

# behavioral sciences

## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY

### Crime causes fear

One in every five Germans is occasionally stricken by excessive and unfounded fear, according to a recent survey undertaken by the German Allensbacher Institute for Demoscopy.

Most of those subject to fear blame it on the rise of crime and the publicity on crime. The survey also revealed that crime is a much more frequently discussed subject among Germans than other social or political problems.

Darkness and cities caused the highest percentage of fear. Most Germans questioned conceded they were only comfortable on main, heavily trafficked and lighted streets in the city at night.

Nearly twice as many people feel fear at night than in the daytime. Thirty-seven percent of the women admitted they were frightened in the dark. Only 12 percent of the males asked conceded that they were afraid of darkness, but they did say that they occasionally experienced fear at night.

Divided into age groups, those over 60 are gripped by fear the most—about 50 percent of that group admitted being frightened. One-third of those 30 and under admitted fear, whereas very few of the middle-aged group conceded generalized fear.

According to the survey, social status had an influence on feelings of fear. The lower socioeconomic families had a higher degree of insecurity and general fear.

## EDUCATION

### Graduate school and the draft

Due to the draft, there has been a considerable reduction of male enrollment for the first two years of graduate school for chemistry, physics and psychology.

Results of a survey conducted by the Scientific Manpower Commission show that in the three fields 15.4 percent of all U.S. males enrolled for their first year, and 11.8 percent in their second year had entered or been ordered to enter the service prior to June 1969.

Responding to the survey, many schools indicated other reasons related to the draft which also contribute to the lowered enrollment.

There are students who drop out to seek employment to qualify for occupational deferment, those who changed from full-time graduate student status to full-time teaching status and students who expected induction notices during this summer.

## POPULATION

### Peak year for marriages

The total number of new American families in 1968, 2.1 million, was surpassed only in 1946, the year after World War II ended, the Population Reference Bureau of Washington, D.C., reports. The number of marriages in 1967 came to 200,000 fewer.

There is a record high 50 million families, almost 5 million more than were recorded in the 1960 census. During the last decade the number of U.S. families has grown at a faster rate than the population.

According to the bureau, the marriage boom is due to the babies of the postwar marriages who have now come of age themselves.

The marriage rate (number of marriages per 1,000 persons) has also risen. The rate had held steady in the late 1950's and early 1960's at 8.5; it began to rise in 1963 and reached 10.3 in 1968. The increase is attributed both to the baby boom and the tendency of more Americans of a given age group to marry.

Despite data indicating that about 1.2 million Americans were divorced in 1968, the bureau maintains that the boom in marriages reflects the stability of the American family.

## SOCIAL WELFARE

### Navajo project successful

A project to provide better welfare services to Navajo Indians has worked successfully, thanks to the fact that the caseworkers involved spoke the Navajo language as their native tongue, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare reports.

Started in July 1966 by the Arizona State Department of Public Welfare, this three-year demonstration program has tried to provide the residents of the reservation with services that included transportation to clinics and hospitals, helping the residents to explore housing possibilities and getting in touch with schools on behalf of the children.

As a result of the three-year project, free school lunches were obtained, better housing secured for some families, adult education classes were organized, several adults were helped to find employment and the interest of Navajo women in their native arts and crafts is being revived.

## PSYCHIATRY

### Predicting college suicides

The suicidal tendencies of the college student can be recognized, predicted and prevented, a Massachusetts researcher reports.

College students are the highest potential suicide risk group; in 1966, 100,000 students threatened suicide and of these one in 10 succeeded, Dr. Mathew Ross reports in the August *AMERICAN JOURNAL OF PSYCHIATRY*.

After reviewing the American and English literature on the subject, Dr. Ross suggests clues to recognition of suicidal tendencies and possible treatment.

A change in behavior, usually seen as withdrawal, is a good indicator of severe depression. This may even manifest itself in overactivity or a false sense of well-being. Greatly increased activity constitutes a denial of depressing personal problems, says Dr. Ross.

A change in mood, usually to apathy or loss of zest for life, and change in academic performance are also signs of a depressed state heading toward suicide.

Hospitalization is often the best preventive solution; sometimes simple restriction and watching is needed. This would include psychotherapy with or without drug therapy.

Group participation activities may be a very valuable aid in preventing suicide in this age group, says Dr. Ross.

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