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A historical perspective on adolescent behaviors and twentieth century parenting paradigms

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A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON ADOLESCENT BEHAVIORS

AND TWENTIETH CENTURY PARENTING PARADIGMS

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Social Work

by

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the evolution of adolescent behaviors, parental concerns, and disciplinary standards throughout the twentieth century. Additionally, the researchers examined the general attitudes and opinions adults share about the parenting paradigms and discipline standards of their day. A standardized questionnaire was developed from an informal group discussion among 12 men and women of various ages, socio-economic status, and ethnicity. Forty-two subjects drawn from 3 twenty-five-year cohorts were then selected from senior citizen centers and coffeehouses, to participate in the final data collection. With this retrospective exploratory research, it appears that adolescents' behaviors do not change from one generation to another, but parenting styles and concerns do. Most children grow up to be productive adults in every generation despite the parenting paradigm in vogue at the time. From this study, it appears that what parents feel children need most for healthy development is loving, available parents who are willing and able to give their children time and a strong sense of family.

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ASSIGNED RESPONISIBILITES

This research was a team effort where both authors worked collaboratively in all phases of the study. However, each researcher assumed separate responsibilities for the actual writing. The responsibilities were assigned as follows:

1. Data Collection

                    Donah Freeman & Raychelle Harper

2. Data Entry and Analysis

                    Donah Freeman & Raychelle Harper

3. Report Writing and Presentation of Findings

    a.   Introduction and Literature Review

              Donah Freeman

    b.   Methods

              Raychelle Harper

    c.   Results

              Raychelle Harper

    d.   Discussion

              Donah Freema

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

> "Our earth is degenerate in these latter days.
> Bribery and corruption are common. Children no
> longer obey their parents . . . The end of the
> world must be approaching" (Kramer, 1959, p.1).
> This sounds like a common complaint of contemporary
> adults dealing with the challenges of parenting
> in our society today, but it is, in fact, the
> lament of a scribe in one of the earliest
> inscriptions to be unearthed in Mesopotamia,
> where Western civilization was born
> (Kramer, 1959)

Another scribe, around 1800 BC, wrote to his shiftless

son: "Go to school, stand before your teacher, recite your

assignment, open your schoolbag, write in your tablet, let

the teacher give you a new lesson . . . Don't stand about in

the public square . . . Be humble and show fear before your

superiors" (Kramer, 1959, p.13).

Growing up has never been easy. In many ways, the

developmental tasks of today's adolescents are no different

from those of generations past. The transition from being a

child to being an adult has often been seen as a time of

rebellion, crisis, pathology, and deviance.

Prior to the nineteenth century, the distinct stage of

adolescence was unheard of (Teeter, 1988). Prior to and

throughout the Middle Ages, children were considered adults

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when they reached the age of six or seven. The "younger

generation" was not a recognizable concept. If children

survived until the age of seven, the age of childhood was

basically over, and from that time forward they were treated

as miniature adults (Tuchman, 1978). Schooling was of

little importance in those days and rarely was offered to

children over twelve. Teenagers of the Middle Ages often

made history at an age when modern teens are still in high

school. For example, Edward, the Black Prince, was only

sixteen when he triumphed at the Battle of Crecy; Joan of

Arc took Orleans from the English at the age of seventeen;

and Ivan the Terrible made his name and crowned himself the

czar of Russia also at the age of seventeen (Aries, 1962).

But the certainty and swiftness of the transition into

adulthood gradually faded with the rise of the Industrial

Revolution.

Many historical documents portray early industrial

conditions and the plight of the urban young.

> When the evening closed in, the difficulty and
> danger of walking about became serious indeed . . .
> Thieves and robbers plied their trade with
> impunity: yet they were hardly as terrible to
> peaceable citizens as another class of ruffians.
> It was a favorite amusement of dissolute young

gentlemen to swagger by night about the town,
breaking windows, upsetting sedans, beating quiet
men, and offering rude caresses to pretty women
(Macaulay, 1899, p. 69).

From this excerpt, it is clear that there was much

youthful villainy in earlier times. There is a striking

similarity between adolescent gang activities occurring in

large cities today, such as New York, Chicago, and Los

Angeles, and the actions of youthful gangs almost three

hundred years ago. This calls into question the

justifiability of the perennial complaint that our youth

have never been more degenerate than they are today.

Adults who negatively compare the youth of our day with

the youth of previous generations were not around to hear

Socrates, nearly 2400 years ago, speak of the children of

his time as being infatuated with luxury, behaving with bad

manners and with disrespect for authority, and as being

tyrants of their households (Friedenberg, 1965).

American society of the mid-nineteenth century

manifested typical youth problems. News of gang violence

during the middle of the last century bore a striking

resemblance to today's headlines. In 1857, the New York

Times ran articles regarding the gang activities of New York

City.   These gangs had names such as "The Dead Rabbits" and "The Bowery Boys" (Gottlieb & Ramsey, 1964, p. 96).   It appears that all that has really changed in today's youth is the names of the gangs.   Also during that time, New Orleans newspapers reported activities of teenagers who roamed the streets beating, stabbing, and robbing innocent citizens. It was frequently necessary to call out the state militia to control the street fighting between rival gangs and reestablish peace.

While complaints about the behaviors of youth appear timeless, they reached a peak during the Industrial Revolution around the turn of the century.   It was that era that convinced every major industrial society that it had a youth problem.   Newly developing cities of the nineteenth century were irresistible to youth of the time.   Jane Addams (1909) wrote: "The city's allurements and excitements, its fast pace and overwhelming variety, overstimulate youth and create in them a new low level of morality"(p. 63).

Many believed that the city was an evil snare for its youth.   The slums of the city bred idlers, vagrants, and delinquents.   Teenagers could obtain pornographic literature, abortions, and "articles made of rubber for

immoral purposes" on any street corner (Teeter, 1988, p. 13). City life was destructive to family values. The people were anonymous, impersonal, individualistic, and demonstrated little human warmth. There was an alarming increase in crime, unrest, violence, and tension by the middle of the nineteenth century. Juvenile delinquency took on a more threatening quality in the more visible city settings. Swarms of homeless, nomadic American youth roamed the cities. These crime-prone "street urchins" scampered about the docks, loitered in the streets, and taunted the police. They terrorized the cities with their gambling, fighting, swearing, stealing, and disrespect of authority. Some of these youths were orphans, but others were "castaways," whose parents had abandoned them or could no longer afford to care for them. Others were "runaways" trying to avoid the abuse and neglect of their parents. Many of them just thrived on the excitement of the brawls, street fights, and thievery (Boyer, 1978).

These nomads lived together in the streets, sleeping on sidewalks or in alleyways. Many slept on barges or under banana boat docks. They fought for warm spots over sidewalk ventilation grates or slid down coal chutes to be warmed by

underground boilers. Some supported themselves

legitimately by selling newspapers, tending storefronts, or

peddling goods. Others were not so noble. They robbed

fruit stores and bakeries, pilfered coal and wood from

backyards, picked pockets, snatched purses, prostituted,

and, surprisingly, did drugs. Drugs such as cocaine,

heroin, laudanum and opium were being exchanged on every

street corner and in every alleyway (Comstock, 1883).

By the end of the nineteenth century, the street

problem was getting out of hand. Because these youths were

so highly visible and because of their proximity to

intellectuals and policy makers who lived in these cities,

this problem began to attract attention from reformers. The

youth had to be saved! This popular opinion launched a

child-saving movement during the early decades of the

twentieth century that started a revolutionary concept

called adolescence (Hall, 1904).

The end of the nineteenth century and the early part of

the twentieth century represented an important period in the

invention of the concept of adolescence. Between 1890 and

1920, psychologists, educators, youth workers, and

counselors began to view young people not as out-of-control

rabble-rousers, but as individuals in transition whose

bodies and minds were going through significant changes.

With the help of pioneers in the field, such as G. Stanley

Hall (1909), Margaret Meade (1928), Erik Erikson (1950), and

others, normative standards of behavior for adolescents

emerged. Parents were pressed into selecting child-rearing

orientations that would ensure that their teenagers would be

able to work through their developmental milestones of

adolescence and become productive adults. These child-

rearing practices encouraged the adolescent to become

passive and to conform to societal standards, while parents

and teens worked through this most difficult time. The

energies of rambunctious teenagers were redirected. Street

urchins were taken off the streets and placed in mandatory

education programs. Homeless youths were put into

institutions to keep them out of the cities at night.

Conformity included the encouragement of school spirit,

loyalty and hero worship on athletic teams (Hall, 1904).

Adolescence took on a whole new, more docile look.

When we think of the youth of today, we envision

youngsters out of control. Parents have many concerns for

their young children and their teens. Gangs, violence, teen

pregnancy, AIDS, and drugs abound. It's hard to imagine that things could get much worse. When today's youth are compared to the sharp-dressing youth of the roaring 1920s, or to the gum-chewing, sock-hopping teenyboppers of the 1950s, it seems that they have lost their innocence and abandoned their moral and ethical integrity.

From the historical records of the first part of this century, it appears that in just 50 years, the shiftless, brazen, adolescents of the nineteenth century had been tamed. They had traded in their incorrigible ways for Ivy League sweaters, school spirit, and competitive sports (Bigner, 1972). By the middle of the 1960s, we seemed to have come full circle from one hundred years before, with the upsurge in drugs, violence, and teenage pregnancy. Parenting paradigms have also vacillated from strict to lenient, with much controversy about how each one affects our youth.

Problem Focus

This exploratory research will examine the evolution of adolescent behaviors, parental concerns, and disciplinary practices throughout the twentieth century. Studying the evolution of these ideas will help us determine if the

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behaviors of adolescents are becoming more or less corrupt over time, and will help us understand the differences in the norms of adolescent behavior and parental concerns in a historical, and societal context. In addition, by using the retrospective reports of individuals who were growing up or parenting at various times throughout this century, we hope to gain insight into the attitudes and opinions they have about the effectiveness of various parenting paradigms.

Literature Review

Today, we envision the ages between 12 and 23 as a time of evaluation, of decision-making, of commitment, of carving out a place in the world. While the developmental trajectories of adolescents have remained fairly constant in every century, our ideas of what children need and how adults conduct their caregiving effectively have taken many twists and turns throughout history. The nature and quality of discipline and parent-child interactions are significantly influenced by cultural values as well as by the historical time in which individuals find themselves in the parenting role (Aries, 1962; Hunt, 1970). Our current child-rearing concerns, disciplinary standards, and parenting paradigms developed as a result of many years of

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social change and transformations in Western culture.

Most historians agree that the actual nature of caregiving has probably not changed over time. The changes are noted in the ways adults define and conduct their parenting behaviors (Teeter, 1988). One of the greatest concerns of most parents is how to go about providing adequate and proper discipline for children to help them learn to behave in appropriate ways according to the norms of contemporary society and the patterns supported by their family systems. Discipline usually refers to those behaviors and methods that involve punishment used to control children's misbehaviors. Effective discipline, no matter what the era or ethnic group, is aimed at providing children with structure and nurturance, and to ensure the safety and long-term well being of the child. The nature of parenting has always been a nurturing one, but the specific ways that this role is expressed has changed according to the culturally acceptable paradigms espoused at particular points in history.

In the very beginning of this century, the emphasis in child rearing was on good moral training. The dominant theme of character development and providing a good moral

home for children was a product of Victorian idealism which permeated the whole of history of American child-rearing from the first days the Europeans set foot upon these shores. It was most vividly seen with the Puritan families in the New England colonies. An analysis of three leading women's magazines between 1890 and 1940 clearly confirm these trends (Stendler, 1950; Wolfenstein, 1953). However, due to intensified industrialization, urbanization and immigration, there were accelerating societal concerns involving the out-of-control youth of the city streets, issues of education, child labor, rampant health hazards, and delinquency.

The progressive reform movement (1890-1920) had begun to focus on the well being of the child as being essential to a healthy society. There was increased public awareness and assumption of responsibility with demands for social action about the failures of family and society to adequately care for its youth. These concerns placed demands upon scientific inquiry to acquire data about the development and psychology of children (Sebald, 1980). Research into behavioral development began with Arnold Gesell at Yale University around this time, but the results

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of his carefully executed studies did not become publicly

available until nearly 30 years later.

In the meantime, the theme of moral training at the

turn of the century was replaced in the 1920s by an emphasis

on proper health conditions and strict discipline (Stendler,

1950). The parenting paradigm posited by scholars such as

Emmett Holt and John B. Watson advocated strict regimes of

behavioral control, scientific molding of the youngster's

behavior, and less "coddling." Technology, even though it

contributed to social problems by promoting

industrialization and urbanization, was also seen as a power

force for solving all sorts of problems, including human

ones. This new scientific age quickly demeaned the

Victorian idealism of righteous morality and sentimentality.

The scientific parenting experts of this era redefined the

maternal role from that of moral guardian to childrearing

technician, and they bridged the gap between child

professionals and public ideology of childrearing (Stendler,

1950).

Emmett Holt, a practicing New York pediatrician and

teacher, was concerned about the high rate of infant

mortality in the first part of the century. Medical

research had recently established that poor hygienic

conditions were a major factor in infant deaths. As a

result, the emphasis in pediatric practice was on strict,

closely monitored, and controlled regimes of infant care

(Holt, 1894). The 1920's were touting Dr. Holt's rigorous

regimes of infant care touted by every new well-baby clinic

across the country.

On the heels of Dr. Holt came Dr. John B. Watson around

1930. Watson was very much a man of his times—a social

reformer with a strong belief in science as a social

instrument and a staunch disbeliever in Victorian

sentimentality. His crusade for psychology based on

observable behavior fit nicely into Holt's doctrine of

strict regimes. Watson incorporated Holt's theory of strict

regimes and schedules for the purpose of behavioral control.

Watson viewed the child's actions solely as the product of

environmental influences and learning experiences. He

applied Ivan Pavlov's conditioning techniques to children,

in the hope of creating the kind of character that Americans

had traditionally valued—independent, self-reliant, and

objective. Behaviorism ruptured all notions of the child's

inner nature. Whatever was going on inside the child was of

no concern to Watson and his colleagues.

Having reduced character to behavior and behavior to

conditioned responses, they were not bound to moral

standards. Watson's advice encouraged chilly relations

between parents and children. To hear him tell it, children

were being kissed to death in the early years of this

century. He proposed that there was only one "sensible" way

to treat children:

> Treat them as though they were young adults . . .
> Let your behavior always be objective and kindly
> firm. Never hug and kiss them, never let them
> sit in your lap . . . In a week's time you will
> find how easy it is to be perfectly objective
> with your child and at the same time kindly. You
> will be utterly ashamed of the mawkish, sentimental
> way you have been handling them (Watson, 1928, p. 68).

Whereas the books of the prior several decades had

recommended loose scheduling, up-to-date parents now did

their best to follow the strict feeding schedules and early

toilet training that the scientists were recommending. They

began to feel guilty over their lapses and the wayward

behaviors of their youth, which seemed to result from these

lax methods. Although children were not to experience guilt

in the new era of scientific relativity, the behaviorists

encouraged guilt among parents who could not be entirely

consistent in following their advice. Eventually, the

strain became too much for many parents, who were ready for

a new approach to parenting (Bigner, 1972).

By the 1940s a third major parenting model was

introduced which would influence parenting practices for

decades. About this time, Arnold Gesell emerged from his

laboratories after 30 years to introduce some interesting

concepts of childhood development. His model was central to

Freud's psychoanalytic theory, which explained the child's

emotional development, as opposed to merely describing it.

This paradigm outdated and uprooted Watson's philosophy of

aloofness. These assumptions emphasized personality

development with particular attention to emotional security

and "tender loving care." The "nature-nurture" controversy

was the topic of interest during the next several decades

(Lerner, Peterson, & Brooks-Gunn, 1991). This is strongly

evident by 1940 in the woman's magazines and the point of

view became the spring board for the post-war baby boom and

the publication of Benjamin Spock's Childcare book (Spock,

1945).

During the 1970s Spock was castigated for promoting a

whole generation of uncontrollable rebels. But his readers,

Spock lamented, had misunderstood his intentions. His model

of childcare did not place major emphasis on indulgence or

permissiveness. He was attempting to free mothers from the

anxiety he noticed in those who attempted to adhere to

restricted, highly controlling regimes. His principal

message to mothers was meant to be reassurance that their

own feelings and common sense about what was best for

themselves and their children was probably the best guide

for child care (Spock, 1976).

Spock borrowed from Freud's ideas, which were extended

to such matters as demand feeding, toilet training, thumb

sucking, and bedwetting. He exuded confidence that children

would turn out well. He felt that parents worried too much

about what the experts thought, and that parents should

trust their own instincts. All the stress and anxiety of

adhering to strict childrearing schedules were causing

unnecessary anxiety for both parent and child (Spock, 1976).

Although Spock freed adolescents from the demands of

their parents, it was sometimes in order that the youth

could meet their peers' demands instead. Spock warned

parents not to make their children feel "different" from

other youth; they should be allowed to dress, talk, play, and have the same privileges as their peers. Liberation, then, often simply meant a new choice of authorities. At a time when children need adults against whom to measure themselves, they were being delivered over to their peers. Psychologists of the 60s and 70s frequently claimed that the lack of involvement with parental role models was leading to the identity problems so characteristic of adolescents. Young people could not convince themselves that they could make the transition to adulthood, because they had had so little contact with adults. Always before, contending with one's parents had been a part of finding oneself (Lee, 1970).

In the 1960s and 1970s, an important revisionist, Erik Erikson, warmed up Freud's concepts of human development and added his own twist to Freud's six stages of psychosexual growth. Erikson believed that humans are forever developing throughout their lives and identified eight stages of psychosocial development. Each stage has its unique tasks or "crises" which must be mastered in preparation for the next milestone. During adolescence, teenagers are negotiating the stage Erikson labeled "Identity versus

identity confusion," in which individuals are faced with finding out who they are, what they are all about, and where they are going in life. Adolescents are confronted with many new roles and adult statuses. Parents need to allow adolescents to explore many different roles and different paths within each particular role. If the adolescent explores such roles in a healthy manner and arrives at a positive path to follow in life, then a positive identity will be achieved. If an identity is pushed on the adolescent by parents, or if the adolescent does not define their own positive future path, then identity confusion reigns (Erikson, 1968).

Overlapping with Erikson's stage of adolescence, the famous Swiss developmental psychologist, Jean Piaget (1932), changed forever the way we think about the development of children's and adolescents' minds. Piaget proposed a series of cognitive stages that individuals go through in sequence. He believed that adolescents think in qualitatively different ways about the world than children do, and than do adults. Between the ages of 11 and 15, individuals move beyond the world of actual, concrete experiences and think in abstract and more logical terms. They develop images of

ideal circumstances. They may think about what an ideal

parent is like and compare their parents with this ideal

standard. They begin to entertain possibilities for the

future and are fascinated with what they can be. In solving

problems, formal operational thinkers are more systematic,

developing hypothesis about why something is happening the

way it is, then testing these hypotheses in a deductive

fashion.

The compartmentalization of life stages by scholars

such as Erikson and Piaget, along with Spock's urging that

teens be allowed to formulate their own collective identity,

society began to view adolescence as a subculture with its

own set of unique behaviors, attitudes, and dress codes. G.

Stanley Hall (1904), the father of the scientific study of

adolescence proposed that all development is controlled by

genetically determined physiological factors and that

environment plays a minimal role in development, especially

during infancy and childhood. Hall believed as most believe

today, that heredity interacts with environmental influences

to determine the individual's development. According to

Hall, adolescence is the period from 12 to 23 years of age

and is filled with "storm and stress." The "storm and

stress" view is Hall's concept that adolescence is a

turbulent time charged with conflict and mood swings. In

Hall's view, adolescents' thoughts, feelings, and actions

oscillate between conceit and humility, good and temptation,

happiness and sadness. The adolescent may be nasty to a

peer one moment, and then kind the next moment. At one

time, the adolescent may want to be alone, but seconds later

seek companionship. Hall suggests that these behaviors are

the result of normal changes in the adolescent's biological

and environmental transition from childhood to adulthood,

and that these changes are genetically bound to happen.

Good peer relations may be necessary for normal social

development in adolescence. Social isolation, or the

inability to "plug in" to a social network, is linked with

many different forms of problems and disturbances, ranging

from delinquency and problem drinking to depression (Simons,

Conger, & Wu, 1992). Research showed that poor peer

relations in childhood were related to dropping out of

school and delinquency in late adolescence (Roff, Sells, &

Golden, 1972). Peer influences can be both positive and

negative. Both Jean Piaget (1932) and Harry Stack Sullivan

(1953) were influential theorists who stressed that it is

through peer interaction that children and adolescents learn

the symmetrical reciprocity mode of relationships. Peers

provide friendship, companionship, and ego support. They

provide feedback that helps teens maintain an impression of

themselves as competent, attractive, and worthwhile. Also,

peers provided an avenue of self-disclosure, information,

excitement, and amusement.

Other theorists have emphasized the negative influences

of peers on children and adolescents who are rejected or

overlooked by their cohorts (Kennedy, 1990). Some

researchers have described the adolescent peer culture as a

corrupt form of influence that undermines parental values

and control. It is often peers who are responsible for

introducing adolescents to alcohol, drugs, delinquency, and

other forms of behavior that adults view as maladaptive

(Kupersmidt & Patterson, 1993).

The adolescent subculture derives a peculiar set of

norms and values that no longer consists of child standards

nor is part of the adult world. They speak a language that

is not shared with the "parent" culture. In fact, it is

only partially understood by outsiders and is often

unacceptable to the "Establishment." Youth's channels of

mass communication consist of mingling in youth "ghettos,"

such as their favorite fast food restaurant, various

"underground" media such as their favorite magazines, and

their own radio and television programs. They cultivate

their own independent styles and fads, and are not willing

to share them with adults. They acquire a primary group

belonging in which they are accepted as total individuals

(Sebald, 1975).

Peer conformity comes in many forms and affects many

aspects of adolescents' lives. Teenagers engage in all

sorts of negative conformity behaviors. They use seedy

language, steal, vandalize, and make fun of parents and

teachers. Peer pressure is a pervasive theme of

adolescence. Its power can be observed in almost every

dimension of their behavior—their choice of dress, music,

language, values, leisure activities, and so on. The

developmental changes of adolescence often bring forth a

sense of insecurity. Young adolescents may be especially

vulnerable because of this insecurity and the many

developmental changes taking place in their lives. The

cause of adolescents' abnormal, maladaptive, or harmful

behaviors include biological, psychological, and

sociocultural factors (Sebald, 1975).

Proponents of the biological approach believe that

abnormal behavior is due to a physical malfunction of the

body (Scarr, 1991) Modern researchers who adopt the

biological approach focus on the brain, illness, or genetic

factors as the causes of abnormal behavior. The

psychological and sociocultural approaches focus on

emotional turmoil, inappropriate learning, distorted

thoughts, and inadequate relationships, rather than brain

processes or genes as the operative terms (Piaget, 1932).

Interactionists believe that neither the biological nor the

psychological and sociocultural approaches independently

capture the complexity of adolescent behavior. These

researchers believe that all of these factors interact to

produce maladaptive behavior in adolescents (Bandura, 1977)

Erikson (1968) comments that adolescents whose infant,

childhood, or adolescent experiences have somehow restricted

them from acceptable social roles or made them feel that

they cannot measure up to the demands placed on them may

choose a negative course of identity development. Some of

these adolescents may take on the role of the delinquent, enmeshing themselves in the most negative activities of the youth culture available to them.

Parents and teenage children have numerous disagreements and conflicts due to difficulties adjusting to the teens' emancipation process. Most parents, in any century, hope their teenagers never experience serious behavior problems, which can have extremely negative consequences for the teens and their families—in some cases even resulting in death. Serious problems of the 1990s include substance abuse, drunk driving, assault, rape, gangs, AIDS and the use of weapons. (Watts & Wright, 1990).

Others are not so extreme but are serious enough to cause strife in personal relations. They often include acting-out behaviors that serve as symptoms of other problems or a means of communicating strong emotions and thoughts in behavioral terms. For example, they may involve promiscuous sexual activity, cigarette smoking, or reckless driving (Newcomb & Bentler, 1989).

As we approach the new century, it is both the best of times and the worst of times for adolescents. Their world possesses powers and perspectives inconceivable at the

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beginning of the twentieth century: computers, longer life

expectancies, new medications, automobiles, the entire

planet accessible through television, satellites, and air

travel. So much knowledge can be wonderful, but it can also

be chaotic and dangerous. Most of the problems of today's

youth are not with the youth themselves. Teens have been

misbehaving since the beginning of time. To make

comparisons about the integrity of adolescents in general

throughout time, one must view the significance of their

behavior in a societal and historical perspective.

CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Purpose of the Study

This study was explores the evolution of both the parental concerns and the adolescent behaviors for which individuals were disciplined. Furthermore, the researchers sought to explore the general attitudes and opinions that adults share about the most popular parenting paradigms and discipline standards utilized throughout the twentieth century.

Research Questions

The research questions for this study included: (a) Have adolescent behaviors changed throughout the century? (b) How have discipline styles changed? (c) In retrospect, what insights might we glean from parents of each generation?

Sample

Participation in this study was limited to persons who were born and raised in the United States. Additionally, participants were required to be at least 18 years of age. Members of the sample population were generally from a

collected was 46, however four of the questionnaires were incomplete. The four incomplete questionnaires were not included in the study, thus the sample included 42 participants.

The researchers divided the sample size into three cohorts. Each participant's responses were evaluated and placed into a cohort based upon the year in which they were born. Cohort 1, included persons born from 1900 through 1925, cohort 2, from 1926 through 1950, and cohort 3, from 1951 through 1975. Figure 1 shows demographic information on the sample population.

Figure 1. Demographics: Cohort, Gender, Race.

	Frequency	Percent
1900 - 1925	4	9.5
1926 - 1950	15	35.7
1951 - 1975	23	54.8
Total	42	100.0
Male	14	33.3
Female	28	66.7
Total	42	100.0
Black	7	16.7
White	22	52.7
Hispanic	10	23.8
Asian	2	4.8
Other	1	2.4
Total	42	100.0

<u>Instrument</u>

The authors constructed the research instrument which was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed from information obtained from an informal group discussion among 12 adult men and women of various ages, socio-economic status, and ethnicity. The authors developed the study instrument by listing various behaviors discussed during this informal meeting.

The instrument was a six-part questionnaire, which included both quantitative and qualitative questions. Part one required each respondent to provide basic demographic information relatedto their age, ethnicity, gender, birth year, birth year of youngest child, and birth year of eldest child. In part two, participants were requested to identify the behaviors for which they were disciplined as teenagers. Additionally, each participant was asked to identify the severity of the discipline they received for exhibiting such behaviors. In part three, the respondents were requested to answer the same questions posed in part two, however they were asked to identify the behaviors for which they have disciplined their own children. Furthermore, the respondents were asked to identify the severity of the

punishment they gave their child for exhibiting each behavior listed. Part four required the participants to identify the types of discipline their parents used as well as the forms of discipline they use on their own children. Part five and six were qualitative in nature, they requested that each participant identify the top three parenting concerns their parents had for them, as well as the top three parental concerns the respondent has for his or her own children. Also, part six requested that each participant identify the items teens today need most for healthy development.

Data Collection

The data for this study was complied from questionnaires, which were located in two locations. The questionnaires were placed in a coffee shop located in Riverside, California and a senior citizen center located in Colton, California. The questionnaires from the coffee shop were available for any patron who was at least eighteen years of age. Each patron who returned a completed questionnaire was given a coupon for a complimentary cup of coffee and a muffin. At the senior center, the questionnaires were offered as a voluntary activity for all

seniors and center staff persons. Seniors who required

assistance with reading or filling out the questionnaire

were aided by senior companions. The senior companions were

senior center staff persons who were not involved with the

study.

The researchers collected the questionnaires from each

of the collection sites. The questionnaires were then

evaluated for completeness. Only completed questionnaires

were used in the study.

Protection of Human Rights

Each participant completed an informed consent form and

debriefing statement (see Appendix B and C). The informed

consent form described the nature and purpose of the study.

Additionally, this form required participants to consent to

participating in the study. In order to maintain

confidentiality and anonymity, participants were not

required to disclose their names or addresses. Participants

were also advised that they could withdraw from the study at

any time. The debriefing statement also described the

purpose of the study, as well as the names and phone numbers

of the researchers and their research advisor.

CHAPTER THREE: RESULTS

Data Analysis

The present study sought to determine whether there
have been changes in adolescent behaviors and discipline
techniques throughout the twentieth century. The authors
evaluated each of the responses by cohort to more
effectively evaluate generation variations. Additionally,
the responses were differentiated with respect to how the
respondent was parented as a teen, as well as how they have
parented their own children. The researchers utilized the
SPSS for Windows 8.0 to analyze the information obtained
from each of the questionnaires. Given the exploratory
nature of this study, the researchers analyzed the data
using modal and frequency charts.

Results

Figure 2 indicates those behaviors for which
participants were most frequently disciplined when they were
an adolescent and as a parent. The results suggested that
the most frequently disciplined behaviors have not changed
much from cohort to cohort. In fact, there appears to be at
least five behaviors which where prevalent in each of the
three cohorts. These behaviors include: 1) not doing

chores, 2) not doing homework, 3) being disrespectful, 4)

bad manners, and 5) fighting with siblings. The behaviors

which differ in each cohort include: cohort 1: bathing,

slang; cohort 2: hairstyle; cohort 3: friends of a different

race, risky behaviors. Risky behaviors included activities

like reckless driving and unprotected sexual intercourse.

Figure 2. Most Frequently Disciplined Behaviors Reported by Cohort as Adolescent/Parent.

(Adolescent)

Rank	Cohort 1 (1900-1925)	Cohort 2 (1926-1950)	Cohort 3 (1951-1975)
1	Not bathing	Bad manners	Fighting with siblings
2	Not doing chores	Disobedience	Arguing
3	Fighting with siblings	Being sassy	Bad manners
4	Using slang	Being disrespectful	Friends of another race
5		Hair style	Risky behaviors

(Parent)

Rank	Cohort 1 (1900-1925)	Cohort 2 (1926-1950)	Cohort 3 (1951-1975)
1	Not doing homework	Not doing chores	Lying
2	Fighting with siblings	Fighting with siblings	Laziness
3	Not doing chores	Not doing homework	Not doing chores
4		Friends of another race	Not doing homework
5		Disobedience	Irresponsibility

Figure 2 also indicates those behaviors in which the

respondents most frequently disciplined their own children.

Here, we have found that in each cohort, respondents

consistently disciplined their children for stealing. Furthermore, the researchers found the largest differences appear among cohort 2 and cohort 3. Respondents from cohort 1 suggest that they most frequently disciplined their children for not doing chores, fighting with siblings, not doing homework, having friends from another race, and being disobedient. Whereas respondents from cohort 3 report that they most frequently disciplined their children for the following items: lying, laziness, not doing chores, not doing homework, and being irresponsible.

Figure 3 presents the data gathered on the behaviors for which the respondents were most harshly disciplined as adolescents and those behaviors for which the respondents most harshly disciplined their own children. Each of the three cohorts reported disobedience as one of the most harshly disciplined behaviors. Other behaviors commonly reported in all cohorts were: stealing, lying, being disrespectful, and arguing. The behaviors that were most harshly punished and that stood out in only one cohort were not going to church and being expelled from school in cohort 1; curfew, reckless driving, destroying property, and truancy in cohort 2; and using drugs in cohort 3.

Figure 3. Most Harshly Disciplined Behaviors
Reported by Cohort as Adolescent/Parent.

(Adolescent)

Rank	Cohort 1 (1900 – 1925)	Cohort 2 (1926 – 1950)	Cohort 3 (1951 – 1975)
1	Not going to church	Lying	Disobedience
2	Being disrespectful	Disobedience	Arguing
3	Being expelled	Disrespectful toelders	Lying
4	Disobedience	Fighting with siblings	Drinking alcohol
5	Running away from home	Irresponsibility	Stealing

(Parent)

Rank	Cohort 1 (1900 – 1925)	Cohort 2 (1926 – 1950)	Cohort 3 (1951 – 1975)
1	Stealing	Stealing	Lying
2	Lying	Destroying property	Disobedience
3	Getting arrested	Curfew	Using drugs
4	Sneaking out	Being truant	Stealing
5	Drinking alcohol	Reckless driving	Being sassy

The researchers also sought to determine whether or not discipline techniques had changed throughout the century. The data suggest that the discipline techniques did not changed considerably from cohort 2 to cohort 3, but cohort 2 and cohort 3 differed considerably from cohort 1. Punishment appears to have become less physical. The respondents-as-parents who reported that they used physical

forms of punishment on their children consistently produced

a cohort of children who did not remember the spanking, but

instead reported that their parents used "shaming" as the

primary form of punishment. This was consistent in each

cohort. In addition, children from cohorts who remembered

their parents "yelling" had a cohort of parents who reported

that they used "stern talking to" (see Figure 4). This was

also a consistent finding in each group. Recipients of

discipline tend to remember the affective aspects of

discipline, while parents remember it in more physical

terms.

Figure 4. Most Common Types of Discipline Reported by Cohort as Adolescent/Parent.

(Adolescent)

Rank	Cohort 1 (1900-1925)	Cohort 2 (1926-1950)	Cohort 3 (1951-1975)
1	Spanking with hand	Stern talking to	Yelling
2	Increasing chores	Yelling	Shaming
3	Hitting with belt/objects	Shaming	Stern talking to

(Parent)

Rank	Cohort 1 (1900-1925)	Cohort 2 (1926-1950)	Cohort 3 (1951-1975)
1	Spanking	Stern talking to	Stern talking to
2	Taking things away	Lecturing	Time-out
3	Stern talking to	Spanking	Taking things away

In Figure 5, respondents' opinions regarding the punishment they received as children and adolescents are reflected in percentages. Twenty respondents out of the 42 reported that their parents used a variety of discipline methods but that physical punishment was not one of them. Sixteen (80%) of these respondents felt their punishment was not excessive. Two of the respondents reported that they did not feel their punishment was excessive at the time, but in retrospect they have come to feel that it was.

Only four of the 42 respondents answered that they always received physical punishment with no other form of discipline. Three out of the four (75%) answered that they did not feel this was excessive.

Of the 42 respondents, 18 reported being spanked and/or being hit with a belt or other object in conjunction with other methods of discipline. Sixteen of these respondents (90%) felt their punishment was excessive.

Figure 5. Respondent's Opinion Regarding Punishment Recorded by Cohort as Parent.

Type of Punishment	Excessive	Not Excessive	Total

Physical Only
   Spanking
   Hitting w/belt or object
   Slapping
	25%	75%	100%

Physical as above
with Variety of Other
   Verbal(yelling,lecturing, etc)
   Non-physical(Restriction,
     chores,
   time-outs,take away privileges,
     etc.)
   Affective (shaming, guilt,
     etc.)
	90%	10%	100%

Variety of other as above with NO physical	20%	80%	100%

Figure 6 shows the parenting concerns of each cohort as reported by the respondents as parents. The concerns in the first cohort revolved around the home and family: health/safety, finding a mate, work ethic, values/morality/manners, and respect for one another. Concerns of the second cohort were more community based: marriage/family, compliance/obedience, education, keeping up appearances, virginity and pregnancy. In the last cohort, the concerns are worldlier: crime, drugs, unsafe sex/AIDS, violence/gangs/weapons, and education.

Figure 6. Parenting Concerns Reported by
Cohort as Parent.

Rank	Cohort 1 (1900 - 1925)	Cohort 2 (1926 - 1950)	Cohort 3 (1951 - 1975)
1	Health/safety	Marriage/family	Crime
2	Finding a mate	Compliance/Obedience	Drugs
3	Work ethic	Education	Unsafe Sex/AIDS
4	Values/morality/manners	Appearances	Violence/bangs /weapons
5	respect	Virginity/Pregnancy	Education

Figure 7 indicates insight as to what the respondents believed children need most for healthy development. Respondents from cohort 1 suggested that children need the

following: a sense of family, respect, and religion.

Respondents from cohort 2 suggested that children need: love

and nurturance, supervision and guidance, and social skills.

Cohort 3 respondents indicated that children need: time and

available parents, love and nurturance, and understanding

from their parents.

<u>Figure 7. Needs for Healthy Development
Reported by Cohort as Parent.</u>

Rank	Cohort 1 (1900 – 1925)	Cohort 2 (1926 – 1950)	Cohort 3 (1951 – 1975)
1	Sense of Family	Love/Nurturance	Time
2	Respect	Supervision	Available Parents
3	Religion	Guidance	Love/Nurturanc e
4		Social Skills	Understanding

CHAPTER FOUR: DISCUSSION

Discussion

From the close of the nineteenth century to the
present, there have been significant changes that have
pervaded every area of American life. The rapid
acceleration of technology has had enormous impact on
industry, agriculture, transportation, communication, and
the American family's way of life. Never before in history
have the challenges of childrearing changed so drastically.
Adolescents and young people of today face entirely
different struggles from those of their parents and
grandparents.

Within this century alone, electricity has invaded the
American home; the automobile has given every American
incredible physical mobility; television and radio were
invented, completely changing the way we view the world and
the way we live; the computer has boggled the mind with it's
capabilities; and modern medicine has increased the life
expectancy of people from newborn to old age. Air travel
has led to space travel; we have walked on the moon, cloned
a sheep, and grown babies in test tubes.

In retrospect, it is obvious that the scientific and

technological revolution that has rapidly transformed the

nation from an agrarian to an industrial society, from the

frontier to suburbia, has brought with it far-reaching

consequences for the American family. Despite the strides

technology has made to enhance the potential for every

American to live a richer and fuller life, it has also

caused new stress and strain which has complicated all

facets of social organization. This translates into

problems in family adjustment; in the way parents and

children relate to one another; and increased challenges for

our youth along their path to maturity.

Perhaps the core issue is how today's youth can learn

the proper sense of responsibility in a society that has

freed them from many of the obligations and duties that

belonged to the generations before them. Each generation

must cultivate its own set of values in light of changing

circumstances, and these values are based on fundamental

principles which have grown out of established truths and

past experiences.

With the potential for many further economic and

technological changes, an understanding of both the past and

the present is essential if parents are to provide their

children with the guidance that will lead to a happy, productive future.

In this study we set out to describe the evolution of the behaviors of adolescents throughout this century, as well as the discipline styles and the overall concerns of parents. The focus of this discussion will be on the variables that stand out in each generation--the differences, not the similarities--in behaviors, discipline styles, and concerns that were revealed among the cohorts.

Most Frequently Punished Behaviors

As shown in Figure 2, in each cohort, several behaviors consistently appeared as those that were most frequently disciplined: chores; homework; respect; manners; and fighting with siblings were cited as disciplinary problems in every generation. In this respect, teens have not changed much, nor have their parents. But the most frequently punished behaviors that stood out as unique to only one generation will be further discussed.

The first cohort, average American citizens who were born between 1900 and 1925 and mostly living in the city, reported that they were frequently punished as teens for not bathing and for using slang, which was not reported by

members of the other cohorts. By today's standards, with

the incidence of crime, teen pregnancy, drunk driving, and

AIDS that is occurring in this country, it is hard to

imagine a time when the most frequently punished behavior

was not taking a bath. Contemporary parents might shake

their heads in disbelief and marvel at how things have

changed and how corrupt our youth has become. But, with a

basic understanding of how things were throughout the years,

the behaviors and concerns in each cohort take on a

different perspective and the question is whether or not

children have changed that much at all.

The residents of the working class during the turn of

the century lived in a variety of dwellings: multi-story

tenements; converted single-family row houses; double-

deckers; triple-deckers; wooden shacks and shanties . . .

wherever they lived, they were likely to live piled

together, several families in space designed for one,

several persons to a room (James, 1946).

In the cities, the sewers were clogged, and the streets

and alleyways filled with garbage. It was here that dead

horses lay for days, bloated and decaying, children poking

at their eyes and pulling out their hair to weave into

rings. Cats and dogs roamed at will through the streets

with gaping wounds, flesh hung loosely on starving bodies.

Wide, frightened eyes, and the look, smell and howl of

starvation could be heard from open windows that let in

putrid air, flies, and mosquitoes. It was here that

tuberculosis, tetanus, influenza and other communicable

diseases raged. Babies died of exposure cold or heat, or

from spoiled milk, and simple infections were sometimes

lethal (Spargo, 1906).

Recent discoveries in medicine during the end of the

nineteenth century and education campaigns in the first part

of this century, impressed upon parents the need for

cleanliness and sanitation to prevent infections and

disease. Parents could not be too vigilant in the hygiene

and grooming of their children. But because of the work

involved in bathing during that time, this was no easy

chore, and bathing became a major source of contention

between parents and children (Aries, 1962).

Light, air, and privacy were at a premium for the

working-class residents of the early twentieth-century

cities (Dreiser, 1923). Privacy was as treasured and rare

as fresh air. High rents forced families to economize on

space and many of them sublet rooms to boarders. City

dwellers shared their flats, their rooms, even their beds

and toilets with virtual strangers. In many apartments the

"water closet," was located in the hall or in the backyard.

A turn of the century study (Abbott, 1936) found that

only 43 percent of families had toilets in their homes; 30

percent had outhouses; 10 percent had a toilet in the

cellar; and 17 percent shared a hall toilet with their

neighbors. At the turn of the century, built-in bathtubs

were only beginning to appear in American homes and were

reserved for the very rich.

Unventilated, overused bathrooms and backyard toilets

were bound to, and did, overflow continually, seeping waste

through the floorboards and into the yards. The odor of

human excrement joined that of horse dung from the streets

and stables and of garbage rotting in the airshafts, inner

courtyards, streets and alleyways. Bathing in stuffy,

unventilated water closets was not a luxury that felt good,

smelled good, or required little work (Aries, 1962).

In the early 1900's, bathing was no easy chore.

Besides the lack of privacy, space, fresh air, and light,

the interior halls and rooms of the tenements retained their

odors indefinitely. Bathtubs were usually large tin vats that needed to be filled manually. Water was drawn from pumps in large, heavy buckets and heated on wooden or coal stoves. Temperature regulation of bath water was accomplished by air-cooling. Often, children all bathed together to economize on time and labor. Bathing was most often a Saturday night event, in preparation for church on Sunday. The soap was homemade out of paraffin and lye. After the bath, the water had to be disposed of by hand, usually ending up on the streets of the city, exacerbating the unbearable stench that already existed (Abbott, 1936). It is no wonder that parents had difficulty getting their children to bathe. But in view of the rampant disease and need for proper hygiene, it is easy to understand why this behavior ranked the most frequently disciplined behavior of this cohort.

Among the second cohort who was born between 1926 and 1950, one behavior stood out as unique. Hairstyles were cited as one of the top-five, most-disciplined behaviors and only appeared in this cohort (See Figure 2). Respondents who were born in this cohort were adolescents between 12 and 18 years of age, from 1938 to 1968. From the beginning of

the century to 1960, the number of families subsisting from

farming changed from almost half to less than one-tenth.

With this shift, the self-sufficient form of family, which

for centuries had been adapted to rural living, had become

obsolete. As the family ceased to be a producer of its own

goods and services, the father left home to earn money to

buy the goods the family once produced. The family became

dependent upon the availability of jobs, continued

prosperity, and the productivity of the wage earner (Glick,

1950).

Materialism was the banner of successful middle-class

and working class Americans who had begun to move away from

the congested cities and into neat, single-family tract

homes with attached garages, backyards, and fenced yards.

Husbands were valued for their ability to provide for their

families in a style that was competitive with the neighbors,

and wives were valued for their ability to cook, clean

house, and raise obedient, successful children (Bernert,

1958).

Parents of the 1950s took on the responsibility of

training their children for the job world—not by

apprenticeships or by providing technical skills, but by

helping them in human relations. The child must learn the

nuances of interpersonal relationships to function in the

large and complex organizations of industry, business, and

government. They must be trained to play the game and to

know their boundaries.

Bureaucratic organizations so common during this era

did not allow for drastic changes in personnel or policies

and procedures (Merton, 1952). Things must operate like

clockwork, and the rules must be obeyed. An employee with

unusual imagination and energy who tried to institute

drastic changes could cause the whole complex machine to

grind to a halt. Such enterprising efforts needed to be

kept under control. To retain a high level of staff morale

and to discourage excessive drive and ambition, a system of

promotion through seniority, not individuality, provided the

answer. The ideal worker had to be precise and

conscientious in performance. They were required to keep to

their assigned tasks and not to stray off into the provinces

of others even if some new ideas for improvement were

involved. Workers must always "clear" ideas and problems

through "proper channels" with their superiors. Employees

were valued for their compliance and conformity and their

ability to curb momentary desires until their consequences could be examined and evaluated. They must not be aggressive or too ambitious for these qualities disturb the organization's delicate balance.

Boys of the 1950s were tutored in this obedient, compliant mentality from a very early age. He must comply with society's expectations and be molded in the image of his father if he were to be a marketable commodity in the workplace (Henry, 1949). Little boys were taught to be little gentlemen, pint-sized versions of their fathers. They rode their bikes around the block in shirts and ties and wore their hair in neat, "little man" haircuts which mirrored their father's. The neighbors were expected to admire him from their windows or porches, and to use him to formulate positive assessments of his parents.

From the mid-fifties on, adolescents began to exercise and demand their rights to exercise independent thinking in various ways. Hairstyles that grated on every conservative nerve of their parents—ducktails and flattops in the fifties, and long, free-flowing tresses in the sixties--were worn proudly by teens who were becoming more savvy in worldly matters and more disgruntled with the way things

were (Lee, 1970).

Compliance and obedience were loathed by this generation's youth, and replaced with struggles for independence and autonomy. "Do your own thing" was the philosophy during much of the last part of this era when the political unrest of the Vietnam War was causing America's youth to stand up for what they believed was right or wrong (Boyer, 1978).

This rebellion symbolized in the way kids wore their hair was a major blow to parents' ideal façade of conformity, perfection, and achievement. His act of defiance and rebellion was translated as failure on the part of the parents to produce upwardly mobile children with futures and financial security (Lee, 1970).

Appearances transcended personal happiness or even education during this generation. This was an age of norms and conformity. There was little tolerance for individuality or diversity in this era, and hopes of employment for such an individual, regardless of their education, was seriously impeded by bare feet, long hair, and beards (Lee, 1970).

As society moved into the 1980s, its members seemed to

tire of the struggle with their teens for conformity, and began to ignore, if not embrace, the long hair being sported by most of its male members. As men over 30 began to wear modified versions of covering-the-ear cuts and long sideburns, long hair lost its impact. The issue of hairstyle no longer ranked high on the list of frequently punished behaviors by the next generation, according to the respondents in this study.

In the same generation, intolerance was also reflected in another of the most frequently punished behaviors reported by the cohorts of this era. Having friends of another race was a major concern of parents in this cohort and was still being remembered as a major concern by the respondents of the third cohort who were teenagers between 1963 and 1993.

In the early 1900s, city kids made do with what they had. Garbage pail lids were made into slides; bicycle wheels into hoops; discarded cans and used bags were fashioned into footballs; baby carriages became pushcarts and wagons; and scraps of wood were put into discarded lunch pails to create bonfires (Burns, 1980).

Children of this era found their playmates the same way

they found their toys. They made use of what was there

(Thrasher, 1936). When the block was ethnically

homogeneous, their playmates were likely to reflect that.

But when, as was more often the case, the block was a mixed

one, they played with kids who spoke different languages,

ate different foods, and worshipped different gods. Teens

whose parents would not have dreamed of socializing became

the best of friends. The block was the basic unit of

socialization. Play groups and gangs were organized

exclusively by geography. Geography, not ethnicity or

religion, determined membership.

Around the turn of the century, a loosely connected

coalition of settlement house workers, educators, Protestant

clergy, crusading journalists, and full-time "child savers"

and "boys' workers" campaigned to clean up the city's

streets by building playgrounds and supervised play spaces

for children who had no place but the streets to call their

own (Brody, 1978). While they were successful in building

dozens of new playgrounds and establishing scores of boys'

clubs, the boys resented the ultimate goal of the adults to

teach them to "play properly," to "follow orders," and "play

by the rules." Nonetheless, legislators, mayors, school

officials and progressive-minded philanthropists continued to build playgrounds to accommodate more and more children. By 1910, when these play communities were segregated by political officials, fewer than 10 percent of the neighborhood children utilized them, preferring instead to stay in the streets and mingle with their old friends on their own turf (Mallery, 1910).

In an effort to clean up the streets, high school was made mandatory to get the kids off the streets for at least part of the day. Schools, like the playgrounds, were promptly segregated. Land developers, who had begun creating tract homes—neat, tidy little single--family dwellings that all looked alike and sported the latest modern amenities--perpetuated this division by only selling their homes to white, Protestant, middle class families, leaving the rundown tenements and unsanitary living conditions of the congested cities for those who were born with darker skin (James, 1946).

It was not until desegregation began in the 1950s that children of all colors were once again united in playgrounds and classrooms in every state (Day, 1997). This presented a threat to white middle-class parents who now had to deal

with their ethnocentric prejudices and ideals and who had to

reassess their stereotypes of other cultures. These

ingrained patterns of beliefs and intolerance are tenacious,

however, and greatly impacted the concerns of parents of

this generation and the next. As suggested by the results

of this study, parents were not ready for social integration

along racial lines for their children, and the thought that

their child would bring home a friend of another color was a

major source of contention for several generations.

By the end of the second cohort's era in the mid-

sixties, major child-rearing theorists had informed parents

that the rebelliousness and independence of adolescence was

a normal occurrence and it was best to let it uneventfully

run its course (Erikson, 1968). There were much more

important issues brewing in the world that deserved their

efforts and attention. The third cohort reflected this

shift in the behaviors they described as being most

frequently punished. For this group, risk-taking behavior

stood out as the most frequently punished behavior of this

era (See Figure 2). Since this also was cited as the most

harshly disciplined behavior of this cohort, it will be

discussed further in that section.

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Most Harshly Punished Behaviors

In order to get a clearer picture of the concerns of parents throughout the century, the most harshly disciplined behaviors were also explored (See Figure 3). Again, there were some common threads that appeared in every generation: Respect, obedience, stealing, and lying were consistently harshly punished in every era. It is interesting to note, however, that "harsh" was defined differently by every cohort; becoming less frequent, less physical, and more verbal as time went on. When respondents were asked if they felt the punishment they received as a child was excessive, it was discovered that it was only considered excessive if it included physical punishment and various other forms of punishment. Various forms of punishment in the absence of physical punishment was not considered excessive, nor was physical punishment alone (See Figure 5). Another interesting finding was that parents tend to remember punishing their children in physical terms, reporting that they used spanking or hitting, while the recipients of this punishment report the more affective aspects of being punished such as shame (See Figure 4).

Behaviors, by themselves tell us nothing about the

child unless they are viewed in the context of the era. Those respondents who raised children at the beginning of the century harshly disciplined their teens for not going to church; being expelled from school; and running away from home, which reflected the values and concerns of that time (See Figure 3).

From the very beginning of our nation's existence religion has occupied a central place. It was generally accepted as the ground of moral decisions for facing all of life's affairs. There is no doubt that the United States is essentially a nation which grew out of convictions as to a person's individual honor, freedom, and dignity, and these convictions were based on religion.

A notable early American attitude toward children was the common conviction that each child had a responsibility for the future. Children were considered more than mere links in genealogy. They were considered to be the guarantors of tomorrow. In the first part of this century, there was a close partnership between family practices and religious services. Religious observances in the family usually began with morning prayer. Grace before meals was standard practice. Bible reading, participated in by the

entire family, took place every evening. On Sundays and holidays families engaged in special worship (Fowler, 197).

America is always evolving and in the process is consolidating within its national identity many new, as well as traditional, ideas. Men, women, and children at the turn of the century began to enjoy a great deal more freedom, particularly intellectual freedom, as a result of mandatory education (Aires, 1962). Personal freedom has always been a mark of American society and with the extension of our frontiers and the development of many new areas of activity, intellectual freedom has become more widespread.

All aspects of life were being studied and analyzed by the youth of this generation. Opportunities for comparison of ideas became more attainable. Religion now faced the test of competition from other values and other ways of life. As the members of the communities were attempting to clean up the streets, teaching children how to "play right," and forcing them to conform to educational goals and ideals with mandatory school enrollment, they misjudged how far the pendulum would swing when these children acquired a more knowing appraisal of the institutions and symbolism of life. This acquired knowledge

had the unanticipated effect of challenging many traditional

notions. Some began to reject conventional institutions,

such as religion, when they could find little in the

primitive science books to support religious testimonials

and teachings. Along with this newfound independent thinking

of early twentieth century youth came a new level of

defiance and rebellion (Thrashden, 1936).

Part of this defiance was exhibited in adolescents

whose focus of existence shifted from the farm, to the

city's streets, to the confines of the classroom. Not fully

appreciating the withdrawal of prior freedoms that school

imposed upon them, early century children found "playing

hooky" to be an irresistible pastime. They no doubt found

this activity all the more alluring because it was strictly

forbidden and punishable by law (Stowe, 1913). Reformers

and truant officers ran themselves ragged attempting to get

children off the streets of the city during school hours.

Nothing united the kids or spurred them into action like the

sight of a truant officer or policeman rounding the corner.

Children stuck together regardless of their feeling for each

other in their cop-warning system. As much as they may have

loathed and feared some of their peers, they never hesitated

to give the high sign when a truant officer was spotted.

School-aged children who were caught playing in the city streets or fishing in their favorite swimming hole during school hours were arrested by truant officers and thrown in jail to contemplate their fates until their parents could be summoned to come and get them. This invariably resulted in their being expelled from school, which, as suggested by this study, was harshly punishable by parents. Truant and expelled teens were taken to the woodshed by their parents, flogged by planks of firewood, hit with switches that they selected and cut themselves from trees in their backyards. They were given untenable workloads and beaten with belt buckles. If the child then fled the home, there would be no place to stay because the neighborhood parents were all united in a parenting conspiracy of mutual child-caring standards (Bernert, 1958). Runaway kids would be turned away and sent back home where their harsh discipline would be merciless. It makes perfect sense that not going to church, not going to school, and running away from home were the most harshly punished behaviors reported by this cohort.

As we moved into the mid-century era, increased

economic security made it possible for every family to have one or two automobiles, and used cars were becoming a huge industry, making vehicles plentiful and affordable to teens. In addition, modern appliances and economic stability freed up time for teens of this era to socialize and get into trouble. This mobility and freedom made truancy, curfew, reckless driving, and destruction of property the major issues between parents and teens of that era (See Figure 3).

The third cohort, who were raising families between 1963 and today, tell us that the problem of drugs and risk-taking behaviors are the most harshly punished behaviors of this generation. Risk-taking behaviors was also one of the most frequently punished behaviors among this cohort (See Figure 3).

Today's parents and other members of society are extremely concerned about adolescent use of drugs and chemical substances. The 1960s and 1970s were a time of marked increases in the use of illicit drugs (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 1987). During the social and political unrest of those years, many youth turned to marijuana, stimulants, and hallucinogens (Robinson & Greene, 1988).

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In 1993, drug use among American youth increased for the first time in a number of years. A sharp rise in the use of marijuana, as well as increases in the use of stimulants, LSD, and inhalants, occurred among high school students in 1993 and 1994. The rise in illicit drug use has been especially pronounced for marijuana. From 1991 to 1994, annual use of marijuana doubled among junior high and high school students (O'Malley, 1994). Sometimes drugs are used to cope with unhappiness, stress, loneliness, and physical as well as psychological pain. Even moderate drug use is highly associated with behaviors that place adolescents at high risk of HIV infection through intravenous drugs, and unprotected sex, which may lead to AIDS (Keller, Bartlett, Schleifer, & Johnson, 1991).

Marijuana may symbolize adolescent rebellion against authority and control more than other drugs. Adolescents seem to experiment occasionally with this drug rather than use it regularly (Newcomb & Bentler, 1989). Marijuana became used for recreational purposes around the 1960s. About half of the adolescent students surveyed in the late 1980s admitted to having tried pot at least once. Marijuana use by adolescents decreased in the 1980s—for example, in

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1979, 37 percent of high school students smoked marijuana at least once a month, but by 1994, that figure had dropped to 19 percent. However, this figure represents a significant increase in marijuana use from that of 1992 (Johnson, Bachman & O'Malley, 1994). Chronic marijuana smokers tend to experience problems with motivation and energy level, and teenagers who use it regularly may be expected to have problems with school and job performance. Among teenage boys, violent delinquent behavior is also associated with chronic heavy use of marijuana and other illicit drugs (Watts & Wright, 1990).

Alcohol has always been an extremely popular drug in American society. Alcohol use among teenagers has become so common today that many consider it a normal aspect of adolescence, although our society officially defines it as illegal for minors (Newcomb & Bentler, 1989).

Alcohol is the most widely used drug by U.S. adolescents. It is the third leading killer of teens in this country. More than 13 million individuals are classified as alcoholics, many of whom established their drinking habits during adolescence. However, over the last 50 years, alcohol use by high school seniors has gradually

declined. Starting in the 1940s, alcohol consumption by adolescents steadily increased and leveled off in the 1970s. Monthly prevalence has declined from 72 percent in 1980 to 50 percent in 1994, for example. Binge drinking fell from 41 percent in 1981 to 31 percent in 1994 (Johnson, Bachman, & O'Malley, 1994). Boys, however, may be more predisposed to use and abuse alcohol than are girls (Colligan & Offord, 1990).

Boys have been found to take more risks and pursue more excitement in their adolescent years than girls do. Teenage boys differ from girls in consuming greater amounts of alcoholic beverages. They begin doing so at earlier ages and experience more problems with alcohol (Logan, 1990). Boys more than girls consider alcohol use to be "cool," a means of expressing their status as mature individuals.

Demonstrating an even more serious risk-taking problem, greater numbers of boys than girls admit to driving while intoxicated (Young, 1991). Today, almost every teen has a car, and 65 percent of them drink. This may account for the high rate of accidental vehicular death as a leading cause of fatal injury among adolescents in the United States today. (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1991).

Smoking is another common risk behavior in adolescents. Nicotine is one of the more addictive substances, and smoking tobacco is today considered a serious health hazard (Adeyanju, 1990). Sneaking a cigarette may be one of an adolescent's earliest risk-taking behaviors involving drugs (Newcomb & Bentler, 1989). Tobacco is used by a substantial number of teenagers today; perhaps 20 percent of high school students are nicotine-dependent. Girls tend to become involved with cigarette smoking more often than boys do. Teens who smoke have a greater tendency for risk-taking behaviors and consider rebelliousness part of their personality styles (Windle, 1991).

Sex is a major risk for teens today. High school students in the 1940s had a very different attitude toward many aspects of sexuality than high school students do today. A review of college student's sexual practices and attitudes from 1900 to 1980 reveals two important trends (Darling, Kallen, & VanDusen, 1984): First, the percentage of young people reporting intercourse has dramatically increased and second, the proportion of females reporting sexual intercourse has increased more rapidly than that of males. Prior to 1970, about twice as many males as females

reported that they had engaged in sex, but since 1970 the proportion of males and females has become about equal. These changes suggest major shifts in the standards governing sexual behavior.

Large portions of American teens are sexually active, and their sexual activity increased during the 1980s (Michael et al, 1994). From 1982 to 1988 alone, the proportion of adolescent girls 15 to 19 years of age that had sexual intercourse increased from 47 percent to 53 percent. Nearly 83 percent of boys during this same period reported being sexually active. In the early 1900s, 10 percent of adolescent girls, and 38 percent of adolescent boys reported having been sexually experienced. In the 1940s, the percentages were 25 and 55 percent, respectively. Today 54 percent of the adolescents in grades 9 through 12 said they had had sexual intercourse (Centers for Disease Control, 1994). In this study, 39 percent reported having had sexual intercourse in the past three months and 54 percent of the sexually active students reported having had two or more sex partners. Nineteen percent reported having had four or more partners.

Vulnerable adolescents are most likely to show

irresponsible sexual behavior, use condoms and

contraceptives less frequently, contract more sexually

transmitted diseases, and have higher pregnancy rates. More

than one million teenage girls today become pregnant each

year in the United States (Jemmott & Jemmott, 1990).

Although the birth rate in the U.S. as a whole has

continued to decline in recent years, the rate observed

among teenage girls has increased more than any other age

group of childbearing women. Researchers are particularly

concerned about the spread of the AIDS-causing HIV virus

among teenagers, who have a high level of sexual activity

that is largely unsafe and unprotected (Hillman, Hovell,

Williams, & Hofstetter, 1991).

An increasing concern of American families of the 1990s

is the high rate of violence displayed by adolescents.

According to the U.S. Department of Education (1993), 16

percent of seniors reported that they had been threatened

with a weapon at school and 7 percent said they had been

injured with a weapon. One of every five high school

students routinely carries a firearm, knife, or club. Many

teachers say they have been verbally abused, physically

threatened, or actually attacked by students. And homicide

remains the leading cause of death among African American

youths, regardless of gender or age.

Drugs and risk-taking behaviors are understandably

taken very seriously and harshly punished by modern parents.

However, this study failed to support the parent's concerns

that today's teens engage in these behaviors any more than

they did in previous eras. This phenomenon may be due to

the fact that our study came from an average middle-class

neighborhood that is relatively free from drugs or crime, or

it could be that these behaviors are sensationalized by

television and other media to cause a frenzy among parents

that exceeds the reality of the situation. Another possible

explanation may be that these activities are more frequently

engaged in by young adults who have already left home and

not among the 12- to 18-year-old population targeted in this

study.

Parental Concerns

Although the actual behaviors of adolescents do not

seem to have changed throughout the twentieth century, the

parental concerns certainly have according to this study

(See Figure 6). At the beginning of the century, parents

described the major concerns of parenting to be those that

reflected self-monitoring behaviors involving the home and family. The number one concern mentioned was health and safety; followed by finding a mate for their daughters; instilling a strong work ethic in their boys; and providing a strong value system including morality, respect, and good manners for all children. The number one concern for parents of this era was health and safety.

Tiny headstones, corroded by time in old graveyards are grim reminders of the countless thousands of infants and children who died from disease and lack of adequate medical care in earlier times. It took many years for this country to take infant and child mortality seriously enough to finally decide why so many babies died (Spargo, 1906). One of the answers to why babies died came in the stables and dairies of Rochester, New York, which supplied the city's milk. Public health officers, aware of current research about the causes of disease, examined the dairies' environments and found dirty stables, festooned with cobwebs and invaded with flies; badly drained sinks of mud and cow manure; dirty utensils; layers of sour milk with a mixture of countless millions of bacteria; and the milk itself so imperfectly cared for and badly cooled that it often soured

before reaching the consumer. Here then, the officers

realized was a major cause of sickness and deaths in

children.

While Rochester's Department of Health moved to clean

up its milk supply, it also moved to inform the city's

residents about the dangers of unsanitary conditions and how

it contributed to death and disease (Spargo, 1906). In the

late 1920, when the United States Public Health Service

undertook a health survey of 700,000 households in urban

communities in 18 states and 37,000 households in rural

areas in three states, it found several causes of child

death. An average of 51 percent of all child deaths was due

to infectious and parasitic disease; pneumonia; diarrhea;

and enteritis. The study also cited measles; scarlet fever;

whooping cough; and influenza, as major contributors to

child mortality (Aires, 1962). When an epidemic of

influenza swept the country, it was anticipated that an

overwhelming two-thirds of those affected would die. In

addition, when one child in a large family became ill, it

was not uncommon for the family to suffer the loss of

several members within weeks of each other (Calhoun, 1960).

It is no wonder that in this cohort health and safety was

the number one concern. Child behaviors such as going out

without adequate clothing, not wearing shoes, and not

washing was tantamount to flirting with death and comparable

to unsafe sex in the 1990's.

Antitoxins, antiseptics and immunizations that were

developed early in the twentieth century helped to prevent

disease, as did sanitary control over milk supplies

(Calhoun, 1960). At the end of World War II, penicillin and

sulfa drugs marked the beginning of the development of a

wide spectrum of medications, which made it possible to

treat tuberculosis; mastoiditis; meningitis; osteomyelitis;

pneumonia, and other acute bacterial infections.

Immunizations have eradicated many diseases such as Small

Pox, poliomyelitis, and diphtheria. Today, the major health

concerns for children include cancer, leukemia, and AIDS.

Another concern of the first cohort of parents was

finding a mate for their daughters and instilling a strong

work ethic in their sons. This finding supports the history

of the priorities of families in this generation. Children

who grow up in a society with strictly defined gender roles

learn early what will be expected of them. The girls of the

early twentieth century were no exception. The streets bred

tough, self-reliant, self-confident boys who would grow up

to join the world of work and wages, but working-class girls

were destined for different futures (Dept. of Labor, 1915).

Though many would, before marriage or between marriage and

motherhood, work for wages in factories, offices, or retail

stores, these were considered but temporary detours on the

road to motherhood and housekeeping.

Because the boys were basically useless at home and

unable to earn much money elsewhere until they reached the

age of ten, they were free to play in the afternoons (Brody,

1928). The girls were too useful to be given the same kind

of freedom. Six-, seven-, and eight-year-olds were big

enough to watch the babies and help their mothers with the

lighter household tasks. Ten- and eleven-year-olds could be

entrusted with enough responsibilities to fill their

afternoons. It took considerable labor to care for a

household and earn money on the side. Household chores

required hours of preparation and involved dozens of

separate steps. The laundry had to be done by hand from

beginning to end; sorted, soaked, rubbed against the

washboard, rinsed, boiled, rinsed again, wrung out,

starched, hung to dry, ironed with irons heated on the

stove, folded, and put away. Cooking involved not only preparing the food and cooking it but hauling coal for the fire, dumping the ashes afterwards, and keeping the cast-iron stove cleaned, blacked, and rust-free. The soot, grime, and ashes released by coal-burning stoves and kerosene and gas lamps complicated housecleaning. Shopping had to be done daily and in several different stores because few people had iceboxes to preserve perishable food purchased earlier in the week (Strausser, 1982).

The girls' help with the shopping, cooking, and cleaning was important to the proper running of the household, but secondary in comparison with their major responsibility as "little mothers." Girls still too young to do the cooking or the laundry were already being apprenticed for their role as wife and mother. Their job was to rock the babies and take them out for fresh air (Strauser, 1982).

Girls old enough to attend school took over caring for the babies when they returned home in the afternoon. In the lower middle class communities, all the girls would congregate with baby carriages, sit on stoops and embroider or jump rope. In these families, their older sisters

effectively raised babies and small children. It was not

that the mothers were uninterested or irresponsible. They

were just overworked and forced to delegate responsibility

to their helpers. Every increase in their mothers' workload

meant an increase in their own, which they accepted as a

matter of course (Brody, 1928).

The "little mothers" and "their babies" were as much a

part of the life of the city as their "little merchant"

brothers. While the girls were being primed to be suitable

and desirable wives and mothers, the boys were being taught

a strong work ethic which they would need later on to

support their "little women." These future brides would

undoubtedly be select from the pool of "little mothers" who

sat on the stoops of the tenement buildings rocking their

baby brothers and sisters.

Middle class children living in the cities in the early

part of the century did the work that would in later years

be taken over by adults (Clopper, 1912). They provided city

workers and residents with their afternoon and Sunday

papers, their gum, candy, pencils, and shiny shoes. They

ran errands and made deliveries for neighborhood tradesmen,

carried messages for downtown businessmen who could not yet

rely on their customers to have telephones, and did odd jobs

for shopkeepers and local manufacturers. There were dozens

and dozens of ways for enterprising eleven- to fifteen-year-

olds to make money in the early twentieth-century cities.

The children were sent downtown to earn money for their

families, but the more time they spent away from their

homes, the more uses they found for the money they earned

(Davis, 1912). Restaurants, lunch counters, hot dog stands,

and candy shops went after the boys' business with afternoon

specials on hamburgers and pie a la mode. Movie theaters

and nickelodeons targeted almost exclusively the business of

middle class working boys between 3:00 p.m. and dusk. Boys

learned the value of the work ethic with such rewards, and

parents realized the benefit in letting them keep a portion

of their earnings to accomplish this very goal.

At mid-century, parents were moving away from concerns

of the home and family and becoming increasingly concerned

about the neighborhood and "keeping up with the Jones's."

Compliance, obedience, education, and appearances were cited

by the respondents of this cohort as most important.

Increased freedom in travel and better economic conditions

gave all members of society more autonomy and mobility, and

made supervision of children more difficult. Smaller families gave teens more privacy and unwed pregnancy became a major concern for most families (Forrest, 1990).

Modern technology and child labor laws relieved children of the expectations that they would contribute to the family's income. Modern appliances greatly reduced the workload for mothers and their daughters. Education replaced work as the major role of youth.

Today, according to the results of this study, the parenting concerns have moved away from the home and family issues of the first cohort, from the neighborhood issues of the second cohort, and now revolve around world issues such as crime, drugs, AIDS, violence and gangs. With a new century only two years away, the American challenge is in rebuilding a sense of community, hope, safety, and a bright future for our children. No child is physically, economically, or morally safe in a world where raw sex and violence is glorified; breakdown of the family and community are expected to occur; moral corruption is seen in all racial and economic groups; growing economic inequality between rich and poor, poverty, drugs, and crime abound.

Implications for Social Work Practice

As the twenty-first century approaches, the well being of adolescents is one of our most important concerns. We all cherish the future of adolescents, for they are the future of any society. Adolescents who do not reach their full potential, who are destined to make fewer contributions to society than society needs, and who do not take their place as productive adults diminish the society's future.

As we can see from this study, growing up has never been easy. However, most problems of today's youth are not with the youth themselves, but with the ever changing social environment and their parents' reaction to it. In matters of manners and behaviors, the youth of every generation have seemed radical, unnerving, and different from adults—different in how they look, how they behave, the music they enjoy, their hairstyles, and the clothing they choose. But it is an enormous error to confuse the adolescent's enthusiasm for trying on new identities and enjoying moderate amounts of outrageous behavior with hostility toward parental and societal standards. Acting out and boundary testing are time-honored ways in which adolescents move toward accepting, rather than rejecting,

parental values.

Most teenagers navigate the long journey of adolescence successfully, but parents are concerned that far too many are not reaching their potential due to factors outside of their control. They are not being adequately reared by caregivers, they are not being adequately educated, and they are not being adequately supported by society.

According to the respondents of this study, adolescents who do not reach their full potential and do not grow up to make competent contributions to their world invariably have not been given adequate individual attention or support. The respondents reported that in order for children to achieve healthy development they need parents who love them unconditionally; who monitor their moral development; are sensitive to their needs for guidance, provide adequate supervision and discipline; who provide opportunities for socialization and a sense of family; and who give their children abundant time and attention (See Figure 7).

Supervision in the early part of the century was provided in part by older siblings, by peers, by extended family members and by other parents. Children played on the streets because there was nowhere else for them. As the

population of the cities expanded, land became more and more

valuable. With space at a premium, even the backyards were

too valuable to be given over to the children. There was

congestion inside the homes as well. There was no room for

children to play in tiny tenement flats and subdivided one-

family houses stuffed full with aunts, uncles, grandparents,

parents, babies, and boarders. It was much easier for a

family to make space for the children to sleep than it was

to find room for them to play. Indoors was for adults;

children only got in the way of mother and her chores, of

father trying to relax after a long day at work, of boarders

who worked the night shift and had to sleep during the day.

The children required no special encouragement to go outside

and play. The streets belonged to the children. They made,

implemented, and enforced the rules. Older kids looked

after the younger ones, and there was a clear subculture of

norms and standards, which were never violated. In essence,

they grew each other up with little parental intervention,

and had a good time doing it.

The presence of adults in the street and in the

tenements above protected the children at play. There was

always someone within shouting distance should trouble

appear. A child's shout of help brought help at once. Parents, laborers, vendors, police, peddlers, crowds of children, and passersby appeared from nowhere to tear apart any pervert who threatened the welfare of the city's youth.

Children who are under the thumb of adults from morning to night obviously have less opportunity to learn from one another than those who are free of adult supervision for long stretches of time. The children of the early twentieth-century city were blessed or cursed—depending on your perspective—with more unstructured and unsupervised free time than the generations that preceded or followed them. Unlike their nineteenth-century predecessors, they did not have to work all day alongside adults in factory, shop, mill, or mine. Unlike their mid-twentieth-century counterparts, they did not spend their afternoons, weekends, and summers in umpired and regulated Little League, scouting, after-school, and summer camp programs. The children of the street were watched like hawks, but they were on their own at the same time.

When middle class families started moving to more urban areas, settling into single-family homes with backyards and

fences, the responsibility of supervision fell exclusively on the shoulders of the parents. When parents started having fewer children, mothers could no longer depend on older siblings to entertain and supervise the younger children.

By mid century, technology had lightened the workload for mothers and freed up her time to spend more of it with her children. It was not until mothers left the home to enter the work force in the late 1960s that the parental time and supervision became a coveted commodity. Grandparents were staying healthy longer and many of them were also working, which eliminated this valuable resource for childcare. High divorce rates and increasing numbers of single-parent families further strained a mother's energy and time to spend with her children. Today, even two-parent families find in necessary for both parents to work in order to provide adequately for their children.

Although the structure of many families has changed as a result of increasing numbers of divorced, working-mother, and stepparent families, the family is still a powerful socializing influence on adolescent development. Regardless of the type of culture and family structure in which

adolescents grow up, they benefit enormously when one or both parents are highly involved in their upbringing; provide them with warmth and nurturance; help them to develop self-control; and provide them with an environment that promotes their health and well-being.

Most respondents in our study felt that an intact family lifestyle with two partners committing their energy and efforts to both marriage and parenting still provides the best environment for children to mature into adulthood. Two people's supporting and caring for each other allows for the sharing of pleasure, insecurity, and pain as children and parents bond together, grow, and change. There needs to be enough cushioning to weather stress and real or imagined disappointments, and the strength to move on with the tasks of living. Even the concrete tasks of childrearing—provisions of economic security; maintaining a living environment; interaction with schools, community groups, doctors, and dentists—can more easily be done by two people, and better still by two people with support from two networks of kin, than by one alone.

Not only do children need family supports to feel safe; children also need to experience a close and caring

relationship with a parent of the same and of the opposite

sex. Children need to know a relationship between adults

where tension is negotiated, differences occurs, and

arguments do not result in the disintegration of their

world. In our society these interpersonal skills are best

transmitted to children through experiencing an intact

functioning family. The most sophisticated, skillful

therapist can only offer something second best.

Relationships with other people can, of course, be created

elsewhere, but no alternative is as meaningful as the role

model of a mother and father, solving problems together,

dealing with tensions and stress, and conveying values and

behavior expectation to the next generation.

Although this model is in the best interests of

children, reality suggests that we should look closely at

the many alternative childrearing models that have emerged

because of a variety of American lifestyles. Some of these

alternative systems have been developed by choice, others of

necessity to adapt to new and different economic realities.

But many arise simply because of insufficient preparation or

coping skills on the part of the original partners who have

undertaken marriage without the necessary knowledge, skills,

models, and family and community supports to weather its many storms. Some do a magnificent job under difficult circumstances incomprehensible to those who function in closely connected and supportive systems. However, one can criticize American society's failure to move in early with preventative help to alleviate family dysfunction, compared to more typical crisis intervention techniques often too late for effective remedy.

In some communities, the job of parenting is still performed by the extended family and family friends. Children at the beginning of the century used to learn from their siblings how to live, how to work, how to parent; they learned social rules and expectations. But in today's families, these close networks no longer work or simply do not exist. Today, children learn these lessons from their parents or grandparents and often with extensive modification as one traditional family boundary after another is broken due to lack of clear rules and expectations. Family members moving away, and new families are being created by bringing two existing single-parent units into a reconstituted or blended family.

The major challenge is to design social systems that

validate assets and strengths. These assets and strengths

lie first in the nuclear couple, then in the extended family

network, next in linkages, to their ethnic, cultural, and

religious groups, and, of course, in friendships and the

community.

We need to remain keenly aware that we transmit values

and behavioral expectations by modeling them for our

children. Program design needs to be open to new

possibilities and devoid of stereotyping. Problems

confronted by families must be defined as normal rather than

pathological. Coping with adverse circumstances must be

seen as challenges to be confronted as people move through

the life cycle in an increasingly complicated, ever-changing

environment in which there seems to be fewer and fewer rules

and less and less rigid models to follow. All this can be

done in a preventative, educational, experiential context.

A philosophy committed to wellness must take into

account the intense needs human beings have for

acknowledgement of their cultural roots, intense biological

connections, and early ties. Because each human being has a

unique configuration of connections, every person is thereby

special. But this recognition needs validation of and by

these other people. Taking this as a philosophic premise,

we can design programs to enhance well being by legitimizing

and reinforcing the individual's social roots and

connections that they used to get from large families of

siblings and their city street friends. Even though there

may be a qualitative difference between old and new ties,

established in specific life situations, such as the

neighborhood, work, or religious affiliations, all

potentially constructive friendships should be reinforce.

We need to explore to what extend support networks,

later life friendships, and special-interest groups

substitute for family, kin, and early, long-established

friendships. Adult support and friendship groups can easily

relate to and help meet the special needs children and of a

family in crisis. Under stress, family and friendship

groups often pull together. Linkages and connections

perceived as lost or non-functioning are reestablished.

Recognizing these linkages provides an unspoken sense of

loyalty and safety. Adult education programs can be

developed to give them opportunities to enhance their

knowledge and skills, enjoy some leisure activities, and

above all to make friends with others who live in their

community and share some interests and concerns. The more the quality of adult life can be enhanced, the less children are in jeopardy.

How children experience childhood today will determine the type of society we will experience tomorrow. If children are nurtured, cared for, and able to grow in a caring, predictable environment that allows them to optimize their human potential, we can hope for a more reasonable, productive, and empathic nation and world. If, on the other hand, we tolerate child abuse and neglect and unbroken cycles of poverty, we can look forward to a further deterioration of our society. Violence and substance abuse will increase as Americans search for relief from inner tensions and harsh disappointments.

If indeed we do believe that children of today are our most important national assets, we will design programs and allocate both material and human resources according to such beliefs. Given the uncertainties that inevitably accompany massive technological changes, we will have to put greater energy into making childhood more predictable in an increasingly complicated, unpredictable world. A safe childhood is only possible if the primary institution

entrusted with childrearing—the family—is understood, valued, and supported.

As American society becomes insecure and confusing, so also do families and their individual members become unsure and confused. National and international conditions already require a rethinking of the roles and functions of individual family members. As both mother and father join the work force, traditional roles and task assignments need rethinking and restructuring. Energy is drained from the generation that is just completing the tasks of childrearing as they shift, often without respite, to care for the elderly, or even to taking in grandchildren who cannot be cared for by their parents.

The large number of single-parent families, the high rate of divorce, and growing reports of child abuse and neglect are among the symptoms telling us that the pressure on the modern American family exceeds the coping ability of many families and individuals. We need to look closely at the underlying causes that have made the American family so vulnerable during this major period of change and uncertainty, and at the variety of new, badly needed supportive institutions that must be put in place.

Our search for understanding of the changes in American

childcare has spanned the last 100 years. From strict

corporal punishment, there followed a decline of practices

which "broke the youngster's will." Then there occurred a

struggle against parental domination of their children's

lives. This was followed by a rigorous new measure to teach

the child to be self-sufficient and independent and to adapt

skillfully to the new demands of a shifting society.

Finally, we saw the growth of yet another change, which

recognized the parents' needs and the acknowledgement of

reciprocal interactions of children and their parents.

Despite the many paradigm shifts in childrearing models,

parents seem to get their children raised one way or another

with a healthy portion of them turning out to be perfectly

all right.

What have we learned about the future by comparing the

present with the past? According to this study, we learned

that children behave in ways that are consistent with

childhood in every generation; parents discipline the

behaviors that reflect the concerns of their cohorts; and

the methods of discipline reflect the parenting paradigm of

their era. In every generation, family systems attain

similar goals in different and varied ways. Hence, different methods of socializing and disciplining children result in similar values, attitudes, and behaviors that are held by most individuals upon attaining adulthood. A variety of techniques, methods, and practices net the same results. It appears that there is no single or correct program of parenting that produces a more responsible society. In every generation, most children grow up to be relatively productive and happy individuals, with some falling on either side of the spectrum. What changes over time is the world in which we live.

As we scrutinize our value system and listen to the concerns of parents today, we can recognize where our commitment to children and families in the United States must be directed in the next generation. If children are to grow into adults who take a productive place in the complex world of the twenty-first century, we must provide the necessary family and social supports to assure a healthy society. Children have fewer siblings, long-distance grandparents, working parents, and less freedom to play in the streets with their friends today than in the past. Often, kids spend all of their leisure time indoors playing

solitary games of Nintendo or watching videos by themselves. As shown in this study, it is not the parenting paradigm or the discipline style that makes a difference in the kind of society we create. Throughout history, it has been the family, siblings, and friends that have made all the difference in the world. Socialization, time with their parents and friends, and a sense of family is what children need today to grow up healthy. People who are healthy feel in control of their lives and have some ability to cope with the normal stresses of the life cycle. A healthy society supports adults who are responsible parents.

Limitations of the Study

Given the exploratory nature of this study the findings may be considered tentative rather than conclusive. Keeping this mind, it is important to note that there are a number of limitations to this study. One of the primary shortcomings of this study includes the fact that there were only four participants in cohort 1. Thus, the information received from cohort 1 may not necessarily be generalized to other families during that era.

Second, the respondents appeared to have had some difficulty understanding the directions on the

questionnaire. In part 2 of the questionnaire, it was not clear whether the researchers were asking the respondents to report the behaviors they did most or the behaviors they were punished for most. Furthermore in the severity section of part 2 the respondents also had difficulty determining whether the researchers were requesting that they report how they were actually punished or how their parents would have punished them had they exhibited the listed behaviors.

The third limitation of the study included the cohort divisions. The researchers chose to divide the sample into three groups, in order to evaluate generation differences. Each cohort represented a twenty-five year increment. The researchers did not attempt to divide the cohorts with respect to historical generation distinction, for example Baby Boomers, or Generation X. Had the researchers chosen to divide the sample by historical distinctions, it is certain that the results of this study may have been much different.

All in all, this study did not explore the differences among demographic variables. The data was obtained from a middle-class college town and a senior citizen center with mixed racial makeup, ages, and genders. The intention was

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to gather data of the average American family throughout the twentieth century, and not in targeted groups. Socioeconomic status, education, size of family, and the like were not considered. This may be an area of further study.

APPENDIX A: CHILD-REARING QUESTIONNAIRE
PART 1-5

PART 1

GENDER   M   F

ETHNICITY   Black ___ White ___ Hispanic ___ Asian ___ Other ___

YEAR OF BIRTH   _____

NUMBER OF CHILDREN   _____

**YEAR OF BIRTH OF
OLDEST CHILD**   _____

**YEAR OF BIRTH OF
YOUNGEST CHILD**   _____

PART 2 Put an X next to the answer that best describes the discipline YOU RECEIVED AS A TEENAGER.

WHEN YOU WERE A TEENAGER (12-18) WHAT WERE THE BEHAVIORS FOR WHICH YOUR CARETAKERS DISCIPLINED YOU AND RATE THE SEVERITY OF THE PUNISHMENT YOU RECEIVED FOR EACH (Use the primary disciplinarian you had).

BEHAVIOR	FREQUENCY WITH WHICH YOU WERE DISCIPLINED					SEVERITY OF DISCIPLINE			
	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Bad Manners									
Being Argumentative									
Being Disrespectful									
Being Expelled From School									
Being Irresponsible									
Being Lazy									
Being Noisy									
Being Sassy									
Being Truant									
Body Piercing									
Chewing Gum in School/Church									
Cussing									
Dating From Another Race									

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	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Destroying Property									
Disagreeing With Elders									
Disobedience									
Doing Drugs									
Drinking									
Dropping Out of School									
Drunk Driving									
Eating Junk Food									
Elbows on Table									
Fighting with Siblings									
Gang Involvement									
Getting Arrested									
Getting Beaten Up									
Getting Pregnant									
Graffiti									
Hairstyle									
Having Friends of Another Race									

	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Having Unsafe Sex									
Hitting Back									
Listening to "wild" Music									
Lying									
Not Bathing/Washing									
Not Doing Chores									
Not Doing Homework									
Not Eating with the Family									
Not Going to Church									
Not Hitting Back									
Not Looking After Siblings									
Not Raising Hand in Class									
Not Taking Hat Off									
Not Wearing Coat/Shoes									
Poor Grades									
Possession of Weapons									
Premarital Sex									
Rape (date rape)									

	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Reckless Driving									
Risk-taking Behavior									
Running Away From Home									
Smoking									
Sneaking Out at Night									
Spitting									
Stealing									
Talking at the Table									
Talking in Class									
Talking Too Much									
Tattoos									
Throwing Rocks									
Unacceptable Attire									
Using Racial Slurs									
Using Slang									
Violating Curfew									
Violence Toward Others									

	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Reckless Driving									
Risk-taking Behavior									
Running Away From Home									
Smoking									
Sneaking Out at Night									
Spitting									
Stealing									
Talking at the Table									
Talking in Class									
Talking Too Much									
Tattoos									
Throwing Rocks									
Unacceptable Attire									
Using Racial Slurs									
Using Slang									
Violating Curfew									
Violence Toward Others									

	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Reckless Driving									
Risk-taking Behavior									
Running Away From Home									
Smoking									
Sneaking Out at Night									
Spitting									
Stealing									
Talking at the Table									
Talking in Class									
Talking Too Much									
Tattoos									
Throwing Rocks									
Unacceptable Attire									
Using Racial Slurs									
Using Slang									
Violating Curfew									
Violence Toward Others									

	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Having Unsafe Sex									
Hitting Back									
Listening to "wild" Music									
Lying									
Not Bathing/Washing									
Not Doing Chores									
Not Doing Homework									
Not Eating with the Family									
Not Going to Church									
Not Hitting Back									
Not Looking After Siblings									
Not Raising Hand in Class									
Not Taking Hat Off									
Not Wearing Coat/Shoes									
Poor Grades									
Possession of Weapons									
Premarital Sex									
Rape (date rape)									

	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Destroying Property									
Disagreeing With Elders									
Disobedience									
Doing Drugs									
Drinking									
Dropping Out of School									
Drunk Driving									
Eating Junk Food									
Elbows on Table									
Fighting with Siblings									
Gang Involvement									
Getting Arrested									
Getting Beaten Up									
Getting Pregnant									
Graffiti									
Hairstyle									
Having Friends of Another Race									

PART 3 Put an X next to the answer which best describes the discipline <u>YOU</u> used <u>AS A PARENT</u>

AS A PARENT WHAT WERE THE BEHAVIORS FOR WHICH YOU MOST FREQUENTLY DISCIPLINED YOUR TEENS (12-18) AND RATE THE SEVERITY OF THE PUNISHMENT YOU GAVE FOR EACH.

BEHAVIOR	FREQUENCY WITH WHICH YOU DISCIPLINED					SEVERITY OF DISCIPLINE			
	N/A	Never	Sometimes	Frequently		None	Mild	Moderate	Harsh
Bad Manners									
Being Argumentative									
Being Disrespectful									
Being Expelled From School									
Being Irresponsible									
Being Lazy									
Being Noisy									
Being Sassy									
Being Truant									
Body Piercing									
Chewing Gum in School/Church									
Cussing									
Dating From Another Race									

PART 4

WHICH TYPE OF DISCIPLINE/PUNISHMENT DID YOUR PARENTS USE?

	NEVER	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALWAYS
Stern Talking To				
Lecturing				
Shaming				
Yelling				
Time-Outs				
Restriction				
Take Away Things				
Increase Chores				
Spanking w/hand				
Hitting w/belt or object				
Slapping				
Threatening				

Other?_____

DID YOU FEEL THAT THEIR PUNISHMENT WAS EXCESSIVE?   Y   N

WHICH TYPE OF DISCIPLINE/PUNISHMENT DID OR DO YOU USE?

	NEVER	SOMETIMES	USUALLY	ALWAYS
Stern Talking To				
Lecturing				
Shaming				
Yelling				
Time-Outs				
Restriction				
Take Away Things				
Increase Chores				
Spanking w/hand				
Hitting w/belt or object				
Slapping				
Threatening				

Other? _____

PART 5

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY WERE YOUR PARENTS' TOP THREE PARENTING CONCERNS (Does not have to be on the above list).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

WHAT ARE/WERE YOUR TOP THREE PARENTING CONCERNS WHEN YOU HAD TEENAGERS?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

PART 6

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY CHILDREN NEED MOST TODAY FOR HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT

You are invited to participate in an exploratory study of parenting concerns in the 20th Century. This study is being conducted by Donah Freeman and Raychelle Harper under the supervision of Dr. Ira A. Neighbors, Professor of Social Work at California State University, San Bernardino. The researchers will examine the evolution of parental concerns and adolescent behaviors throughout the 20th century. Furthermore, the researchers will explore the disciplinary standards of this same era . You have been selected as a possible participant in this study because you are at least 18 years of age and you have parented an adolescent. You will be one of forty participants in this study.

In this study, you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire, which takes approximately 35 minutes to complete. Each participant will be asked questions related to the types of adolescent behaviors for which they were disciplined. Additionally, participants will be asked questions related to the form of discipline that they received for exhibiting those identified behaviors.

Participants will also be asked questions related to the types of behaviors for which they discipline their own children.

Your participation in this study is entirely voluntary. All participants are free to withdraw from the study at any time. If you have any further questions, please contact Dr. Ira A. Neighbors at (909) 880-5565.

If you have chosen to participate please read and mark the space provided below.

I have read and understand the information provided. I have voluntarily chosen to participate in the study mentioned. I am at least 18 years of age.

To remain confidential an X below indicates
my willingness to participate.

_____ I agree to participate

Donah Freeman, MSW candidate
Raychelle Harper, MSW candidate
Dr. Ira A. Neighbors, DSW, Research Instructor (909)880-5565.

APPENDIX C: DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

In this study, we will explore the evolution of parental concerns, adolescent behaviors, and disciplinary standards throughout the twentieth century. The data will be collected from a six-part questionnaire. The questionnaire will solicit information related to the particular adolescent behaviors for which the participant received discipline as well as those behaviors for which the respondent has disciplined his or her own children for exhibiting. Additionally, the researchers will explore the severity of the discipline provided for those behaviors. All research data collected will remain confidential. If you are interested in receiving information about the findings of this study, please contact Dr, Ira A. Neighbors, California State University, San Bernardino, Professor of Social Work at (909) 880-5565.

Due to the nature of the information being studied, personal issues may arise. Should you experience any personal issues during or after completion of this study, please contact any local family service or mental health agency.

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