impacts

of social change. This was due to the buffering effects of their traditional families and to the extensions of these conservative values in their schools, which have served to buttress the familial values. To put it another way, throughout their lives they lived within rather narrow confines both with respect to school and to family and were reared not to question the system. When the doors of college were opened to these children, they sought entrance to use the instrumentality of a college degree to attain vocational and, ultimately, consumer goals. Studies of student subcultures made by Lewis revealed that roughly one-half of the student population sampled, came from blue-collar backgrounds and that 48.6 percent expressed consumer-vocational goals as their major motivation in attending college. Further analysis of his data revealed that only one-fifth of this group saw college as a means of expanding intellectual horizons. They were very interested in obtaining a degree. (Interestingly, the students in the nonconformist subculture were minimally interested in obtaining a degree and very high in intellectual motivation.) For technological reasons, paths to upward occupational mobility have been significantly linked to higher education. This educational ceiling on mobility has meant, therefore, that among blue-collar youth those who do not attend college experience an effective decline in their opportunities. In the noncollege blue-collar youth group this has led to intense competition and, at times, overt hostility to the minority youths who are striving for the same occupational niches.

For the blue-collar college youth there was a significant lack of political activism. They were in the "silent majority." However, despite their lack of militancy it was true that many of them did sympathize with some of the avowed goals of the student protestors. For example, some of them were concerned about injustices suffered by blacks and a great many were opposed to the war in Vietnam. In general, they supported the student protestors when police counter-violence or disciplinary action was involved.

In contrast to the college blue-collar youths, a sector of noncollege working-class youths has been much more militant. Again, as with other young militants, they have often received support from their parents and other adult reference persons when their violence was directed against perceived incursions by minorities. At times these blue-collar youths have been instigators of ugly incidents involving reprisals when attempts were made to integrate housing or a union, or to bus school children for school integration. Significantly, many working-class young men are now attracted to jobs as policemen. It seems to be concretization of their desire to "restore law and order," at times used to defend bigotry. Among noncollege working-class youth there is deep antagonism, not only to the minorities whose strivings are an economic threat but to student protestors and hippies as well. At times these three sets of peer contemporaries are seen by them as flaunting their deeply held value of hard work as the road to achievement. Blacks and other minorities are often seen as being given unfair unearned

advantages in a kind of reverse discrimination. They envy and resent the elite young people who use the sanctuary of the university to attack the establishment and system that they value. They equally resent the hippies who flaunt the work ethic. It was surprising to some, but understandable in the light of this discussion, to learn that in 1968, the polls of Gallup, Harris, and Yankelovich revealed that 25 percent of young voters, at all educational levels, preferred George Wallace as their candidate. In looking at the twenty-five million new voters who were eligible to cast their first ballots in the Nixon-McGovern election in 1972, Roberts found marked differences between college and working youth. Only 22 percent of the blue-collar youth described themselves as liberal whereas 43 percent of the students did. At this writing, the details of the youth vote in the recent Nixon-McGovern election have not been carefully analyzed, but the preliminary scan strongly suggests that the youth vote was concordant with the voting patterns of the older generation. It can be noted, again in the voting pattern of the 1972 presidential election, that there was a bimodal distribution of the vote for a mandate for change. The highest and lowest ends of the social scale (the elite and the disadvantaged) seemed to be the groups who preferred McGovern over Nixon. As judged by the 70 percent plurality in Washington, D.C., the size and solidarity of the black vote, both young and old, for McGovern was particularly striking. Some forecasters had anticipated that there would be a "youth bloc" of first-time, liberal voters. No such pattern materialized. Desire

for social change did not break down along age lines.

Youth and Sex Roles

There is one area, however, in which contemporary youth does appear to be differentially responding along generational lines with respect to social change. This has to do with the roles of women. Up until fairly recently, at all ages, a conservative view about the role of women as homemaker and mother had been a dominant and deeply held American value. Opinion polls are now revealing that this traditional view, particularly among youth, is changing.

Over the past two decades there has been a gradual acceptance of women in work roles. In 1947, women made up 28 percent of the total labor force. By 1969, women were found to represent 37.8 percent of the working population. Not only has the total number of women employed greatly increased but they now seek to occupy an ever-widening range of work roles. Their right to do so has been institutionalized by statute, Title VII of the Civil Rights Act prohibiting sex discrimination in hiring. By 1970, the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission had had some success in eliminating discriminatory wage differentials as well as in extending the hiring of women in new job categories. Coupled with this has been a shift in the acceptance of the working mother. In prior years there had been a deeply held belief that the young child needed his mother, specifically, and would be harmed if child-

care arrangements were provided and the mother was employed out of the home. Youth has shown a far greater readiness to reevaluate this concept.

Particularly among the older generations there is still ambivalence about whether or not it is sound public policy to encourage mothers to work by establishing inexpensive, high quality and readily accessible child-care facilities. However, inasmuch as a legislative decision has been made that it is desirable to encourage welfare and disadvantaged mothers to work (and also to facilitate the hiring of women in industries with manpower shortages) public monies have been appropriated for the establishment of day care under federal auspices. This framework, coupled with accepting attitudes of young people, would seem to set the stage for a vast increase in daycare facilities in the near future and a consequent acceleration of the changing role of women as mothers.

In contemporary America, the attitudes of women in relation to mothering and childbearing have been greatly influenced by advances in biomedical technology for birth control, chiefly "the pill,"' and also by liberalized attitudes toward abortion. In the past, pregnancy was chiefly related to sexual motivation. Now, for a great many individuals it is increasingly a result of a desire to have and to rear children. Despite the lack of widespread support for Women's Lib per se, it would appear that all of these factors have caused contemporary young women to view their roles

differently.

The current trend toward later first marriages may be an indication of a lessened commitment to early marriage and children. Especially for women there is more emphasis on higher education, careers, and self-expression. These same attitudes may, in part, account for the unexpected, sharp drop in the birthrate, which is also being currently recorded.

There has been much interest among contemporary youth both in family arrangements that deemphasize a sex-role division of labor, and in the hierarchical,, patriarchal family that was once traditional. On the one hand, there has been interest in a wide range of communal structures and, on the other hand, in new approaches to the more conventional nuclear family. The White House Conference on Children in 1970 identified five different communal-family types and seven variations on the traditional family in the section on “Changing Families in a Changing Society.” It remains to be seen which of these experiments will be viable. One of the outcomes may very well be a general acceptance of the principle of a range of choices in life style. Acceptance of diversity is promoted by exposure to television. Individuals are vividly presented with direct exposure to perspectives and information in a way that was not possible prior to this TV generation. There is also a tendency by the media to focus on the most innovative developments of the time. The net result can be an apparent legitimatization of new freedoms and

values.

Television and Youth

It would not be appropriate to conclude this discussion without commenting on the significance of television for contemporary youth. The influence of TV has been exerted throughout the entire course of their lives. It has played an important background role in shaping their attitudes, values, and behavior.

Unlike the printed word, TV is a direct experience. No decoding is necessary. Consequently, it is equally available to children, educated persons, illiterates, the rich and the poor. Studies have shown that TV has a preemptive quality and that when available, it tends to be preferred to other mass media. The popularity of TV and its presence in 87 percent of all American homes, including poverty households, is truly phenomenal. Gerbner speaks of TV's ability "to from new bases for collective thought and action, quickly, continuously and pervasively across boundaries of time, space and class." With the advent of satellite communication, TV messages are now beamed all over the world.

As mentioned previously, TV has diluted the parental influence in shaping values by replacing their filtered information, which reflected a particular cultural perspective, with either "raw" information or, at other

times, the opinions and judgments of nonfamily persons. In this way, TV opens up the possibility for the transmission of the culture among diverse groups.

Another effect of TV has been to enhance the cult of the personality. It elevates some persons to hero status. At the same time, with a relentless focus on the novel and the sensational there can be an emphasis on the unmasking of heroes, which can promote cynicism and loss of heroic figures with whom youth can identify. TV has also fostered a shrunken globe and "one-world" perspective. Through the evening news reports, world problems come to rest on the individual conscience.

The role of TV in promoting violence has been under scrutiny by the office of the Surgeon General, and an extensive report has been issued. The findings would seem to implicate the viewing of television violence by children as a contributing factor to the violence of our society. The experimental evidence reviewed revealed that violence depicted on television can induce imitative behavior on the part of children. The effect was not uniform and it was noted that aggression-prone children were more likely to show an increase in aggressive behavior in response to television violence. It was also reported that there is very high television viewing among the three-to-twelve age span. The average home television is turned on six hours per day.

Many important issues are raised by the Surgeon General's inquiry. An important concern is the role of TV in the acquisition of aggressive tendencies in young children. The mutually reinforcing effects of environmental factors on aggressive behavior needs study.

There is little known, for example, about the shaping effects of TV in promoting a taste for violence in magazines, books, and movies or the translation of any of these into violent actions.

A more general issue can also be raised about the future of television programming. At present, the programs are geared for presentation to a mass audience. There are, however, alternatives of greater diversity and more specialized programming for pro-social goals, particularly with the advent of cable TV. Finally, there is need to review the underlying needs that have led to such an extensive use of television. There may be important non-television avenues for use of leisure time that should be developed. It is possible that schools will need to place some emphasis, for example, on teaching children the uses and values of leisure-time pursuits and on giving them the skills and enthusiasm for seeking other activities.

Conclusions

An effort was made to trace the impact of social change on American youth using the example of youth in the 1960s. This decade was chosen partly

because of the turbulence of students in the universities during this period and partly because it may help us to better understand today's youth. The role of women in contemporary society is an issue that is of particular importance to youth.

It was proposed that response to social change is more closely related to membership in a particular cultural subgroup than to age or generational lines. Several major cohorts of youth were delineated. Within each group the continuity of values through the generations was discussed. Each group had a distinctive interpretation of basic American values that was transmitted to its children.

In order to understand the impact of social change on youth it is necessary to know something about the social context and the values of the parental generation who were responsible for the socialization of the individuals in question. The response to social change, in other words, is a function of a sub-culturally determined readiness to adapt. The parental generation under scrutiny is an interesting one because the families of that era were experiencing the stresses of urban, mobile, industrial society. The effects of television in further diluting the role of the family as a transmitter of values is discussed.

It was concluded that, despite difficulties, the family continues to

provide its children with a basic-value structure. This set of values acts as a stable base for interpreting the environment and providing the individual with the range of possibilities of response to the changes that confront him. Even though the basic values are stable, each generation expresses its own version of these values and displays distinctive behavioral styles.

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