



# ***Adolescence***

## Chapter 3: Social Transitions

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## **Social Redefinition**

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

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## **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

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● ● ● | **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

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● ● ● | **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

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● ● ● | **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

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● ● ● | **Changes in Interpersonal Status**

- Addressed with adult titles
- Maintain new types of social relationships with
  - Parents
  - Elders
  - Younger individuals whose status has not yet changed

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● ● ● | **Changes in Political 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

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● ● ● | **Changes in Economic Status**

- May own property and maintain control over their income
- Age is a prerequisite for employment in certain occupations
- Expected to contribute to the economic well-being of their community, i.e. pay taxes

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● ● ● | **Changes in Legal Status**

- 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

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● ● ● | **The Process of Social Redefinition**

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

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● ● ● | **Variations in Social Transitions: Clarity in Previous Eras**

- U.S. transition to adulthood in the early 19<sup>th</sup> 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.

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● ● ● | 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

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● ● ● | 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

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● ● ● | What Can Be Done to Ease the Transition?

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

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