Chapter 5 -- The Adolescent in Society

Section 1: Adolescence in Our Society

Objectives:
- Explain how adolescence developed as a distinct stage of the life cycle in the United States.
- Identify the five general characteristics of adolescence.

Adolescence is a unique stage in our life cycle—they are no longer kids, but not seen as adults. Adolescence can be defined as the normal onset of puberty and the beginning of adulthood. Puberty is the physical maturing that makes an individual capable of sexual reproduction.

Adolescence as a distinct life stage is the creation of modern industrial society. It does not occur universally. In the USA, adolescence is from 12-18, but the beginning and end dates can be somewhat blurred, especially if you go to college and are dependent on your parents longer.

The Concept of Adolescence
- Adolescence is not universal in preindustrial societies. Children go straight to adulthood once they have taken part of formal ceremonies called puberty rites (13-14).
- Examples: demonstrations of strength, filing one’s teeth, tattoos, branding.
- Adolescence as a life stage is a relatively recent phenomena. In the USA, it did not exist before the Civil War (1865).
- Young people were treated as small adults—it has become an acknowledged stage of development in the past century.
- Three have made it an important life stage.

How Adolescence Developed as a Stage of the Life Cycle
1. Through school—children stay in school longer; extended period of dependence
2. Need parents or government for money/support—not in (usually) from spouse—but parent/provider
3. Through work—laws restricted child labor, also increasing length of dependence
4. Through court system—juvenile-justice system legally distinguished between youth and adults

General Characteristics of Adolescence
- The experiences of adolescence are not the same for everyone—but five characteristics usually apply to all.
- Biological growth and development—various biological changes such as changes in body proportions and acne (ADD almost all—many seek medical advice)
- This is biological, rather than cultural in origin—the brain and the endocrine system (glands that produce hormones) are in control.
2. Undefined status—adolescent expectations are often unclear.
- Are you a child or adult?????—different people treat you differently
- Some adults dress as teens——other shun all things teen
3. Increased decision making—must make some of their own decisions
- Kids are used to adults making decisions for them
- Once adolescence hits there are so many decisions to be made—some have far reaching consequences

Deciding What to Do with the Rest of Your Life
4. Increased pressure—adolescents are faced with pressure from many sources
- Parents have the most say on young lives
- Adolescents have to strike a balance between parental wishes and peer pressure—School is also a factor
- The most pressure comes from peers—they strive to be part of the “in” group—the way they dress, talk, and act are influenced by them
- There is pressure to establish relationships—to make them accepted and popular
- Job pressure also plays a role—many times all of these factors conflict with one another
5. The search for self—deciding what is really important
Most teens can decide what they want out of life—decide what is important to them—then establish personal NORMS that will guide this behavior. When you are certain of yourself, what you want from life, and what MORALS serve you best—you are in a better position to make the most out of ADULTHOOD. Preparing for future roles is one aspect of finding yourself—ANTICIPATORY SOCIALIZATION—is an important part of adolescent development—it involves learning the rights, obligations, and expectations of a role to prepare for assuming that role in the future.

EXAMPLE—PLAYING HOUSE AS A KID

3 Common forms of anticipatory socialization during adolescence are:

1. Part-time job
2. Club membership
3. Dating

The five characteristics of adolescence are general and individual experience differs widely—race, religion, ethnicity, cultural heritage, economic status, family composition all play a role in the kinds of EXPERIENCES a person has.

Chapter 5 Section 2: Teenagers and Dating

OBJECTIVES:

- Summarize how dating developed as a form of social interaction.
- Describe the functions that dating fulfills.

-Dating is a social behavior that is identifiable to many Americans—especially TEENS.
-Dating like ADOLESCENCE is not a universal phenomenon.
-Dating—the meeting of people in as a romantic engagement—is most commonly found in societies that let you CHOOSE your marriage partners.
-In some societies marriages are arranged by parents or CONTRACT.
-Dating is relatively recent phenomenon—it did not emerge as a form of social interaction among the sexes until after WWI (1920S STARTS).

In the past 60 years sociologists have begun to study it.

Development of Dating

-Prior to dating interaction between young unmarried men and women was called COURTING—these differ from dating in that its express purpose is eventual marriage.
-Dating may led to marriage—it is mainly for enjoyment and ENTERTAINMENT at least in the casual stages.
-Dating is the MEANS through which most modern Americans eventually decide on a marriage mate.
- Look at the process as a CONTINUUM—beginning with casual dating, progressing to steady dating, then ENGAGEMENT then marriage.

-As you move along the continuum—the degree of commitment given to the relationship increases.
-It is a FLEXIBLE system—stages can be bypassed, and you can quit at any time.

-Courtship was not this flexible—you can look at it between steady dating and engagement.
-It is not casual—parents are asked—intentions kept honorable, and marriage minded—the roles where clearly defined.

-Courtship was usually done in the girl’s parlor—rarely where couple left alone—if the relationship continued—marriage WAS EXPECTED.

The Emergence of Dating

-The rise of INDUSTRIALIZATION contributed to dating in the USA.
-The USA was primarily agricultural-----men needed LAND for marriage—parents had much control.
-The Industrial Revolution – marked when people moved from the farms to the cities where young adults could gain more economic CONTROL and their own home. As a result, parental control over young adults and courtship decreased and set the stage for dating.

-FREE Public Education – was also a help to dating—by the 1900s most secondary school students attended coeducational public schools which increased INTERACTION between boys and girls.

After WWI 2 INVENTIONS had an effect on dating.
1. **AUTOMOBILE**—young adults had more freedom of movement away from parents
2. Telephone—young adults could more easily talk to members of the opposite sex

-Equality of **WOMEN**—more women entered the workforce (1920s) and took on more active community roles which increased the interaction between single adult men and women
-Dating was more **FLEXIBLE** than courtship was

**WILLARD WALLER** conducted a formal analysis of American dating patterns

-During the 1920s and 1930s he studied students at **PENNSYLVANIA STATE** University (Penn State)—from his findings he concluded that casual dating was a form of **ENTERTAINMENT** and had little to do with mate selection
-Status attainment and **ENTERTAINMENT**—were at the center of the process
-Status like **LOOKS**, $, cars, cloths, dancing ability, frat membership, popularity--------in courtship honesty and dependability were most valuable
-Waller also found that dating was limited to within sororities or frats---find someone of a similar **SOCIAL STANDING**—lower status people would damage your standing
-Later research would challenge Waller’s “**RATING** and dating game”
-Status attainment and entertainment are important factors in casual dating **BUT** **CHARACTER** & personality are also important
-There are similarities between what people look for in a casual date and what they look for in a spouse---EXAMPLE—status attainment can be important to both
-Status attainment is a function of **HOMOGAMY**—the tendency of individuals to marry people who have social characteristics similar to their own

**Why Date????**

1. Serves as a form of entertainment---allows people to have fun
2. Is a means of socialization that teaches people about the opposite sex
   Can learn how to behave in certain social situations, learn roles, and define self-concepts
3. Fills psychological needs such as companionship, **HUMAN CONTACT**, & understanding
4. Helps individuals attain status as people are judged in part by whom they date—Dating a person who is valued by others raises one’s own social status
5. Aids in **MATE** selection (later stages of dating)

**Dating Patterns**

-Dating patterns can also be viewed as a continuum—one end traditional dating patterns (before 1960) on the other end **CONTEMPORARY** practices of today

**Traditional Dating Patterns**

-Still found in small towns and rural areas---mostly characteristics of 1940s-50s
-Traditionally all responsibility fell on the **MAN**—ask, set it up, and pay
-Both parties knew what was expected of them---the rules were defined by the group to which they belonged—behavior not done within group expectations was met with sharp disapproval
EXAMPLE—Wed for arranging Sat dates
-Early stages of dating revolved around an **EVENT** (movie/sports)—if award spend energy on activity
-If relationship continued---you progressed to **STEADY** dating—class ring, letterman jacket, id bracelet---**SYMBOL** of commitment
-Steady dating was a form of **ANTICIPATORY** socialization for marriage---one could have several “steadies” before finding a marriage partner

**Contemporary Dating Patterns**

-Since the 1960s dating has changed---greater opportunity for men and women to interact informally
-No set stages, greater **EQUALITY**—both sexes initiate dates & pay
   *Still not that much, most girls won’t ask a guy out or to prom (guys would say YES)—**BUT** neither would consider woman asking man to marry her—**SO NOT REALLY EQUAL**
-This tendency towards flexibility reveals some important differences
   -Traditionally-interaction was formal and centered on the couple
Men thought they needed a good “LINE” to sell themselves
- Today—relationships based more on friendship and the group—than the couple
- Lines are not needed

-Dating practices of the Amish of LANCASTER County, PA offer a counterpoint to traditional dating patterns
- They have little to do with society OUTSIDE their community
- No electricity, phones, cars, appliances, etc.
- Dating activities of today’s high school students are unknown to the Amish—yet all date, court, and eventually marry
- They start dating around 16—men receive a COURTING BUGGY (think like driver’s license)
- Most opportunities to spend time together come from formal events (picnics, weddings, corn husking)
- Best time for arranging dates are at SUNDAY SINGINGS—then they can pair off or walk or buggy home
- Date once every 1-2 weeks and are discreet until they marry—it is serious and done with MARRIAGE in mind—the Amish do not recognize DIVORCE

Chapter 5 Section 3: Challenges of Adolescence

PART ONE
OBJECTIVES:
- Identify some of the social problems facing contemporary teenagers.
- Trace the causes and consequences of these problems.
- Adolescence can be a turbulent and perplexing time of life
- New problems occur that were not found in CHILDHOOD
- Adolescents are caught between the SAFETY of childhood and the independence of adulthood
- Teens face developmental tasks like—planning for the future, craving out an identity, becoming independent, developing close relationships—some do this with relatively no PROBLEMS—to others it is overwhelming
- The 1980s marked a boom in adolescent research—most focused on the problem’s teens face

Social Problems of Contemporary Teenagers
1. Teenage Sexual Behavior
2. Teenage Drug Use
3. Teenage Suicide

Teenage Sexual Behavior
- As with other social phenomena the NORMS that govern sexual behavior vary widely from society to society
- Some small preindustrial societies allow adolescents to engage in sexual behavior before marriage—it is viewed as preparation for MARRIAGE
- In WESTERN countries there are traditional sexual values that include the norm against premarital sexuality
- Traditional sexual values in the US are an outgrowth of PURITANICAL and Victorian views of sexual morality (sex is for marriage)
- Until the 1960s traditional sexual values had the support of most American in PRINCIPLE, if not always in practice
- However, in the 1960s American had the start of the "SEXUAL REVOLUTION" was brought on by the
  1) Development of the pill 2) The feminist’s movement 3) The counterculture
- During the revolution—the norms governing sexual behavior began to change—people talked and explored
- As a consequence sexuality is a familiar feature of American culture today
- Sexual references are common in the programs seen on TELEVISIONS of American teens
  *14,000 sexual references—less than 500 include use of birth control
- Another unanticipated consequence of the changing norms is a dramatic increase in adolescent SEXUAL BEHAVIOR
- Sociologists now spend a great deal of time analyzing teen sexual activity and what factors influence it
**The Rate of Teenage Sexual Activity**

- Data from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention:
  - * Most current data shows 42% of American girls 15-19 were sexually active
  - *This is a decline from the 1980s where the percentage was 51%
- Teen **BIRTH RATE** has also been on the rise—although it has dropped some in the last decade
- The **AMERICAN** birthrate is higher than other industrialized countries
- The CDC established **GUIDELINES** to address the issue:
  1. **ABSTAINANCE**
  2. **Effective Birth Control**
- Results from the end of the 1990s show success—**BIRTH CONTROL** use increases—teen pregnancy fell

**Influences on Early Sexual Activity**

- There are a number of reasons that sociologists feel teens engage in sexual activity
- Social and **ECONOMIC** factors found to influence early sexual activity are family income level, parent’s marital status, and religious participation
- Higher income 2 parent homes have lower rates of sexual activity than low income single parent families
- Religious teens tend to less experienced than non-religious teens
- There are some explanations that focus on **SUBCULTURE**—teenagers who friends have sex are more likely to have sex themselves
- Early sexual behavior is also associated with other **RISK-TAKING** behaviors like drug use and delinquency

**Consequences of Early Teenage Sexual Activity**

- Sexual activity has its **CONSEQUENCES**—for teens these are often negative—they are generally social and health issues
- The CDC says less than **75%** of sexually active teens use birth control regularly—1 million teens become pregnant each year

- **Teenage pregnancy has a number of negative consequences:**
  1. Low birth weight, more likely to die within 1st year
  2. Less likely to finish **HIGH SCHOOL** and college
  3. Lower lifetime earnings
  4. Children more likely to have **LEARNING DELAYS**
  5. Children of teenage parents more likely to become teen parents themselves
  6. Teen moms face significant emotional stress
- Even when pregnancy does not occur—early sexual activity can have negative health issues—like STDs and AIDS
  - **1 in 4** teens get an STD a year (HPV, CHLAMYDIA, TRICH, HERPES)
  - AIDS is a fatal disease that attacks the body’s **IMMUNE SYSTEM**—leaving a person vulnerable to infection
  - Teens are especially at risk with high rates of activity and low rates of condom usage
- Studies show teens are aware of the AIDS epidemic, but many do not believe it will happen to them (50% of new infections occur in people under 25)

**Teenage Drug Use**

- A **DRUG** is any substance that changes mood, behavior, and consciousness
- Drug use had a long **HISTORY OF USE IN CULTURES**—coke was in a wide variety of products in the 1800s

**Drug Violence**

- Public had been increasingly alarmed about drug use—mainly because of an increase in **DRUG VIOLENCE**
- Violence is also associated with drug trafficking **CURRENT EVENT**—MEXICO
- Rival gangs battle each other for turf—teens used as foot soldiers—kids as lookouts
- They rise in the hierarchy to become runners and dealers (Watch THE WIRE from HBO)
- Crack was the considered the principle cause of the escalation of drug violence—its popularity has given way to prescription drugs and meth
- In our area—heroin use has led to a crime spike

**The Rate of Teenage Drug Use**
Since 1975 The University of Michigan’s Institute for Social Research has conducted an annual for high school seniors—they have included 8th and 10th grade recently—it includes lifetime use, annual use, and monthly use stats.

- Any UPWARD trend is encouraging
- When analyzing the study 2 factors should be kept in mind—the USA has the highest rate of drug use for adolescents of any industrialized country
- It does not measure drug use in percentage of DROPOUTS (who have much higher average rates)

Influences on Teenage Drug Use

1. Friends who use drugs
2. Social and academic problems
3. Hostile HOME setting

The Michigan survey also monitors changes in attitudes of teenagers towards drug use.

- Results find that students are more likely to now believe that a drug is harmful to their health marijuana and coke—especially with CIGARETTES—1975-51% 2000-73% (NOT E-CIGS, VAPES)

- The only exception is WEED—it has remained low

- Negative attitudes towards regular use of LSD, Coke, heroin, amphetamines, barbiturates—have remained constant and high (in 90s)

Chapter 5 Section 3: Challenges of Adolescence

PART TWO—Suicide in Teens

- The social problems of teenage drug and alcohol abuse are contributing factors to another teen SUICIDE
- The SUICIDE rate in the USA has GROWN in the last 3 decades
- The rate for young people now exceeds the rate for general population (except SENIOR CITIZENS—which is twice as high as teens)
- The suicide rate may actually be higher because many suicides are ruled ACCIDENTS: undetermined, drownings and ODs

- It was responsible for more than 47,000 deaths in 2017, resulting in about one death every 11 minutes
- Every year, many more people think about or attempt suicide than die by suicide. In 2017, 10.6 million American adults seriously thought about suicide, 3.2 million made a plan, and 1.4 million attempted suicide.

The Sociological View of Suicide

- When you think of causes and consequences of suicide you probably think in terms of INDIVIDUALS—that it is a personal act that results from psychological factors like depression
- Sociologists admit it is an act done by individuals—but they are more interested in the sociological factors that affect suicide rates
- Sociologists believe that variations in SUICIDE PATTERNS can be understood by studying the structure of society and the experiences of people

- Emile Durkheim classic study on SUICIDE—was interested in why some societies or groups have higher rates of suicide than others—he felt that variations in suicide rates could be explained by the level of SOCIAL NTEGRATION in a group or society

- Social integration—is the degree of attachment people have to social groups or to society as a whole—he predicted that groups with particularly HIGH OR LOW of social integration will have high suicide rates

- High levels of SI—place group NEEDS before their own

EXAMPLE---Inuit elderly—if they are holding tribe back they will go on their own to die
- Low levels of SI—(more COMMON) Occur in periods of social disorganization (social change, geographic mobility, WARS, natural disasters, and changes in economic conditions) EXAMPLE---The Great Depression
Suicide rates increase because periods of social disorganization---make the NORMS that govern social behavior weak or unclear.

Social bonds (family/COMMUNITY) tend to weaken or strain during this time.

With no behavioral guidelines and support people turn to suicide as a last resort.

**Predictors of Teenage Suicide**

- As teens move from kids to adults, they have new freedoms and new restrictions---as PARENTAL control weakens teens begin to take more responsibility for their actions.

- Most teens ADAPT to these changes---but for some the confusion and self-doubt are blown out of proportion---teens do not focus on the FUTURE---most things can be solved with patience and time.

- Social PRESSURE and self-doubt can lead to suicide.

- Suicide cuts across all social BOUNDARIES: gender, race, economic level, religion.

- Certain social factors appear to affect the rate of teen suicide:
  1. Alcohol or drug use---risk of suicide increases with a teens alcohol or drug use:
      a. Heavy users usually have low CONTROL and are easily frustrated.
      b. Under the influence and act on IMPULSE.
      c. Use them as the MEANS to commit suicide.
  2. Triggering events---a specific event or anticipation of an upcoming event may trigger the need to commit suicide---fear of punishment, pregnancy, fights with friends, school trouble, family crisis.
  3. Age---the risk increases with age---under 13 do it but in much smaller numbers than older teens and young adults.
  4. Sex---FEMALES are 3xs more likely to attempt suicide---but MALES are more likely to succeed (use guns and weapons).
  5. Population density---LOWER populated areas have higher rates of suicide---may be the result of social isolation or access to fewer social services.
  6. Family relations---in homes with violence, marital conflict, or a recent death of a family in the family---or any threat of these in the future---rates are higher.
  7. Cluster effect---A teenage suicide sometimes results in other suicide attempts among adolescents in a community---more likely to occur when a WELL KNOWN member of the community takes his/her own life---a well-publicized suicide can trigger "SUICIDE CLUSTER" attempts in others---mental health officials suggest the CLUSTER occurs because a suicide acts as the fuse that ignites self-destructive behavior in unstable adolescents---studies indicate that as many as 5% of teen suicides a year are a result of the cluster effect.

- Teens are affected by the same sociological factors as adults-chief among these factors are stress and the weakening of social bonds.

- Most communities have programs to help teens with rough spots in adolescence---teens need to learn they are not ALONE---teens who feel isolated or frustrated should seek guidance.