



Adolescent Development

48.212: Dr. Jeffrey Leitzel
Chapter 3: Social Transitions

1



Outline/overview

- o Social Redefinition
- o Adolescence as a Social Invention
- o Changes in Status – social and legal
- o Continuity and discontinuity in social transitions and how we can improve the process
- o Neighborhood Influences

2



Social Redefinition

- o In all societies adolescence is a period of social transition for the individual
- o The individual comes to be recognized as an adult
- o The social transition is less explicit in contemporary U.S. society than in traditional cultures

6

● ● ● | **Social Redefinition and Psychosocial Development**

- Identity
 - attainment of adult status causes adolescent to feel more adultlike
- Development of Autonomy
 - Adult status leads to shifts in responsibility, independence, and freedom
 - Permitted to make decisions that have long-term consequences

7

● ● ● | **Social Redefinition and Psychosocial Development**

- Age of majority: legal age for adult status
- Interest in intimacy, dating and marriage
- Achievement
 - Becoming a full-time employee
 - Permitted to leave school on their own volition

8

● ● ● | **Adolescence as a Social Invention**

- Inventionists
- Roots in the Industrial Revolution
- Young people excluded from labor force
 - Economic dependence on elders
- Formal schooling is lengthened
- New Terminology
 - Teenager
 - Youth
 - Emerging adulthood

9



Changes in Status

- Two-sided alteration in status
 - Given privileges/rights reserved for society's adults
 - Increased expectations for
 - self-management
 - personal responsibility
 - social participation
- Addressed with adult titles
- Maintain new types of social relationships with
 - Parents
 - Elders
 - Younger individuals whose status has not yet changed

10



Changes in Legal Status

- Permission for more extensive participation in the community's decision making
 - Voting (U.S. citizens)
 - Ceremonial life (Navaho people)
- Expected to serve their communities in emergency and train for warfare
- May own property and maintain control over their income
- Age is a prerequisite for employment in certain occupations

11



Changes in Legal Status

- Expected to contribute to the economic well-being of their community, i.e. pay taxes
- Ability to participate in activities typically reserved for adults
 - gambling, purchasing alcoholic beverages, and driving
- Expected to take increased responsibility for self-management and social participation

12

The Process of Social Redefinition

- A series of events occurring over time
- Contemporary American indicators?
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.
 - 5.
- Extrusion/Scarification

15

Variations in Social Transitions: Clarity in the Past

- U.S. transition to adulthood in the early 19th century was more disorderly
 - School – viewed as children
 - Work – viewed as adults
 - Timetable depended on household/family needs
- A century ago, the passage into adulthood may have been more prolonged than today.

16

Variations in Social Transitions: Continuity

- Continuous transitions
 - Gradual transitions, where the adolescent assumes the roles and status of adulthood bit by bit
- Discontinuous transitions
 - Sudden transitions, where the adolescent's entrance into adulthood is more abrupt, with little or no training

17



The Transition into Adulthood in Contemporary Society

Two trends are reshaping the transition

- (1) The transition period is getting longer
Puberty occurs earlier and schooling lasts longer.
- (2) Success in the labor force is more dependent on formal schooling

18



What Can Be Done to Ease the Transition?

- o Encouragement to spend time in voluntary, nonmilitary service activities
 - Staffing day-care centers
 - Working with the elderly
 - Americorps, Job Corps
- o Mentoring programs for at-risk adolescents, who often have few relationships with positive adult role models

19



Influence of Neighborhood Conditions on Development

- o Poverty - important overarching factor
 - Growing up in poor neighborhood
- o Mechanisms of Neighborhood Influences
 - Collective Efficacy
 - Impact of Stress
 - Limited Access to Resources

20
