

AP US History

Chapter 28 - The Affluent Society

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Key Concepts

What are this chapter's key concepts?

- **8.1.I.D** - Decolonization after the war → nationalist movements in Asia/Africa/Middle East → new alliances formed on both sides of Cold War; some non-aligned
- **8.1.II.C** - Debates continued over practicality of nuclear arsenal, power of executive branch, military-industrial complex
- **8.2.I.A** - Post-WWII, ↑ civil rights movement combating racial discrimination w/ law, direct action, non-violent protest
- **8.2.I.B** - Three branches of fed. govt. enforced army desegregation, *Brown v. Board of Education*, Civil Rights Act of 1964 to promote racial equality
- **8.2.I.C** - Resistance → ↓ desegregation w/ social and political unrest; civil rights activists debated effectiveness of nonviolence
- **8.2.II.C** - Poverty remained prominent despite overall affluence
- **8.3.I.A** - Private sector, fed. spending, baby boom, tech. dev. → ↑ econ.
- **8.3.I.B** - Higher education oppos. new tech. → social mobility, migration of middle class to suburbs, many others to South/West; Sun Belt became more prominent
- **8.3.II.A** - Mass culture more homogeneous → challenges to conformity

The "Economic Miracle"

How did the U.S. economy expand rapidly?

In the 1950s and the early 1960s, government spending, an increased birth rate, and suburban growth for the middle class were all sources of economic growth. As a result of government spending and migration, the West grew rapidly as an economic force. The U.S. economic structure changed, too, favoring Keynesian economics, or the belief that the government could regulate the economy by changing the flow of money through spending and taxes rather than by regulating private industry. Labor became more consolidated, too; these new corporations resented strikes, making many concessions to unions to prevent them from occurring. The merger of the AFL and the CIO led to an overall resurgence of unions as a force, though membership remained relatively stagnant and corruption within unions became prominent.

What were the primary sources of economic expansion?

- 1945-1960: ↑ GDP, ↓ unemployment, stable inflation
- Govt. spending continued throughout period after Depression w/ public school funding, veterans' benefits, welfare, road development, mil. spending
 - Korean War greatly stimulated growth; period after saw relative decline in growth due to reduced armaments
- Birth rate increased significantly in **baby boom** w/ population ↑ by 20%
 - Led to ↑ consumer demand, econ. growth
- Suburbs expanded → growth in private cars, housing industry, road construction
- Econ. grew 10x as fast as pop. w/ avg. American having signif. more purchasing power; highest standard of living in world

Government spending in schools, veterans, welfare, roads, and especially military paired with an increased birth rate leading to growing consumer demand and the expansion of suburbs leading to booms in road development and the housing industry meant that the GDP increased, unemployment decreased, and the economy grew rapidly, contributing to an improved standard of living.

How did the West expand as an economic force?

- Pre-war, West had assisted Eastern industry, supplying agricultural goods / raw materials
- By 1960s, some parts had become prosperous in their own right
 - Govt. spending during war → expanded infrastructure (dams/highways/power), military growth
 - Automobile expansion → need for oil → TX/CO oil fields grew w/ cities in Dallas/Houston/Denver
 - State govts. focused on education w/ UT and UC systems
 - Warm, dry climates attracted many

Primarily as a result of WWII, the West transformed from a force reliant on the East for demand into an independently prosperous region. Government spending during the war, automobile expansion, university development, as well as climate, allowed the region to develop and the population to surge.

How did the economic structure of the U.S. change?

- Discovery of power of U.S. economy → increased confidence in capitalism
- Belief that Keynesian econ. allowed govt. to regulate without disrupting private sector became more prominent
 - **John Maynard Keynes** had emphasized in 1920s that govt. could vary flow of spending, taxation, and overall currency output to prevent recession and inflation
 - Confirmed by successful govt. policies during Great Depression
 - "New economics" officially accepted in 1963 w/ Kennedy's proposed tax cut; Lyndon B. Johnson finally passed, w/ result confirming theory
- Poverty reformers believed new way forward not redistribution but instead continued growth for all of society to raise standard of living uniformly

Keynesian economic beliefs - the belief that the government could regulate the economy without intervention in the private sector but instead by varying the flow of spending and taxation - took a greater foothold in U.S. policy in the 1960s with Kennedy and Johnson's support. Furthermore, the idea of redistribution became superseded by the belief that all of society should expand.

How did labor structure change during the 1950s?

- More and more corporate mergers → smaller number of corporations dominated than ever before
 - Promoted by defense spending: govt. mainly provided armament contracts to largest population
 - Mechanized agriculture → agri. workforce, family farms declined w/ corporations owning more and more farms
- Corporations reluctant to support strikes → concessions to unions
 - ex: 1948 saw Walter Reuther of U.S. Automobile Workers obtain contract from GM to allow standard of living to match consumer price index; promised wages even during layoffs
 - Labor unions formed **postwar contract** w/ steel, auto., other unionized industries seeing increase in wages/benefits; unions agreed to ignore other issues, limiting strikes
- Econ. success of 1950s → reunification of labor movement w/ AFL and CIO (**Congress of Industrial Organization**) merging to form **AFL-CIO**
 - Led by **George Meany**; some tensions w/ CIO correctly fearing dominance of AFL w/in merger and AFL fearing radical past of CIO
- Corruption accompanied econ. growth
 - **Teamsters Union** under congressional investigation due to misappropriation of funds under David Beck; successor, Jimmy Hoffa, eventually convicted of tax evasion
 - United Mine Workers under John Lewis faced many scandals; successor convicted of complicity in murder of rival
- Unorganized labor made little progress w/ union membership stable due to transition from blue-collar to white-collar, obstacles to organization like Taft-Hartley Act

During the 1950s, corporations grew further consolidated; concomitant to this was increased concessions to unions to prevent strikes from occurring. The merger of the AFL and the CIO further developed the labor union; however, corruption grew simultaneously. Furthermore, unorganized labor made relatively little progress with stable union membership.

The Explosion of Science and Technology

How did science and technology develop rapidly during the 1950s?

In the 1950s, several medical breakthroughs were made, with antibiotics like sulfa drugs and penicillin and vaccines for smallpox, typhoid fever, tetanus, and, most notably, polio (created by Jonas Salk). Pesticides greatly assisted agriculture, notably DDT. The electronic development industry skyrocketed after the creation of the transistor, ultimately allowing for the creation of an advanced computer capable of doing more than simple math. As part of the Cold War, weapons technology developed, too, with the first dropping of the H-Bomb encouraging long-range missile tests; furthermore, the space race against the USSR led to major strides in space travel, with NASA putting a person on the moon and developing the space shuttle.

What were the most significant medical breakthroughs?

- Medical science saw rapid development w/ antibacterial drugs to fight infections
- Antibiotics originated w/ **Louis Pasteur** in 1870s; revealed viruses could be defeated by regular bacteria
 - Using antibacterial devices to combat disease began in 1930s w/ **sulfa drugs** from **sulfanilamide** for streptococcal blood infections developed at rapid rate; treated major cause of death
- 1928: **Alexander Fleming** discovered properties penicillin; discovered to target bacterial disease at Oxford in 1941
 - U.S. labs developed penicillin for mass production; soon widely available to doctors/hospitals
 - New antibiotics developed → bacterial illnesses among most successfully treated
- Immunization w/ smallpox vaccine developed by **Edward Jenner**; typhoid vaccine by **Almorth Wright**; tetanus vaccine widespread during/before WWI
 - Viruses difficult to prevent → slow progress against vaccines; studies began only in 1930s w/ discovery that viruses could be grown in cultures
 - Gradually created virus unable to stimulate disease but capable of triggering antibodies
 - Yellow fever, influenza viruses appeared in first half of 20th century
 - Polio vaccine by **Jonas Salk** extremely effective
 - * Polio killed/crippled thousands of children/adults
 - * Became free to public after 1955; oral vaccine by Albert Sabin after 1960
- Death rate overall decreased, particularly among younger children

Antibacterial drugs became particularly effective in medical science, starting with sulfa drugs to combat blood infection; penicillin was another major, but slow-developing, breakthrough. Treating viral diseases through immunizations developed far more slowly; it started with the smallpox vaccine, but the polio vaccine was a major breakthrough, which was offered free to the public by the government and saved thousands of children and adults from death.

How did pesticides impact agriculture in the 1950s?

- Scientists developed **pesticides** to prevent crops from destruction by insects while protecting humans from crop-carrying disease
- 1939: Paul Muller discovered **DDT**, seemingly harmless to humans but killer to insects → sent to Africa during WWII to protect soldiers from malaria
 - Used on large scale during/following the war primarily to prevent typhus/malaria outbreaks
 - Only later realized to be toxic

Pesticides developed for targeting insects; among the most effective was DDT, developed shortly before WWII. It became critical to preventing malaria and typhus outbreaks; only later was it realized to be toxic.

How did electronic technology expand after the war?

- 1940s researchers created televisions on commercial level functional over large ranges; color television created in late 1950s
- 1948: Bell Labs created first **transistor** to amplify electrical signals; effective for small-scale. making smaller radios, TVs, weapons, satellites
- **Integrated circuits** used transistors, resistors, diodes, etc. all in one device; allowed for complex electronic devices

After the war, television technology developed rapidly, converting to color by the late 1950s. The transistor, released by Bell Labs in 1948, allowed devices to be miniaturized and integrated circuits to be created, paving the way for advanced devices like the computer.

What was the earliest computer technology to develop?

- Pre-1950s: computers for mathematical tasks like breaking military codes; first commercial functions in 1950s
- **UNIVAC** created for U.S. Bureau of the Census to store alphabetical/numerical info., processing this data more rapid than predecessor (**ENIAC**)
 - Developers, Remington Rand Company, used to predict election results in 1952 for publicity → many people learned about computer for first time
- UNIVAC had little marketing success, but **IBM** found wide market in mid-1950s; soon became leader

Computers first became used for commercial purposes in the 1950s. The first commercial computer, UNIVAC, was intended for census bureau data processing; however, it failed to gain significant commercial traction. IBM began to market computers more effectively, soon dominating the market.

How did weapons technology develop in the 1950s?

- 1952: U.S. detonated first **hydrogen bomb**, notable for using fusion explosions (far more effective)
- H-Bomb development pushed for rocket/missile technology for both U.S. and USSR; U.S. relied on emigrating German scientists
 - Early research by Air Force w/ some early successes in short-range missiles
 - More experiments in early 1950s: struggled w/ long range due to difficulty of finding stable fuel
 - 1958: solid fuel paired w/ guidance system → creation of **Minuteman** type of missiles, w/ several thousand miles of travel
 - Some development in underwater missiles w/ **Polaris** fired from underwater

After the U.S. dropped the first powerful hydrogen bomb, missile and bomb research expanded; the Air Force struggled to develop a long-range missile for several years. However, the creation of the Minuteman type of missile in 1958 using solid fuel was an effective long-range device.

What characterized the growth of the space program in the U.S.?

- Space program began after USSR revealed having launched **Sputnik**, satellite, into space in 1957
 - U.S. took as personal indication of failure → significant development of scientific education in school, research labs
 - By Jan. 1958, U.S. launched first satellite
- Creation of manned space program by new agency, **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** w/ selection of first astronauts
 - Alan Shepard first American launched into space in **Mercury Project**; unable to fully orbit the Earth and preceded by Soviet Yuri Gagarin
 - John Glenn first to orbit the Earth in 1962
 - **Apollo program** intended to send men to moon; several setbacks w/ many deaths, but **Neil Armstrong**, Buzz Aldrin, Michael Collins travelling in orbit around moon in 1969
 - * Armstrong/Aldrin sent off smaller capsule to land and walk on moon; missions followed until 1972 but government funding soon cut w/ ↓ public enthusiasm
- Goal no longer to reach distant planets; instead shifted to develop **space shuttle** for easily launching into space and arriving w/ similar ease to aircraft
 - First launched in 1982; Deadly explosion of *Challenger* put things on hold after 1986
 - Shuttle launched **Hubble Space Telescope**, deposited
- Space program impacted several other industries

After the USSR launched the first satellite into space in 1957, the space race began. The U.S. quickly launched their own satellite, then created NASA, culminating in the Apollo program, which made American Neil Armstrong the first person to set foot on the moon. After the moon landing, however, the goal shifted more toward developing a versatile space shuttle allowing for easy takeoff and landing; several successful launches have been made to this day.

People of Plenty

How did Americans become accustomed to a life of consumerism and wealth?

A growing consumer culture paired with road development allowed middle-class Americans to move further out to the suburbs in the 1950s; the suburbs focused primarily on the family while reinforcing traditional gender roles, but the amount of married women in the workplace in fact increased. Television developed significantly during this period; travel to national parks, too, stimulated the preservationist movement. Youth culture became increasingly rebellious, with "beats" criticizing the middle-class; rock 'n' roll became an extremely popular genre, led by Elvis Presley.

How did the middle class embrace a consumer culture?

- Middle class became increasingly centered around consumer goods like dishwashers, TVs, stereos due to increased prosperity, credit cards → purchasing power
- ↑ marketing of goods → several consumer crazes of goods
 - Late 1950s saw great popularity of hula hoop
 - Walt Disney's *The Mickey Mouse Club* immensely successful, sparking popularity of Disneyland

The middle class became increasingly centered on consumer culture based around crazes for several major goods due to an overall increase in purchasing power.

How did road development occur in the 1950s?

- Disneyland great indicator of popularity of automobile due to surrounding highways, large parking lot
- **Federal Highway Act of 1956**, by setting off \$25b for highway development, created links betw. every major city, reducing travel time and encouraging trucking
 - Railroad industry declined
- Economic activities moved more into rural/suburban regions due to cheap land → downtowns declined somewhat, w/ "edge cities"
- Families able to move into homes farther than work → enjoyed larger houses in suburbs w/ amenities like garages, pools, swing sets in suburban society
- Motels became popular, w/ **Holiday Inn** opening on highway betw. Memphis and Nashville and soon spreading, along with drive-in theaters

Road development was extremely rapid in the 1950s, with several highways created to link major cities. This pushed the railroad industry to decline and pushed economic and residential activities into the suburbs due to cheaper land. Motels, too, became very popular.

What was the overall impact of the growing suburban popularity?

- Suburbanization encouraged home-building, w/ **William Levitt**, most popular postwar suburban developer, using mass-production to create NY suburb
 - Created **Levittown** w/ many two-bedroom identical houses selling for very cheap prices; young couples purchased, often w/ help of GI Bill
- Suburban growth largely due to greater emphasis on family w/ birth rate increasing; friendships easier to form in suburbs, especially for mothers to meet other nonworking mothers; most suburbs primarily white
- Suburbs never uniform: some, like Levittown, for lower-middle class; others far more affluent

Suburbanization led to a growth in the real estate industry, particularly with the large Levittown, a New York suburb. The growth of suburbs was primarily due to a prioritization of families and making new friendships; several other whites flocked to the suburbs to escape racial tensions.

How did the suburbs change family structure?

- For men, suburbs → sharp division betw. work/personal; for women, suburbs → isolation from workplace w/ 1950s seeing increased prejudice against women working at paid jobs
- Benjamin Spock's *Baby and Child Care* offered child-centered approach to parenting, focusing on parenting as process of allowing child to learn/grow
 - Initially presented fathers as having very little influence
- ↑ consumer demand → many women needed to work to sustain lifestyle → number of married women outside the home increased despite pressure

The suburbs meant that women were increasingly pressured to remain at home and focus on child-rearing; however, consumer demand meant that many women had to find a sustainable job to ensure that the middle class lifestyle could be sustained.

How did television develop in the 1950s?

- Broadcast experiments in 1920s; commercial television by WWII w/ rapid growth: 40m sets by 1957
- Emerged as offshoot of radio industry w/ three major networks having started as radio companies
 - Industry driven by advertising w/ most content driven by needs of advertisers: shows often named after advertisers (like **Chrysler Playhouse**)
- Television had replaced newspapers, magazines, radios by late 1950s as most important spreader of information
 - Televised athletics → college/professional sports critical to entertainment in U.S.
 - Entertainment programs replaced movies/radio
- Programming created image of U.S. life as white, middle-class, suburban; reinforced gender roles emphasized the father as dominant in the household
 - Some portrayed urban working-class families; some were childless and explorative; some showed Afr. Americans
 - Stress on suburban lifestyle alienated lower classes unable to indulge in such pleasures

Television became widespread in the 1950s, with the programs driven by advertisements rapidly replacing newspapers, magazines, and radios. Sports as well as entertainment programs portraying white, middle-class, suburban life became the most popular programs.

How was travel a significant activity for Americans?

- Paid vacation began in 1920s; vacation travel common only in postwar years w/ highway system, new wealth → cars
- National parks saw greatest surge in hiking, camping, fishing, hunting; some simply sought to explore the wilderness
- Preservationist movement seen in **Echo Park**
 - Echo Park large valley betw. UT/CO; govt. decided to build dam in early 1950s
 - Environmental movement dormant after failure in Hetch Hetchy Valley dam; soon spoke up
 - **Bernard DeVoto**, champion of West, created sensational piece describing dam as ruining parks; Sierra Club returned w/ aggressive leader **David Brower**
 - * Succeeded: Congress cancelled dam plans in 1956

Travel to national parks became extremely common in the years after WWII. The American environmental movement resurged after the U.S. planned to build a dam at Echo Park; the Sierra Club returned and several writers spoke against the building of the dam, with Congress finally reverting.

What was the overall labor structure of the 1950s?

- White-collar workers outnumbered laborers in 1950s w/ many more in rigid corporate industries; industrial workers faced large bureaucracies
- Americans believed more skills required to work in large orgs. → educational philosophy changed
 - More focus on science, math, languages; universities expanded curriculum for specialized skills
- Social debate about bureaucratic life
 - William H. Whyte Jr. created book describing mentality of corporate lifestyle - self-reliance was to be replaced by cooperation
 - David Riesman stressed that man reliant on his own values was replaced by man seeking to be approved by community
- Novelists like Saul Bellow, and notably J.D. Salinger w/ *The Catcher in the Rye* believed in impersonality of society

In the 1950s, corporate workers began to outnumber laborers; as a result, the educational system shifted to focus more on science, math, and languages, while universities focused on specialized skills. Many writers lamented the loss of individuality and self-reliance being replaced by a mentality driven by community approval.

What was the state of youth culture in the 1950s?

- Critics of middle-class society were young poets/writers/authors known as **beats**; criticized conformity of U.S. life, useless politics
 - **Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac** were two notable **Beat Generation** authors
- Beats driven by restlessness motivated by prosperity w/ limitless opportunities
- Fear of **juvenile delinquency** w/ increased criminality of youth; though crime did not increase dramatically, significant fear reflected in works
- Ordinary middle-class society saw teen rebelliousness, obsession with fast cars, sex; popularity of moody teen James Dean

The "beats" were harsh critics of middle-class society; they were driven by constant restlessness. Although many feared increased youth crime, it did not increase significantly. This rebelliousness extended even into middle-class teens, with a focus on fast cars and teen sex.

How did rock 'n' roll grow as a music genre?

- Popularity of **rock 'n' roll** transformed U.S. society, driven by **Elvis Presley**
 - Presley symbolized goal to push borders of conventional w/ good looks, rebellious style, sexuality of music/performances → young Americans loved him
 - Drew from black rhythm/blues; began to appeal to white youth
 - Some roots in country music, gospel, jazz
- White audiences remained hesitant to accept black musicians; still ↑ popularity of bands and singers but never rivaling Presley
- Radio/television very significant for popularity of rock w/ radio stations beginning to play recorded music; radio announcers known as "disk jockeys" created programs for rock fans; some music showcased on TV
 - Encouraged sale of records, jukeboxes
 - Payments (known as **payola**) made to radio stations/TV programs to showcase unknown artists' songs

Rock 'n' roll, drawing heavily from black rhythm and blues, was popularized for white audiences by Elvis Presley. It was also encouraged by the radio and television industry, with DJs creating song mixes and encouraging the purchase of records and jukeboxes.