

# BEHAVIOR

## Adolescence is benign (now they tell us)

That turbulent journey from teenager to adult—during which many of us thought (or were led to believe) we developed our adult outlooks, self-concept and attitudes—may actually not be that critical, according to an eight-year study by University of Michigan social scientists.

An investigation of more than 2,000 youths across the nation indicates that a person's outlook on life and personal insights by his (the study examined males) early 20s are largely formed by the start of the 10th grade—well before college and job experience. Moreover, the study suggests that the apparent turmoil of adolescence and post-high school years does little to alter such values.

Researchers at the university's Institute for Social Research examined the young men at five points between 1966 and 1974, from 10th grade until 5 years beyond high school. "Neither the amount nor quality of education showed the powerful socializing effects that were expected. Nor did education always have expected job payoffs," the researchers write in their report.

Among the other findings of the study were: Illegal drug use was reduced among married persons and increased among unemployed ones; self-esteem tended to rise from age 16 to 23, "perhaps reflecting increased maturity"; those with higher education were less likely to be smokers or drinkers; racial attitudes of white men became more positive between 1969 and 1974.

But the major finding dealt with the surprisingly small effect of adolescence as a whole. "Contrary to what might have been expected by those who view adolescence as a period of great turbulence and stress," say the scientists, "we have found a good deal of consistency along dimensions of attitudes, aspirations and self-concept."

## TV violence down, studies up

Almost as prevalent as television violence, it seems, are studies of TV violence. In its ninth and latest annual "violence profile," the University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg School of Communication reports that violence on 1977 television "plunged" close to the record low observed in 1973.

Before the public starts thinking we've turned the corner on television violence, however, the researchers note that more than three-fourths of aired programs still contain "some violence." Still, that is down from 80 to 90 percent over the past two years. And the rate of violent episodes per hour dropped from a record high of 9.5 in 1976 to 6.7 in 1977.

And to put matters in further perspective, the investigators report that "new data indicate that people are acting on the feelings of danger and mistrust that years of violent programming may have cultivated: Heavy viewers of police and crime shows, for example, were more likely than light viewers to report buying locks, dogs and guns to protect themselves."

## Watching Yugoslavs with a friend

And speaking of TV, who will ever forget the 1976 Olympic basketball championship between the United States and Yugoslavia? Remember how much fun it was to watch? Just to refresh our memories, Barry S. Sapolsky and Dolf Zillmann report on their study of 50 male and 33 female University of Indiana students who watched the game. It doesn't make any difference whether you watched the game alone, with a friend or two, or in a large group, they say. You enjoyed the U.S. baskets equally in any of those situations. However, if you were viewing within a small group of friends, chances are you didn't appreciate the Yugoslavian baskets as much as did your single or large group counterparts. This had something to do with being afraid to cheer for the Yugoslavs in front of friends, say the researchers in the February PERCEPTUAL AND MOTOR SKILLS. Finally: "The analysis yielded no sex differences in enjoyment of the baskets scored..."

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