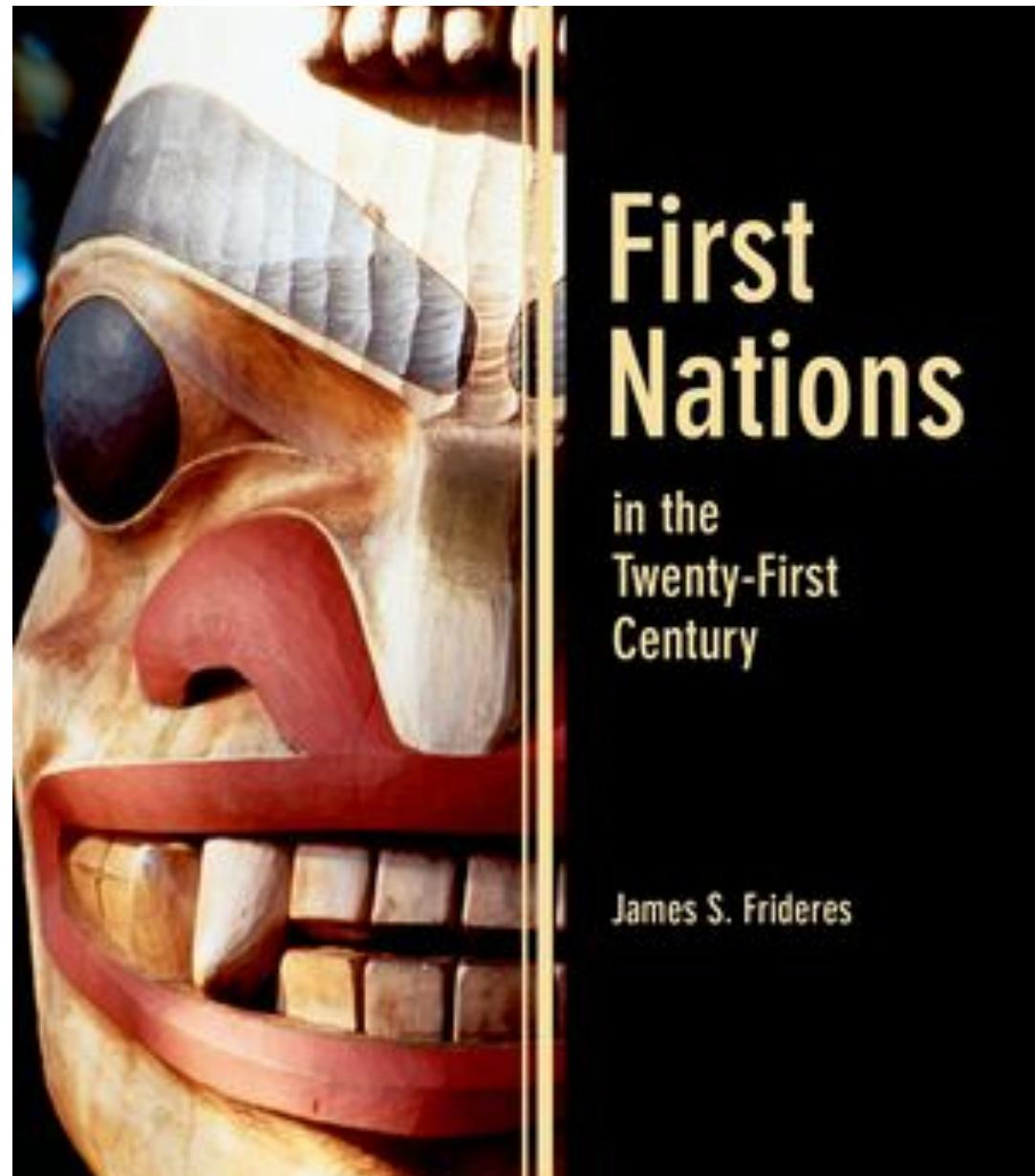


Race and ethnic relations, continued: First Nations People

- Today, we will complete last week's race and ethnic inequality lecture with a brief discussion of First Nations People
- We will follow this with the scheduled discussion of age inequality



A few salient facts about Aboriginal people in Canada

- Aboriginal people are spread with varying degrees of density over all of the Canadian provinces and territories.
- They fall into three main categories: First Nations, Métis, and Inuit.
- Within the First Nations and Inuit categories, they belong to scores of different bands – each band having its own governance, land, language, and traditions. These bands vary dramatically in size and wealth (or poverty).
- Additionally, about half the Aboriginal people live on tribal reserves while the rest live elsewhere, mainly in cities.
- So, given this variation, it is *nearly* impossible to generalize about Aboriginal people in Canada – hence, my hesitation.
- That said, a few generalizations will be ventured nonetheless.

A few generalizations



- First, all Aboriginal people descend from people who immigrated from Asia about 10,000 years ago
- Second, by the time that Europeans arrived in Canada in the 16th century, Aboriginal people had staked out their own lands
- Third, the colonization of British North America – later, Canada – involved the seizure or purchase of native lands, often on unfavorable terms

The Indian Act

- Fourth, the Indian Act, which formalized relations between the federal government and Aboriginal people, remains contentious today
- The Indian Act (1867) defines who is eligible for certain legal rights and benefits
- Bill C-31(1985) ended discriminatory provisions of the Indian Act and allowed bands to define their own membership rules.



Some benefits to Aboriginals



- Treaty annuity payments are paid annually to registered members of bands that have historic treaties with the Crown.
- Social programs provide income assistance, child benefits, assisted living, child and family services, and family violence prevention.
- Yet, these fail to meet present-day needs on many reserves.
- E.g., 60 per cent on reserves aged 20-24 have not completed high school or gained an equivalent diploma

Residential schools

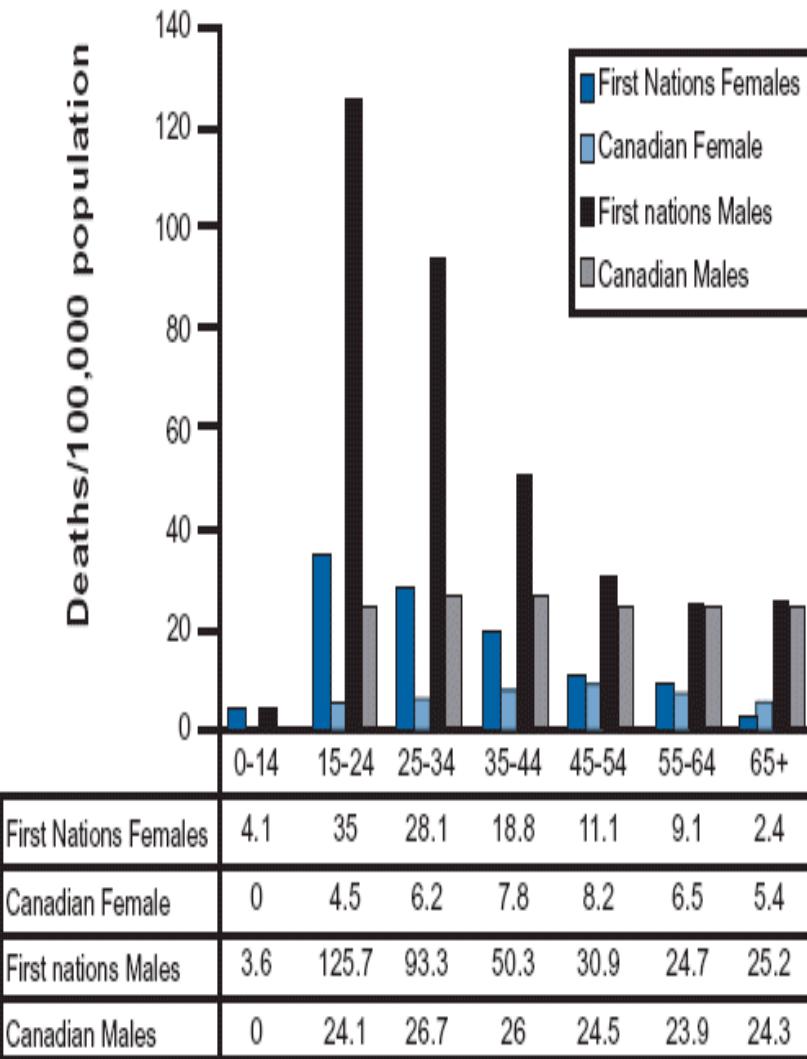
- Fifth, many Aboriginal children had to leave their families and communities to attend residential schools *circa*1870 to 1960.
- These schools, under federal authority, were intended to acculturate Aboriginal children to European, Christian standards.
- Many Aboriginal children were abused in these schools; some died from neglect and poor care.
- Aboriginal family life and culture was weakened by this forced acculturation



Thomas Moore before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan in 1874.

Library and Archives Canada / NL-022474

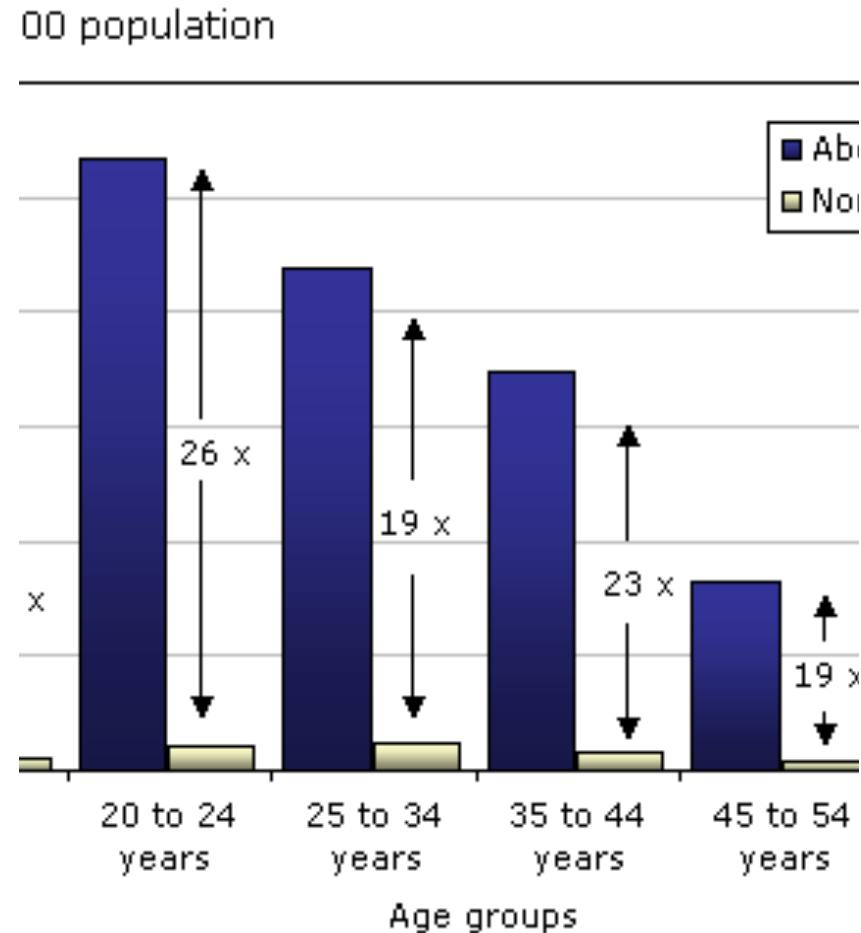
Social pathology resulted



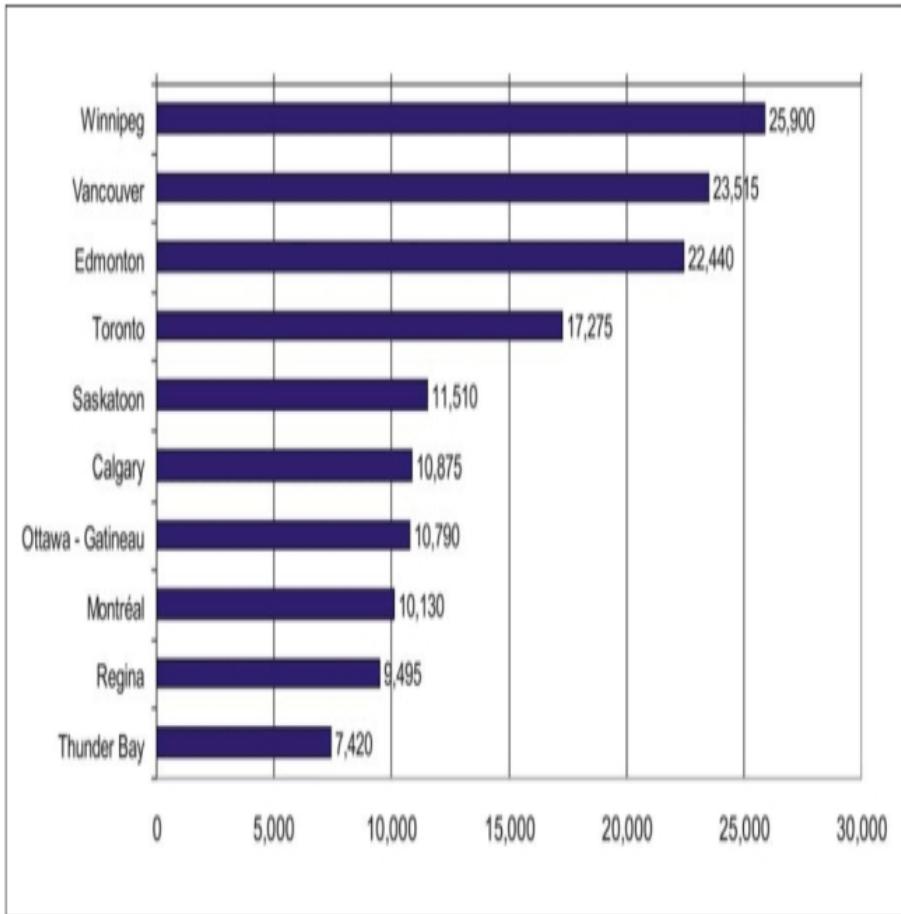
- Sixth, Aboriginal people – especially those on rural reserves -- are more likely than average to suffer from unemployment, poverty, low educational attainment, poor housing, and preventable infectious diseases.
- They are also more likely than other Canadians to be victimized by crime – including domestic violence; more likely to suffer from an addiction (including both alcohol and gambling); and more likely to commit suicide.

Legal penalties were harsh

- Especially in the Western provinces, Aboriginals are over-represented in jails and prisons, and in sex work.
- In some regions, Aboriginal people represent well above the majority of the prison population – 70% in Manitoba and 80% in Yukon.



The exodus from rural reserves



Note:

1. A census metropolitan area (CMA) has a total population of at least 100,000 of which 50,000 or more live in the urban core.

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Population, 2006.

- Seventh, for generations Aboriginal people have been moving off the reserves and intermarrying with non-Aboriginal people.
- Those who have moved to the major cities have assimilated economically and socially into the mainstream society, sometimes without any great difficulty.
- To varying degrees, they have retained their links with their native communities and traditions, while living away from the tribal homeland.

The Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study (UAPS)

- A survey of Aboriginal people living in Canada's largest 11 cities was commissioned by the federal government and managed by the Environics polling organization.
- In 2009, roughly 2600 interviews were conducted with First Nations peoples, Inuit, and Métis.
- More than 100 interviewers, almost all Aboriginal, talked in-person with these respondents.



What the study reports about Aboriginals



- “Urban Aboriginal peoples are forming stable and vibrant Aboriginal communities in Canadian cities.”
- However, almost all of them perceive that they are stereotyped negatively.
- *Most report that they have personally experienced negative behaviour or unfair treatment because of who they are.*

Believes there is unfair treatment



- Most urban Aboriginal peoples agree with the statement “**I think others behave in an unfair/negative way towards Aboriginal people.**”
- Nine in ten either strongly (42%) or somewhat (47%) agree with this statement, while only one in ten (9%) disagree.

Especially in the West

- This perception is especially strong among those in Saskatoon (51% strongly agree), and those aged 45 years and older (48% strongly agree).
- Women are also more likely than men to *strongly agree* that others behave in an unfair/negative way toward Aboriginal people (47% versus 37%),
- as are Elders (57%).



Strongly felt in Toronto



- This view is strongest among First Nations peoples (41% strongly agree, compared to 33% of Métis and Inuit).
- This view is also strongest among Aboriginal peoples in Toronto (51%), who are more likely than those in other cities to strongly agree.

Have been teased or insulted

- A large majority of urban Aboriginal peoples also say they have experienced unfair treatment because of who they are.
- When posed with the statement “**I have been teased or insulted because of my Aboriginal background,**” seven in ten strongly (37%) or somewhat (33%) agree.



Especially among middle-aged and older



- Those aged 18 to 24 are less likely than older individuals to agree they have been teased or insulted (58%, compared to 71% of those aged 25-44, and 75% of those 45 years and older)
- As are those who are employed full-time (67%) or part-time (63%).

What the Urban Non-Aborigines (NA) said

- A telephone survey was also conducted with roughly 2,500 non-Aboriginal urban Canadians living in these same cities.
 - men and women from all educational backgrounds, income levels and age groups
- Only a handful—especially in Northern Ontario and the West—expressed negative stereotypes of Aboriginal peoples
- However, the NA also agreed, almost unanimously, *that Aboriginal people are discriminated against in Canadian society today.*



Most people lack information about Aboriginals



- Without wishing to exclude them, NA urban Canadians are unsure where Aboriginal people fit into the Canadian mosaic.
- They are divided over whether Aboriginal people should hold special rights and privileges
- NA people, especially those born outside Canada, know little about the problems facing Aboriginals
- Many believe Aboriginal people have the same or better socio-economic opportunities as other Canadians.

Most Non-aboriginals want to learn more

- Almost half of NA Canadians have never read or heard anything about Indian residential schools, despite the federal government's official apology in June 2008
- “Different city histories, the size of local Aboriginal populations, and the location of urban Aboriginal organizations all shape NA urban Canadians’ awareness of Aboriginal communities in their cities.”
- This awareness influences their perception of Aboriginals’ needs and concerns



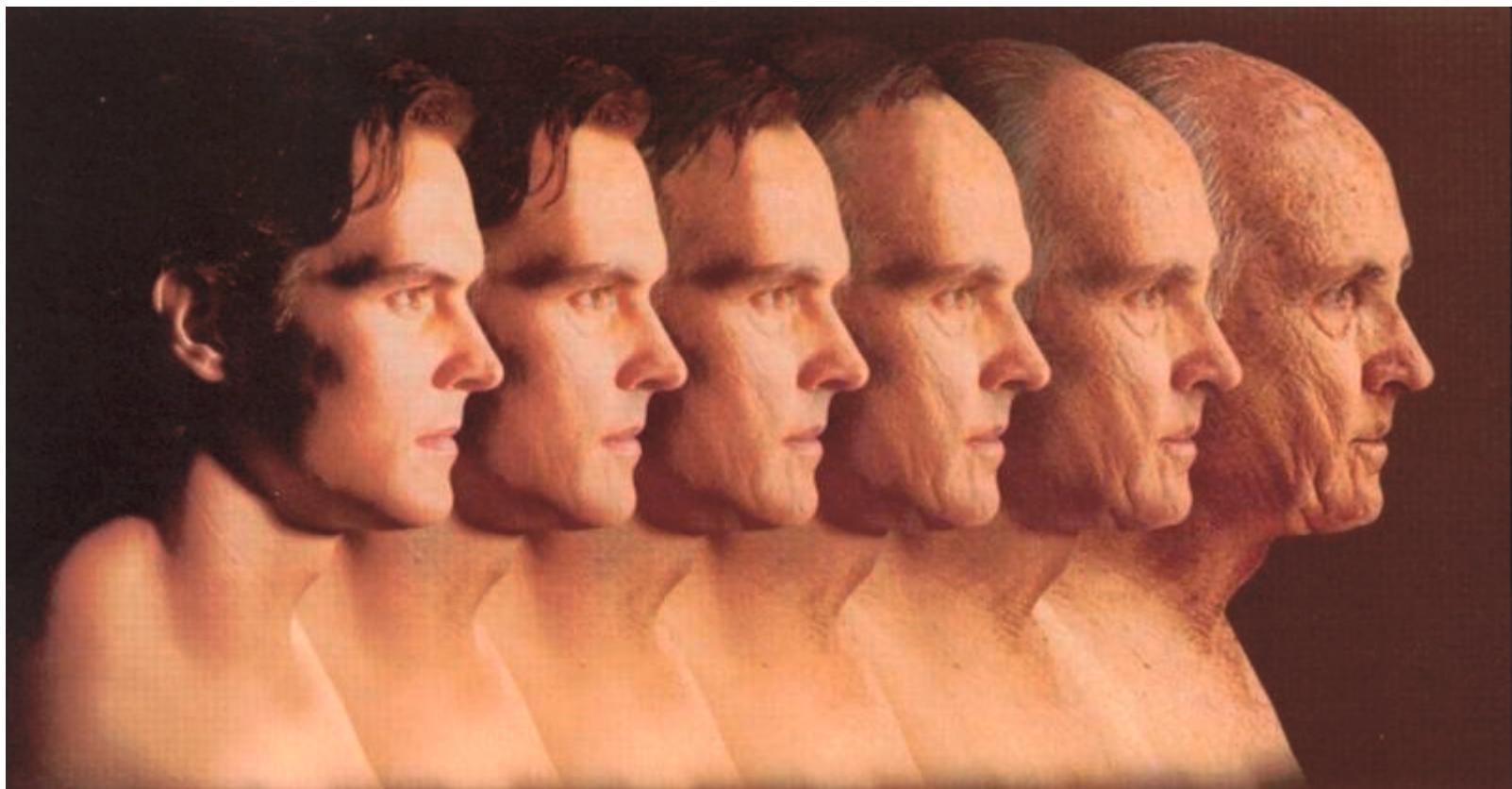
In conclusion....



- Prejudice and discrimination continue to be a problem for Aboriginal people
- Most NA Canadians express an interest in and sympathy for Aboriginal people, but lack knowledge about their problems
- They are (likely) even more ignorant about the problems facing Aboriginal people on distant, rural reserves.
- More public education on the problems of Aboriginal people is needed.

Lecture 5

Aging and Age Inequalities



How age inequality is different

- Unlike *racial* groups, which may have *permanent* distinguishing *physical* features
- Unlike *ethnic* groups, which may have *permanent* distinguishing *cultural* features
- Unlike *gender* groups, which may have *permanent* distinguishing *physiological* features
- Unlike classes, which may have relatively *permanent* distinguishing *economic* features...

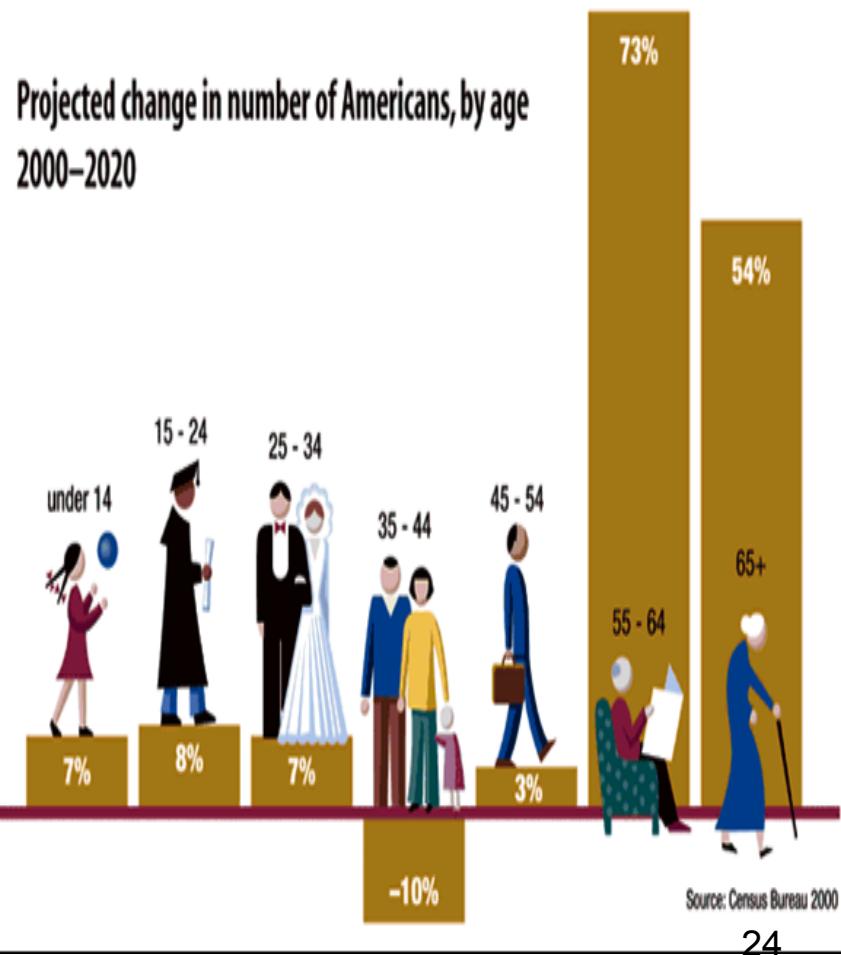
Age groups have *NO permanent* distinguishing features – everyone starts young and becomes old

Implications

- Therefore, age differentiation requires a lot of cultural socialization into:
 - myths about youth
 - myths about old age
- Self-awareness of age differences – age consciousness – will be hard to establish and maintain
 - Therefore, age-based strategies of resistance will be hard to establish and maintain

The underlying age norms

- Sociologists are concerned with age norms or, as they are sometimes called, age-sets.
 - All societies have age norms
- Age-sets define the social status, permitted roles, and activities of people belonging to them
- Transitions from one age-set to the next are often major social events
 - rites of passage mark the change of social status and role.

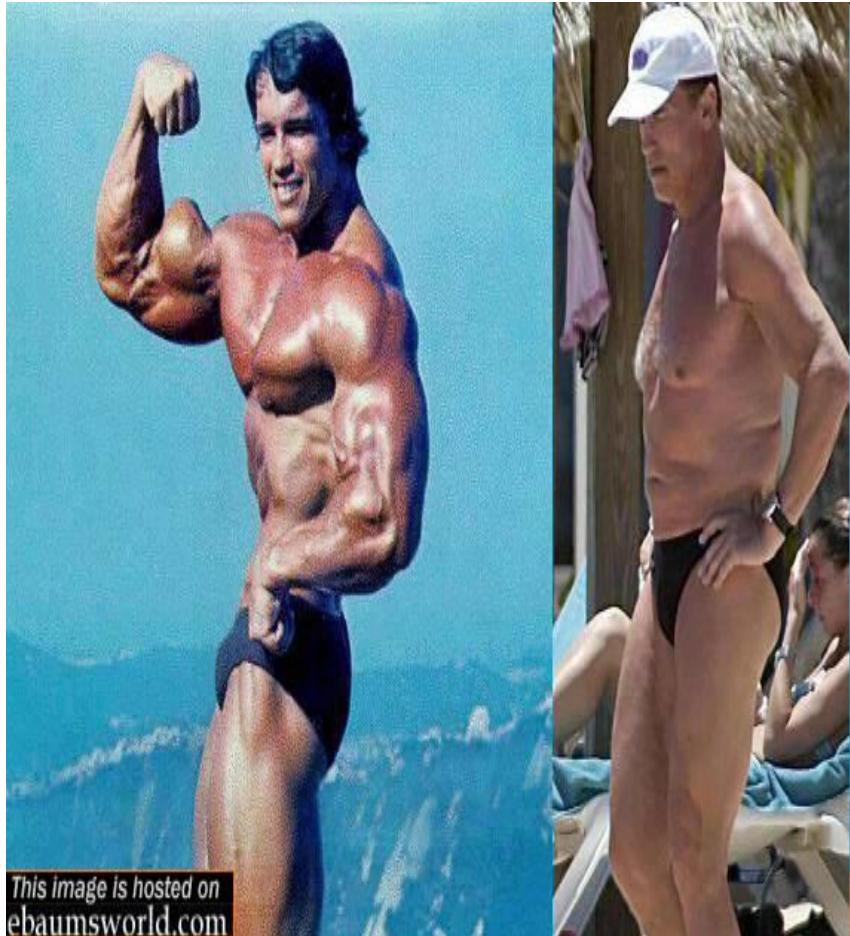


Age stratification



- *Age stratification* is a system of inequalities linked to age, often associated with age-sets
- Age stratification theory is also concerned with how societies experience aging
 - for example, how the economy is affected by population aging

Age is a social category



- Age is a cultural category, and its meaning varies historically and cross-culturally
- In particular, there are differences in whether aging and old age are viewed *positively or negatively*
- Social distance often exists between age groups, just as it does between ethnic and racial groups

This image is hosted on
ebaumsworld.com

Competing narratives in a conflict of generations

*For middle-aged people,
older age implies*

- Accomplishment
- Authority
- Blame for current problems
- Praise for current solutions
- Investment in the past
- Outdated-ness

*For middle-aged people,
younger age implies*

- Promise
- Absence of authority
- Innocence of current problems
- Disconnection from current solutions
- Investment in the future
- Untested-ness

How different it was when old people ruled society

- Consider the rural Irish community studied by Arensberg and Kimball
- 1-2 centuries ago, farm children were ruled by their parents, remaining ‘boys’ and ‘girls’ until marriage.
- In these communities, marriage was not a love match: it was largely a property transfer.
- Only the oldest son inherited property

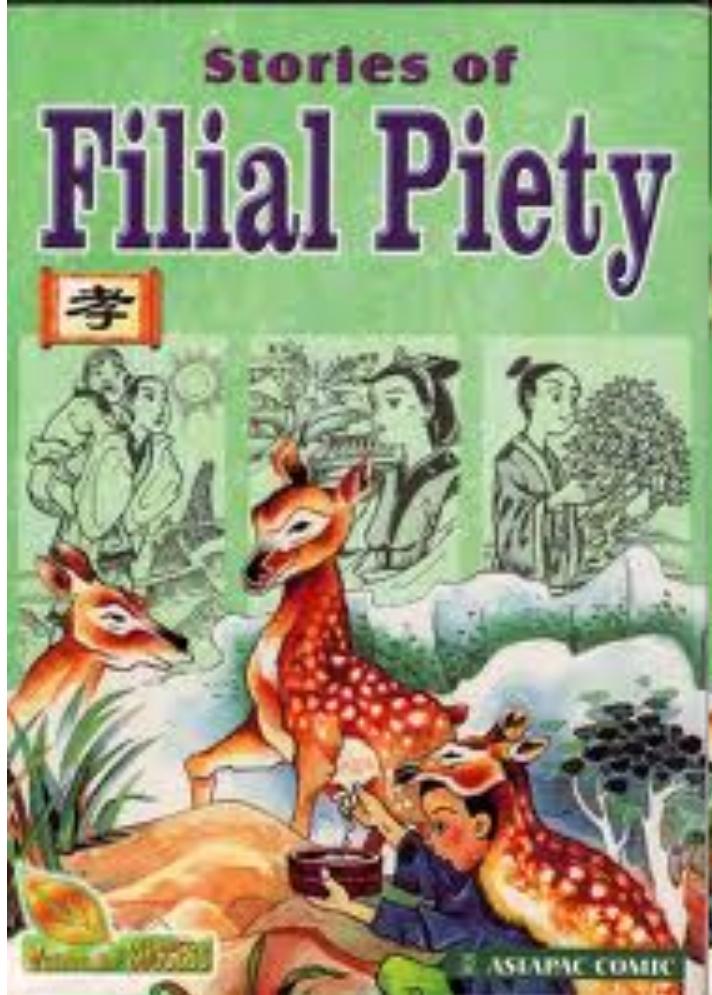


Many young people left



- No wonder millions of young people left Ireland in the 19th century
- About one-third had emigrated by the 1920s
- Emigration also enabled the traditional (elder-dominated) family structure to survive briefly into the twentieth century
- The old people ‘live long because they have much to live for. They have power.’

The Asian generational pattern was similar, until recently



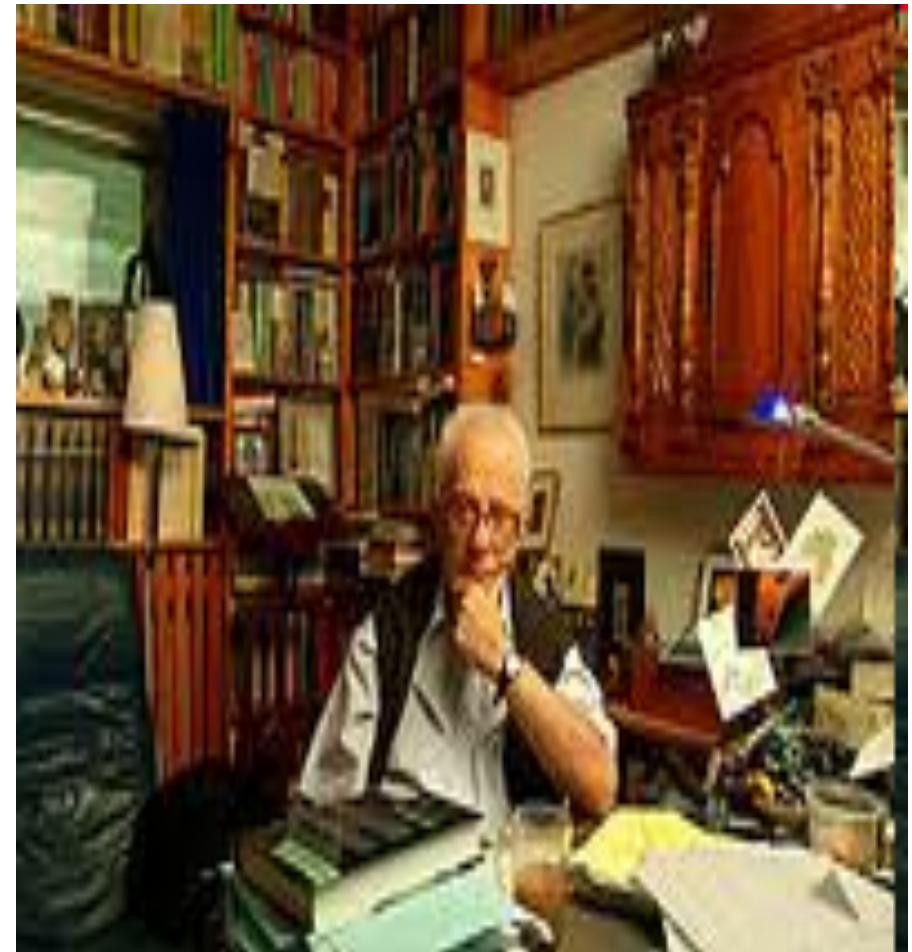
In Confucian thinking, the elders ruled society through filial piety in five key relationships:

- Ruled to ruler
- Son to father
- Wife to husband
- Younger brother to elder
- Friend to Friend

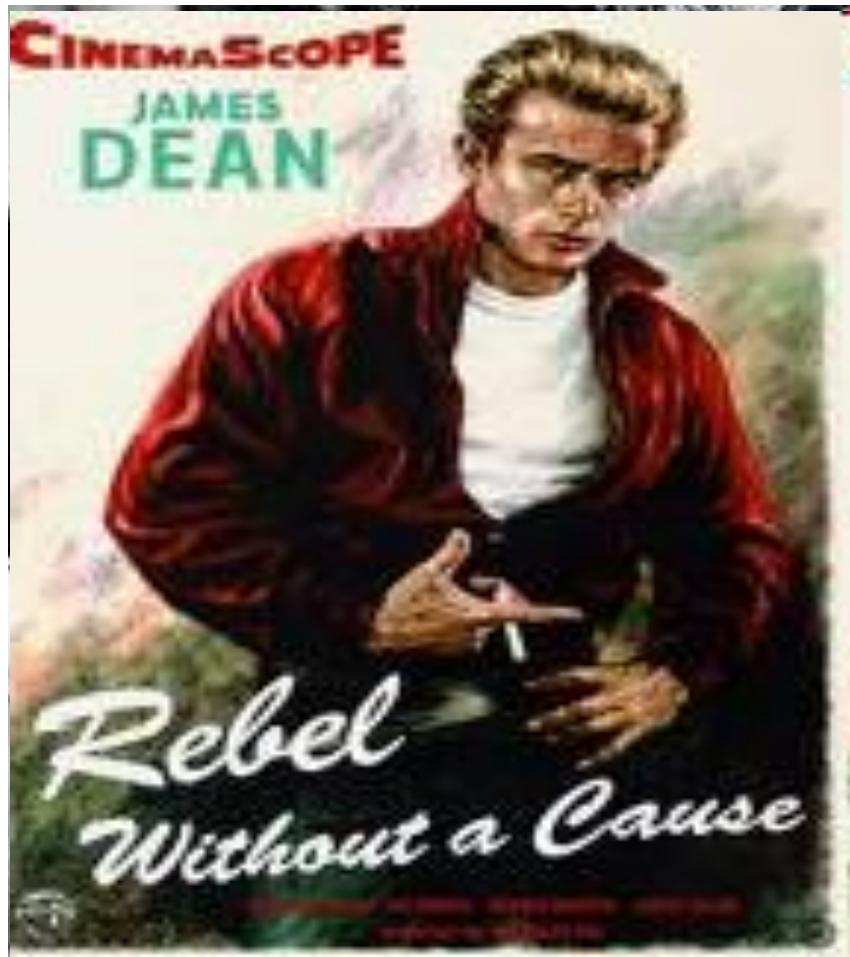
However, in China as in Ireland and Quebec (i.e., Hughes), this system of age inequality started to fall apart with industrialism

The breakdown of kinship control

- Industrialism always breaks down traditional kin-based institutions
- Youth groups arise in societies where the family (or kinship unit) no longer constitutes the main unit of society – e.g., no longer controls land or work (S N Eisenstadt)
- Then, the individual is forced to acquire important roles and skills outside the family
 - E.g., in peer groups



Youthful rebellion against the old



- Totalitarian societies try to control or channel youthful frustration into formal youth movements (e.g., China's Cultural Revolution)
- In liberal societies like Canada, rebellion is individualized – acted out by individuals, as individuals – often as risky behaviour

The flow of wealth shifts dramatically



- *In traditional societies*, children bear the costs of their parents directly, within families (e.g., through filial piety)
- In *modern societies*, older people assume the costs of their children directly, within families
 - The financial costs of children outweigh the benefits
 - So they produce fewer children!

The sociology of generations

- The social differentiation of people into distinct age categories leads to the formation of age-groupings
- Today, people are inclined to perceive and identify with age-related “generations”
- German sociologist Karl Mannheim was the first to make sociological theories about such generational groupings
 - “imagined communities” again



Generational experience shapes worldview

- Members of a younger generation reject the social norms of earlier generations
- For this reason, Mannheim views different generations as “sources of opposition
- Younger generations challenge existing societal norms and change society through “collective generational organization”



How generation shapes worldview



Can view Generation as....

- **A Location in Time**
 - Age-groups share the same relation to **major traumatic events** or catastrophes (e.g., World War 2)
- **A Resistance to Authority**
 - Age groups share an orientation or feel a kinship toward each other, based on a **common relationship to authority** figures in the older generation
- **An Instrument of Change**
 - Age groups sometimes act as **agents of social change** and foster alternatives to the status quo

Glen Elder's life course approach

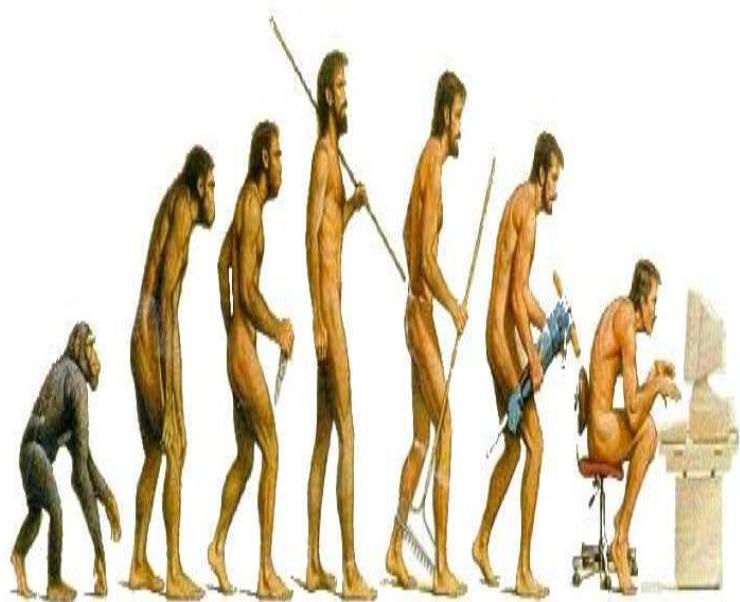
- It is a small step to the so-called “life course approach” developed by sociologist Glen Elder
- This approach compares different generations over the *life course*
- The *life course* is a patterned sequence of individual experiences over time, subject to **varied** social, historical, and cultural influences



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The Wheel of Life by Gustav Vigeland

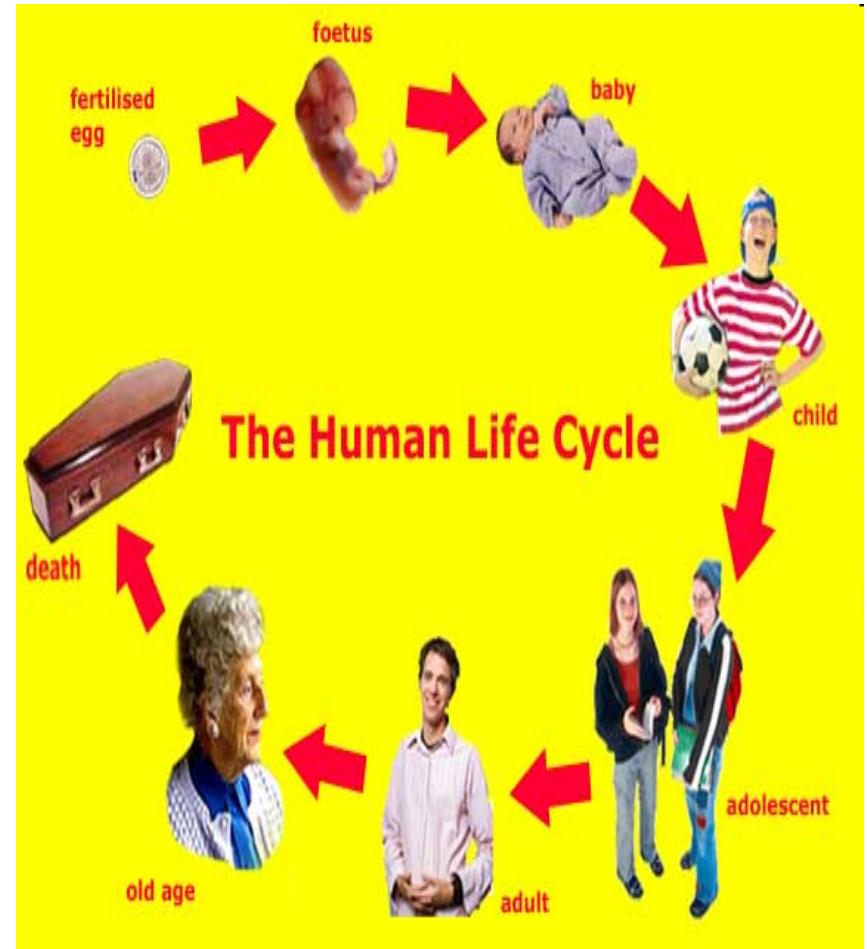
Five assumptions underlying the life course approach



1. ‘human development and aging are lifelong processes’
 - At each stage, certain concerns become supreme and others become trivial
 - To interpret the actions of people at a given age, we must know what they have experience already i.e., their developmental pathway

Sequences and stages

2. The causes and consequences of life transitions vary according to their timing in a person's life
 - i.e., It makes a difference at what age you make a key life transition —whether you divorce at 25 or at 55, for example, or graduate from college at 20 or at 40
3. 'Lives are lived interdependently and socio-historical influences are expressed through this network of shared relationships'
 - i.e., our lives are shaped by the lives of significant friends and relatives



People live in historical time



- 4. ‘The life course of individuals is embedded in and shaped by the historical times and places they experience over their lifetime’
- 5. ‘Individuals construct their own life courses through the choices and actions they take within the opportunities of history and social circumstances’
 - In other words, social forces set the context within which we exercise choice in our lives.

e.g., growing up in the Depression

- To illustrate these ideas, Elder studied a sample of children who had lived in California during the Great Depression (1930s)
- The results are described in Elder's book, *Children of the Great Depression* (1974)
- “Deprived” children lived in families that had lost at least 35 percent of their income between 1929 and 1933
 - Their sudden financial loss altered family relationships



Children became more important



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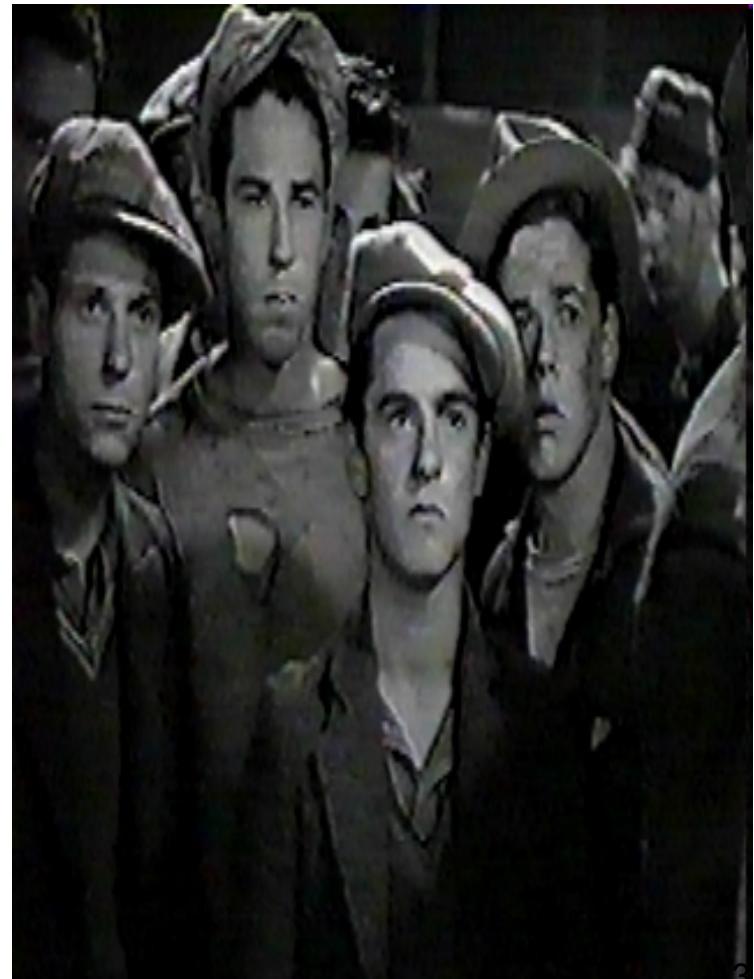


- To compensate, many teenage sons had to work for pay
- This gave them more independence and a sense of importance.
- It also gave them the opportunity to mingle with adults and form extended social networks
- Daughters took over some of the household chores

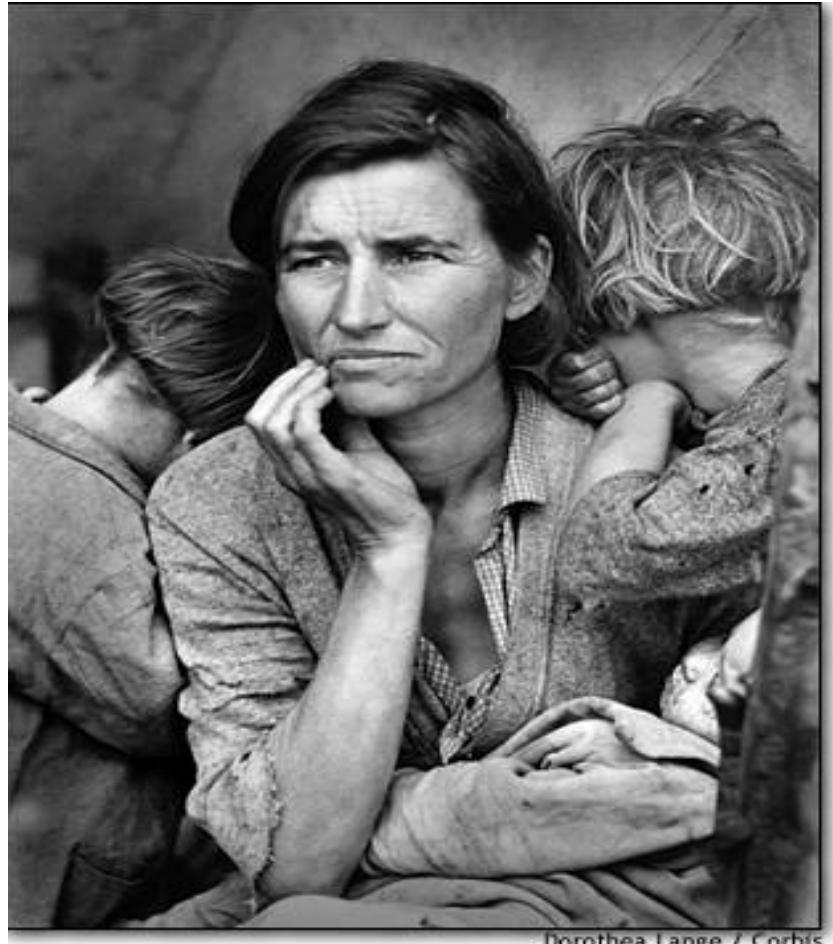
How this affected self-concept

Their shortened childhood and earlier entry into adulthood
produced few negative results

- Deprived boys often dropped out of high school to join the military, which appears to have had a positive effect on them
- Deprived girls' self-concepts were more negatively affected by deprivation
 - Maybe eliminated brief period of independence



Adversity speeded maturation



- This shift in family power during the Depression helped to bring about a more egalitarian family in America
- Many teenage sons had to work for pay, and as a result they gained more independence
- Paradoxically, the deprived children matured sooner than non-deprived children
- This “depression generation” came to see family relations as a valuable resource and children as a worthwhile investment

Today, the children Elder studied are 85+

Likely, they experience powerlessness and *social exclusion*

- *Exclusion* may refer to social problems associated with unemployment, low income, poor housing, deficient health, or social isolation

There are three distinct ideas of exclusion.

- 1. The first defines social exclusion as a *barrier* to exercising social rights



Marginalization



- 2. A second approach defines social exclusion as a state of *isolation* from the wider society
- 3. A third approach defines social exclusion as a lack of access to important positions of economic, religious, or political power

Old people today: more numerous, longer-lived, and less valued



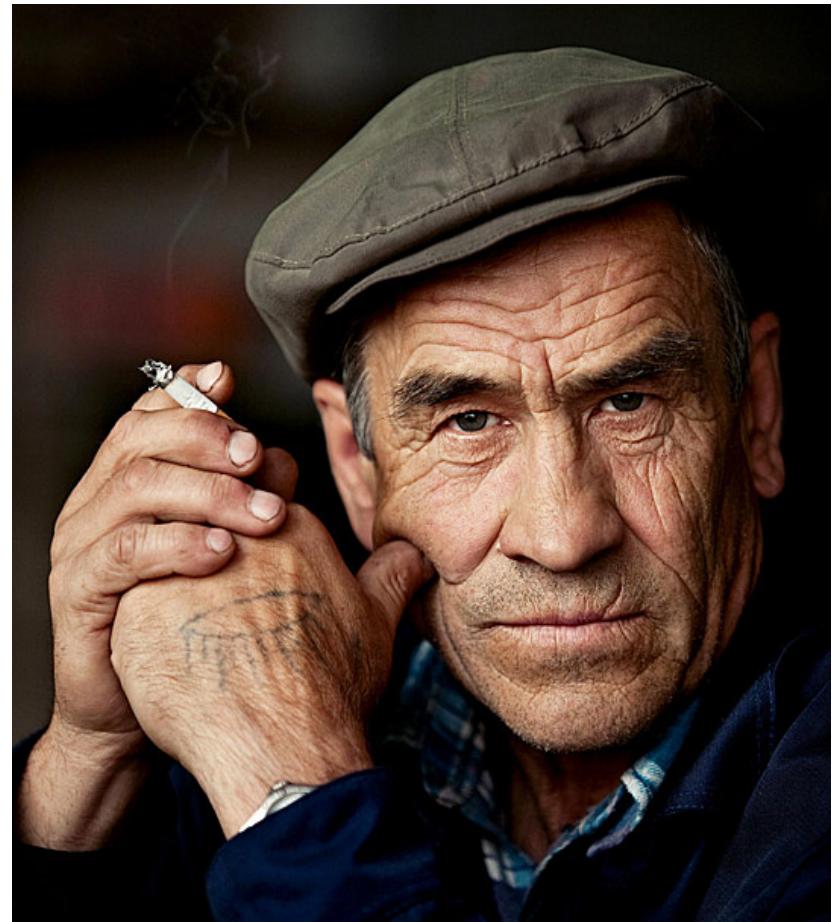
- In developed countries like Canada, the number of people over 60 has already surpassed the number under 15 years old

YET

- As old people have become more numerous in a society, they have lost the power to influence society

Age groups as imagined communities

- People of different ages, like people of different ethnic groups, “live” in different social worlds
- Because of this, people maintain prejudices about others of different ages
 - Such prejudices can lead to discrimination
- Consider the beliefs we hold about old people.



The invention of old age

- The invention of the idea of “old age” is fairly recent
- It arose with the invention of paid retirement in Germany in the 1880s
 - Bismarck defined old age as anything over 65
- Paradoxically, the invention of “retirement” led to the idea of old age
 - not the other way around



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Why old people actually “retire”



Retirement is functionally necessary for society:

- It empties important social positions, allowing people from the next generation to move up the social hierarchy
- It ensures that society regularly replaces “outdated skills and ideas” with more useful ones

How related to power structure

- However, forced retirement without competence testing is age-based discrimination
- It is a form of inequality exercised by the younger generation to further its own interests
- Elderly people who enjoy their work rarely withdraw from it voluntarily
 - Especially true in the professions

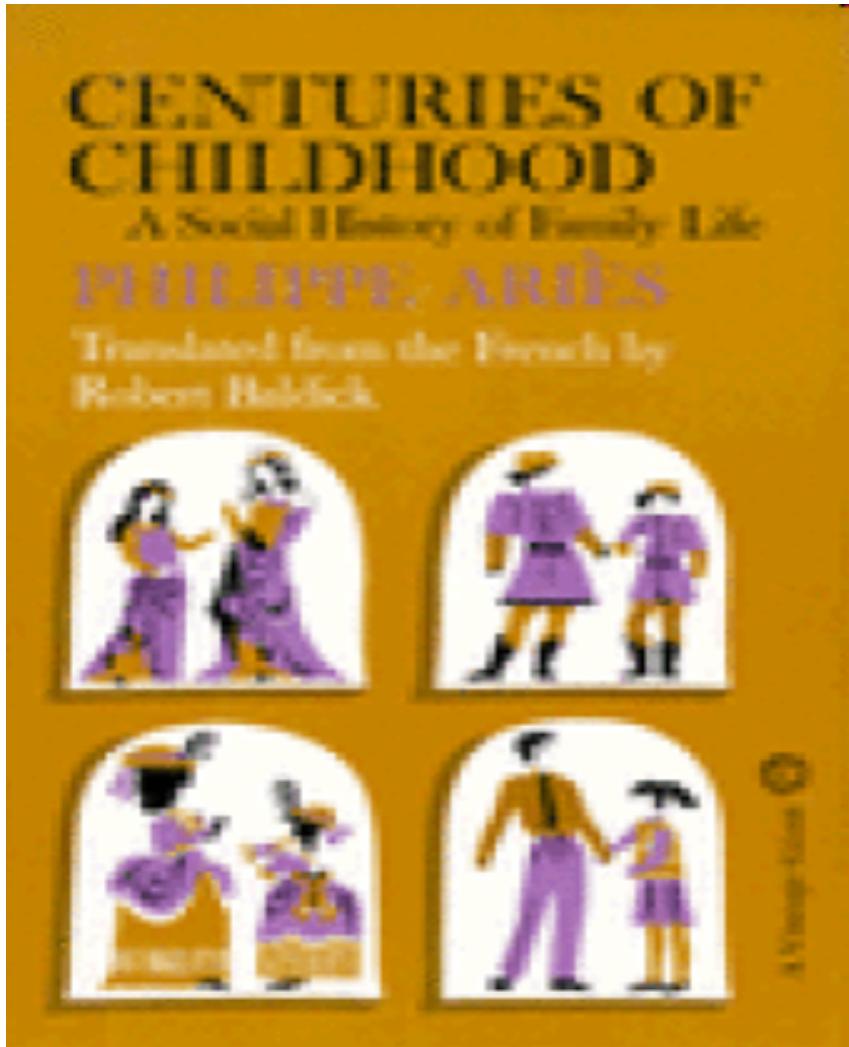


Exclusion and Age-ism



- Elderly people are no more willing to take a backseat than are poor people, women, or racial minorities.
- A competition between age groups, old against young, results in exclusion
- Often, social assumptions about ageing reflect *ageism*, a form of prejudice and discrimination directed against *any* age group

Childhood also changes over time



- Childhood didn't always exist as we understand it today
- Historian Philippe Ariès' book *Centuries of Childhood* is one of the most influential works in the sociological study of childhood
- It shows how and why modern notions of childhood arose in the West

Why childhood was invented

- In the Middle Ages, children whose families could not afford to pay for schooling supported themselves by working as apprentices to adults
- Even in the upper classes, very few European children were educated at schools before the 16th century
- Thus, “childhood” was almost nonexistent before industrial times



Schooling “demanded” childhood



- The industrialization of work had profound effects on schooling
 - and the change in schooling had a profound effect on childhood
- People came to view children as different kinds of beings, with pre-adult developmental needs to satisfy before they could enter adult life
- Since the industrial revolution, formal education (and childhood) has continued to lengthen

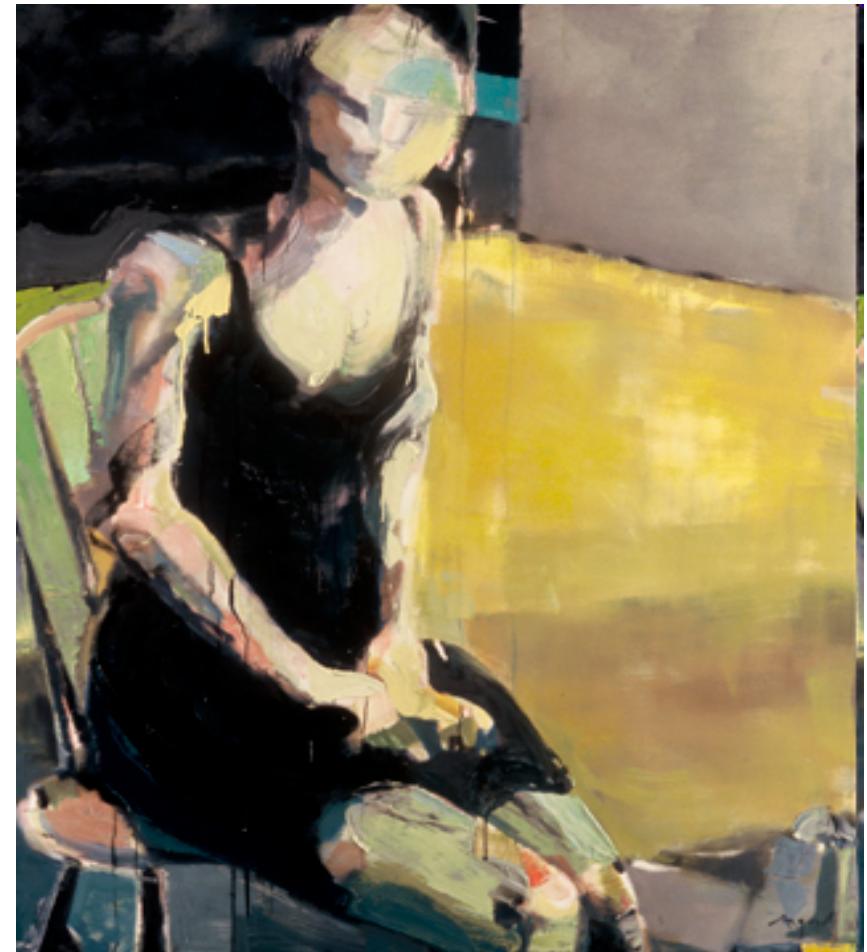
The Invention of Adolescence

- Like “childhood,” the idea of “adolescence” was socially invented (in the late 19th century)
- Adolescence was thought to bring a greater emotional volatility than we normally see in young children
- The acceptance of adolescence as an idea permitted young people to perform, magnify, and dramatize assumptions about adolescence



Young people as performers of risk-taking

- The single most characteristic feature of young people in our society is their willingness to take risks
- Teenage risk-taking is commonplace and ordinary – perhaps even normative
- Perpetrators and victims of risky behaviour are often the same people



Young people as performers of rule-breaking



- As sociologist David Matza (1964) wrote in *Delinquency and Drift*, many young people even ‘drift’ into delinquency without a strong motivation to do harm
 - armed with little more than ‘techniques of neutralization’ .
- The drift in and out of delinquency can be very consequential, however⁵⁸

Young people as performers of alienation and distancing

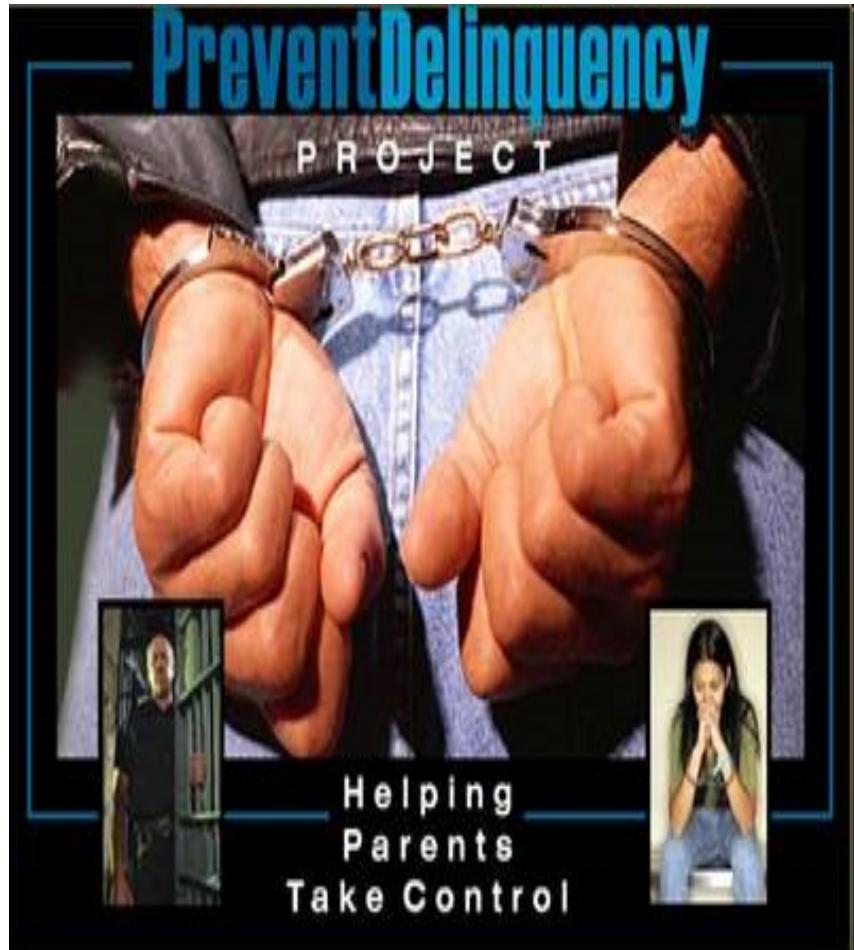
- Young people are also likely to distance themselves from adult life
- There is no long-term cost associated with such behaviour
- They have no emotional or cultural investment in the status quo
- They imagine that only they can see “reality”



IRONY

Just when you thought it could never happen

Youth has a downside too



- Young people often bring dauntless courage to risk-taking
 - see themselves as invincible and indestructible
- Yet, many youth also suffer from low self-esteem, stress, and depression
 - Are isolated from both peers and the adult world

How people become conformists

- According to Travis Hirschi, four social bonds promote conformity:
 - Attachment to others
 - Commitment to goals
 - Involvement in activities
 - Belief in social values
- People with a spouse and/or child, a paying job, and a mortgage usually stop being distant
 - i.e., responsibility is the key



Youthfulness and dependency



- However, increased high rates of youth unemployment and demands for longer education increase youthful dependency
- This delays “growing up” – hence, prolonged risk-taking, distancing, and emotional volatility
- Are 15-30 year olds today the opposite of 15-30 year olds in the Depression generation: i.e., dependent and without importance for family or social functioning?
- If so, then.....