

SELECTED PERSONAL AND SOCIAL VALUES:

AN INTERGENERATIONAL

COMPARISON

By

SUSAN DIANE SEWELL

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Thesis Approved:

Frances Stromberg

Thesis Adviser

Rich Stinnett

D. Robert H. Jarber

Norman N. Dushon

Dean of the Graduate College

968385

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Is there a generation gap, and, if so, where does this gap exist? As represented in our society the "generation gap" refers to the alleged differences between today's older and younger generations in attitudes held toward various contemporary issues. The term "generation gap" can also be used to describe a variety of phenomena ranging from a clash of values to a lack of communication between adults and youth.

The author feels that there is a definite gap concerning certain personal and social values between the older generation and the younger people of today. Some feelings and values will, however, remain similar for both groups as a result of living and growing in the same community. This is especially true in a rural community where people of all ages are exposed to basically the same ideas. In a rural area, it is common for generations of families to reside in the same area for many years. When this occurs people seem to be unaware of many of the happenings and changes which exist in a metropolitan area.

When young people leave a small community and become exposed to a different environment, such as college, it is very probable that they will acquire new values. College life offers varied ideas and viewpoints for the young adult. Thereby, each individual will have to decide for himself whether to accept or reject any new ideas and/or

viewpoints. He may alter his ideas and some of his values as a result of several influences.

For instance, if a person is away from parental contact he will have to make decisions on his own and accept responsibility for his own actions. No longer will the individual be able to rely on the security and sanction of his home environment.

The "generation gap" is the result of the younger generation maintaining a consistent and interrelated set of values that differ from the consistent, interrelated values of the parent generation (Meisels and Canter, 1972). The author feels that the idea of a generation gap is apparent in regard to the situation of young adults leaving the small community. For example, when two people the same age grow up in a similar area, and one leaves and the other remains, there is a good possibility that a "gap" will develop in this situation. It seems obvious that the environment and location would play a significant part in the development of one's values and ideas and might contribute to the developing of differences in opinion which are not related to age.

#### Need for Research

In order that the generation gap can be better understood, it is important that the various age groups recognize and respect the differences in opinions and beliefs outside their immediate age group. If people are aware of and accept the diversity of values and value-related behavior, then they would be more receptive to another person's mode of behavior. If one is interested in studying potential sources of interpersonal conflict between younger and older people, then it is

important to expect and try to understand value differences between generations.

Despite the fact that the "problem of generations" is one of the older issues in our society, Bengtson (1970) states that very few thorough studies have been conducted to clarify the nature and extent of continuity or differences between age groups today. Adelson (1970) also points out that the possible generation gap has not been appropriately studied.

The generation gap has had a tremendous impact on society since the "new morality" has not been accepted by the general public. Thereby, there is a particular need for research concerning the "generation gap" since some have considered that the new value system of the young is in the forefront of a new morality. If people of different generations are aware of the value differences among them, then they will more likely be able to understand and accept one another's point of view, as well as live together harmoniously.

An examination of the literature on intergenerational relationships between the older and the younger segments of the population indicates that very little research has been conducted in recent years. This lack is especially noticeable concerning the differences in attitudes and values expressed by young adults who have left the home environment and become a part of the college life.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the differences in selected personal and social values held by subjects in four age groups. An instrument, identified as the Liberality-Conservativeness Scale,



was developed by the investigator to obtain responses from the subjects. High school students, middle-aged persons, and elderly people from one rural community and a selected group of college students were surveyed in relation to their feelings and attitudes toward racial relations, sexual attitudes, women's roles in our society, drugs, and religious beliefs.

The following hypotheses were examined:

- I. There are no significant differences among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students concerning their total L-C scores.
- II. There are no significant differences among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons and college students concerning their sub-scores for each of the following sub-scales within the L-C Scale: (a) race, (b) sex, (c) women's role, (d) drugs, and (e) religion.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The term "generation gap" may be used to describe a variety of phenomena ranging from a clash of values to a lack of communication between adults and youth. Most of the literature examined showed evidence that there is a generation gap between adults and youth.

Duvall (1969) described the generation gap as a time in the family life cycle when it is especially difficult for young people, parents, and other adults to understand each other. Meisels and Canter (1972) also supported this theory of a generation gap by suggesting that the younger generation maintains a consistent and interrelated set of values that differ from the consistent interrelated values of the parent generation. This conclusion was drawn as a result of the attitudes shown by 225 college students when given an attitude questionnaire which reflected a variety of contemporary issues.

Harrison, Scriven, and Westerman (1974), investigating the differences in values of four age groups - younger than 19, 19 to 23 years, 24 to 32, 32 years and over - noted that all of the younger groups were significantly more liberal in their values than those groups older than 32 years. The results of this study also indicated that a definite difference does exist in values held by the four age groups. A generation gap was found to exist between those older than 32 years and those who are 32 and younger.

Payne, Summers, and Stewart (1973), in a study of values of three age groups (mean ages of 20, 48, and 72), provided evidence that there is conflict between today's youth and their parents, and that this conflict occurs frequently. The study suggested that differences in judgments also exist between the parent generation and the grandparent age group. Munns (1972) in a study which measured attitudes and values found that children tend to conform to parental values.

Research has also shown that possible differences may exist in values between college students and their parents and other adults. Cousins (1969) stated that the basic purpose of a university education is not solely to provide an encounter with "book" knowledge, but to enable the young to discover and pursue new questions, to develop a spirit of critical inquiry, and to test accepted propositions.

In opposition to Cousins' findings, Kennedy (1971) felt that whatever the college student's current life style, a significant part of the psychological life of the student stays in relation with and response to his parents. The student evaluates much of his behavior in terms of what he believes his parents will think of that behavior. Kennedy believes that the parent's attitude may not deter his action but will influence his feeling about that action. Kennedy also believes that a large part of the student's value system and the core of his life style is an updated version of his parent's viewpoint. For example, liberal students come from liberal homes.

Research has indicated that environment plays an important part in shaping ones values. Fengler and Wood (1972) found that students from small towns and rural areas tended to have values which were similar to the parent generation in a greater degree than were the students from

larger cities.

Konopka (1974) stated several goals for the American people to help close the generation gap:

1. Accept differences; see something positive in meeting and mingling of racial, national, religious, and cultural backgrounds; find diversity in life styles exciting, not threatening, as long as they do not harm anyone else.
2. Accept change (not fear it); but not seek change for change's sake.
3. Think through our own values and make moral decisions not on the of what we are told but on our having talked about and examined our values (p. 14).

#### Racial Relations

Allport (1961) identified the area of race relations as one of the primary areas of current intergenerational conflict. He believes that racial attitudes of younger people differ significantly from those of older generations. Intergenerational conflicts are an expression of these differences.

Edwards (1972) in an effort to gain a clearer perception of the issue of intergenerational conflict, analyzed the degree and direction of differences in racial attitudes of 206 black and 260 white parent-child pairs. The results indicated greater conformity than difference among both groups. It was shown that white children differed most from their parents in terms of attitudes toward blacks. It was also suggested that the generation gap is greater among whites.

Surveys reported in Newsweek in 1966 showed that an overwhelming majority (79%) of whites would have strong objections if a close friend or relative married a Negro. Eighty-eight percent of the parents were against their child dating a Negro. The results of a Gallup Poll in

1972 showed evidence that American society is becoming more tolerant in terms of expressed attitudes on interracial and interfaith marriages. It was reported that 44% of the 18- to 30-year-old group approved of marriage between blacks and whites, 28% of the 30- to 49- year-old group and 19% of the 50 years and over group.

High school students were interviewed in Petroni's (1972) study concerned with attitudes toward certain issues. It was found that racism seems to be universal and is characteristic of young and old across racial and ethnic lines. Students perceived themselves as more liberal on the question of racial integration than did adults.

#### Sexual Attitudes

Several researchers (Harrison, Bennett, and Globetti, 1969) suggested that a revolution in sexual behavior is occurring within American society. It is possible that these occurrences are actually an evolution which points to a change in the American standards and values regarding sex. Reiss (1960) believes that great increases in sexual behavior are not just violations of beliefs, but are overall signs of the new emerging sexual standards. Reiss also feels that sexual behavior has high potentialities for maintaining or disrupting the existing social organization.

It was hypothesized by Teevan (1972) that American adolescents change their reference groups from their parents to their peers as they grow older. This hypothesis is important when explaining behavior. It was found that there is a positive correlation between perceptions of the student's own sexual permissiveness and his peer's sexual permissiveness.

Several studies (Reiss, 1960; Bell and Chaskes, 1970; Christensen and Gregg, 1970) have indicated an increase in the "permissiveness without affection" standard among college students. This standard dictates that sex is legitimate anytime, with any person, and under any circumstances.

Norval and Alston (1967) provided data which support rural-urban differences in attitudes and behavior, but it was found that the stereotype of rural groups as conservative in attitudes toward premarital sex is a misconception. In an attempt to explore the nature of sex value conflict between parents and their unmarried late adolescent and young adult children, Bell (1966) investigated values held by parents and their unmarried children toward premarital sexual intimacy. Bell concluded that the conflict between parents and their adolescent-young adult children with regard to premarital sexual intimacy may decrease in the future. He feels that even though the conflict between generations may be reduced, it appears that the parents and children will continue to live with different value systems with regard to premarital sexual values.

Yankelovich (1970), in a study of young adults found wide divergence among youth on the question of premarital sex values. The non-college youth were found to have values more similar to the parent generation than the group of college youth. In studying 73 three-generation families, Fengler and Wood (1972) found that in the case of sexual norms and boundaries, the gap was wider between the parental and grandparental generations than between student and parental generations. Freeman (1972) in his investigation of college students and their parents found that the greatest discrepancy between students and their

parents occurs in attitudes toward sexual behavior. Among the subjects, 73.5% of the students found coitus acceptable for unmarried college age males and 68% for unmarried college age females. In contrast, only 18.5% of parents believed coitus is acceptable for unmarried college males and only 10% for unmarried college females.

A recent Gallup Poll (1973b) showed evidence of a generation gap as seen in the fact that only 29% of young persons, 18 to 29 years old, believe that premarital sex is wrong. Twenty-seven percent of the single persons surveyed think it is wrong for people to have sex relations before marriage while 51% of the married persons surveyed think it is wrong. It was also found that a large majority of people over the age of 30 continue to believe premarital sex is wrong.

The general public's attitude toward abortion appears to be moving in a liberal direction but the laws concerned with legal abortion remain basically conservative. In Maxwell's (1970) study which concerned college students' attitudes toward abortion, it was suggested that attitudes toward abortion are largely the result of environmental exposure and are subject to change in a changing environment. It was also found that city residents are more liberal than rural residents in regard to abortion beliefs. Mirande and Hanner (1974) found that attitudes toward abortion appear to reflect broader and more basic premarital sexual standards. The researchers believe that women become more tolerant of abortion as they become more sexually permissive and more involved in romantic relations.

More recent studies (Sarvis and Rodman, 1973) have shown much more favorable public attitude toward abortion. Blake (1971) reported the following findings concerning abortion:

1. In general non-Catholics would disapprove less than Catholics.
2. The most disapproval comes from respondents in the lowest educational brackets.
3. Women are generally more disapproving than men are.
4. Young men are consistently more in favor of elective abortion than older men.
5. Young women (under 30) consistently disapprove elective abortion more than older women (p. 548).

Cohabiting, or heterosexual unmarried "living together" appears to be a popular situation among young adult Americans, particularly college students. A study by Peterman, Ridley, and Anderson (1974) showed that parents generally were not informed of their children's "living together" and that there was no significant relationship between the size of the student's hometown and his tendency to cohabit.

Data reported by Henze and Hudson (1974) indicate that the major differences in personal characteristics of cohabiters and noncohabiters were church attendance, life style, and drug use. Cohabiters tended to be nonchurchgoers, they label themselves as liberals, and they are drug users. It is believed that cohabitation among college students will continue and increase as more students are exposed to the idea.

Very little research has been published about parental attitudes toward high school sex education. Previous research relating to sex education (Libby, 1970) appears to indicate that a majority of adults and/or parents approve of sex education in public school, although some approve with reservations. Gallup (1969a) found that 71% of adults surveyed would approve a course in sex education. It was also found that 55% of adults would approve of contraceptive education.



## Role of Women

Nelson and Goldman (1969) believe that sociologists, educators, governmental advisors, and psychologists generally look with favor upon the idea of women combining homemaking with a career. The authors, along with other social scientists, feel that women can be happy and self-accepting only if they become all which they are capable of being.

Ehrlich (1971) studied six texts and found that in sociology, woman as an object of study is largely ignored. She seems only to exist in the field of marriage and the family Ehrlich feels. This investigator feels that women's place in sociology is the traditional one assigned to her by the larger society.

Students in the women's college of a coeducational professionally-oriented university were studied longitudinally to assess types and amount of change in career aspirations over four years (Angrist, 1972). Results of this study showed that two characteristics of the respondents seem to emerge: (1) their notions of women's role are shifting and changeable, and (2) they seem flexible and pragmatic in aspirations for adult life. It was suggested that work will be a definite element in the lives of these educated women.

In an attempt to explore background experiences and beliefs that contribute to a person's support of or opposition to women's liberation, Travis (1973) surveyed 2284 men and women. It was found that 73% of the men surveyed approved of equality in housekeeping and childcare, but only 15% of the married men actually share such responsibilities. Most of the men approved of their wives working and most showed support for the Women's Liberation Movement.

Bruce (1974) believes that some of the things that have helped to

make a job or career more acceptable for women are "the passing of time", the appreciation of and dependence on the additional income, the increasing evidence that the rearing of children is not impeded by the mother's employment, the effect of wars and inflation, and the withdrawal of cultural support for childbearing that is accompanying awareness of the population issue. In 1920 in the United States, 20% of the work force was female, while today approximately 40% of the work force is made up of women (Bruce, 1974). During the last three decades the number of employed women in the launching years increased more than two and one-half times (Women's Bureau, 1969). On the basis of statistical probability, the majority of women will work at some time during their lives (Rohrlich and Vatter, 1973; United States Department of Labor, 1974).

#### Drug Attitudes

Kaplan (1970) states that the present debate over the safety of marijuana is important but that the facts concerning this should not obscure the question of whether or not it should be legalized. Kaplan reports that laws against marijuana have made criminals of approximately a third of the younger population and encouraged widespread disrespect for law enforcement. He feels that the laws have increased the popularity of the drug culture and made a joke of drug education.

Surveys (Gallup, 1969(b); Abelson, Cohen, Schroyer, 1972; Abelson, Cohen, Schroyer, and Rappaport, 1973) based on national and more limited school samples indicated that marijuana use begins in the early teens, reaches a peak in the years 18 to 25 years, declines rapidly through the twenties, and is very low at age 35 and over. The National Commission

on Marijuana and Drug Abuse (1973) reports that in 1972 the incidence of marijuana use was 4% among persons 12 to 13 years old, 10% among those 14 to 15 years, 29% among those 16 to 17 years old, 55% among those 18 to 21 years, 40% among those 22 to 25, 20% among those 26 to 34 years, 6% among those 35 to 49, and only 2% among those 50 and over.

Huth (1971) suggested that as many as one-third of the drug addicts in the United States are youths between the ages of 18 and 25. A high correlation was also found between the intellectual "climate" of a college and the incidence of drug use among its students.

In an attempt to measure drug use behavior and certain social values related to drug usage, Toohey (1971) headed a study which involved five American universities. He found that marijuana ranked second to alcohol as a drug most frequently used to alter mood and perception. The range of percentage of students who had used marijuana at least once was 49% to 28%. The students questioned indicated that they considered the present state laws relative to marijuana possession as too harsh.

Tec (1971), in his study of high school students, found that 45% did not think marijuana should be legalized, 25% felt it should be, 22% felt it was "hard to tell" and 8% did not care. It was also discovered that 43% of the students approved of the use of marijuana and 55% disapproved. Nine percent approved of friends using marijuana regularly and 69% disapproved. The findings implied that marijuana is a part of the youth culture but that the young may not be quite as extreme in their formal approval of marijuana as it is sometime believed. The acceptance of marijuana by youths when compared to expectations of parental reactions toward drug use suggests the existence of a generation gap.

The Gallup survey (1973a) showed that opposition to the legalization of the use of marijuana is overwhelming. Those most in favor of legalization are younger adults which constitute 34% and persons with a college background which account for 29% of the persons in favor of legalization. The survey also found that the current use of marijuana is highest in the 18- to 29-year-old age group.

Freeman (1972) found that the predominant view of students regarding marijuana was that it is a fairly harmless drug and that it is neither valuable nor harmful. In contrast to the finding, a majority of parents believed that the drug is possibly harmful. Among the students 21% either believed marijuana to be "beneficial" or felt its "benefits offset its risks." A discrepancy was also found between the attitudes of students and those of their parents in the area of legal controls of marijuana. Thirty-seven percent of the students believed that marijuana should be legally controlled without being prohibited and a sizeable minority of 15% advocated no controls whatever. The attitude of the parents was that the possession of marijuana by anyone should be prohibited.

Tobias and Wax (1973) believe that we tend to de-emphasize the use of alcohol by youth because of the increased use of drugs and even, when comparing it with drugs, condone it. Alcohol abuse is definitely a problem among teenagers and may be the number one killer in the United States today when the number of physical ills, the auto accidents and the family problems related to it are considered.

### Religious Attitudes

In 1967 the Gallup Opinion Poll found that the percentage of those who believed that organized religion was losing its influence increased in the past decade from 14% to 57%. The greatest skepticism about the influence of religious institutions was found in the 21 to 29 years age groups. Among college students, 74% felt that religion was on the decline. The loss of authority of religion is reflected across all three generations, but it is more clearly pronounced among the youth.

Yankelovich (1970) in his study of young adults and their parents found that on the question of the importance of organized religion there were vast differences between generations. Three times as many young adults said organized religion was not important as did respondents from the older generation.

## CHAPTER III

### CHARACTERISTICS AND SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

The subjects in this study represent four different age groups: high school, college, middle age, and elderly. In each of the four groups, 25 subjects were randomly selected by the investigator. This was done by drawing 25 questionnaires from the total sample of each group.

During the spring of 1976, two sections of the marriage course, FRCD 3143, at Oklahoma State University were used as the college subjects for this study. For the purpose of this study, the sample group was limited to persons between the ages of 19 and 25 years who were reared on a farm or in a community with a population less than 25,000. The L-C Scale was given to all students in both sections, a total of 76. Of the 76 students, 30 met the aforementioned limitations. Twenty-five questionnaires were randomly drawn from these instruments completed by the students.

The high school, middle age, and elderly groups were residents of Granite, Oklahoma, a small community with a population of 2500. The high school group, consisting of persons between the ages of 15 through 18, were members of the junior and senior classes of the high school. The L-C Scales was administered to all junior and senior students of the high school, a total of 67. Upon completion of the testing, the questionnaires of 25 students were randomly drawn from the total group.

Persons between the ages of 35 and 65 years made up the middle age sample. The questionnaire was administered to 29 persons in this age bracket and 25 were randomly drawn for this study.

The elderly persons in the study were members of the American Association for Retired Persons. The questionnaire was administered at a meeting of their organization with 26 persons present. One instrument was not usable.

#### Construction of Instrument

The first section of the instrument is composed of items concerned with personal background information of the respondents, including: (a) age; (b) sex; (c) marital status; (d) residence classification; (e) religious preference. Also included is an explanation and definition of the study.

The second part of the instrument consists of a 35-item scale. The items on the L-C scale represented five different areas: (a) race; (b) sex, (c) women's role, (d) drugs, and (e) religion. The five areas were chosen to provide items for the L-C scale because the literature suggests that conflict between generations exists primarily in values which apply to these areas. Previous research also guided the investigator in selecting the specific areas to be included on the L-C scale.

In developing the L-C scale, the researcher settled on seven specific questions to represent each area, making a total of 35 items. The author feels that seven items for each area is sufficient in yielding results, while 35 items are not so many as to discourage participation from the subjects. The items were selected from four previous research studies and from the book Values Clarification (Simon, Howe,

and Kirschenbaum, 1972). Several of the items were taken from a study conducted by Meisels and Canter (1972) concerning the generation gap and from a study by Travis (1973) concerning the role of women in our society. The book, Values Clarification (Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum, 1972) also yielded some items for the instrument. Lerner, Pendorf, and Emery (1971) and Lerner, Weinstock, and Weinstock (1972) also provided items which were used in the construction of the L-C Scale. Lerner et al. reported an average test-retest reliability for 29 items of .75, with reliability coefficients ranging from .37 to .98. These data were also subjected to factor analysis and interpretations of the findings suggested the presence of but one general factor.

All of the 35 items in the L-C Scale were selected from previously reported research or from a recognized training program dealing with values. It was, therefore, assumed that the L-C Scale has content, a measure of the internal consistency of the L-C Scale was obtained through an item analysis using the chi-square test to determine those items which significantly discriminate between those persons scoring in the upper quartile on the basis of their total scores (which represent the greatest degree of liberalness) and those persons scoring in the lowest quartile which represents the greatest degree of conservativeness).

The split-half reliability coefficient using the Spearman-Brown correction formula, was used to obtain an index of the reliability of the L-C Scale. The results of both the item analysis and the Spearman correlation will be discussed in Chapter IV, Results.

In order to avoid response set, 17 of the items on the L-C Scale were worded in a negative way and 18 of the items were positive in



wording. The 35 items were arranged in a definite order in which every group of five successive items represented the five different areas. The pattern was consistently followed throughout the L-C Scale. This was done to insure that items which pertained to a specific area would not be grouped together. Consequently, this would eliminate the possibility of one question influencing the response of another question.

Each item was scored by examining the subject's response (strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree) and applying a score to each item. Numbers one, two, four, and five were used in scoring, with one being the most conservative response and five representing the most liberal. Refer to Appendix for a complete copy of the instrument with the most conservative response (score of 1) circled.

#### Collection of Data

The L-C Scale was distributed to two of the four marriage classes, FRCD 3143, at Oklahoma State University in May, 1976. All students in both sections who were present completed the questionnaire immediately after distribution. The investigator gathered the instruments as they were completed.

To obtain the high school's group responses, the researcher obtained permission from the superintendent and then visited the Granite High School during school hours. Two different sets of students were involved in the study: the members of the Junior class and the members of the Senior class who were in attendance on the particular day. All members of these two classes, excluding one who chose not to participate, were given the questionnaire at the beginning of the first class period. The

instruments were returned to the researcher immediately following their completion.

The author obtained the middle age sample by attending a community recreation event. A sizable proportion of the town's population was present. This group assisted the author by completing the questionnaires during a break in the program. The instruments were gathered by the author as they were completed.

To obtain responses of elderly people to the instrument, the author attended a meeting of the local chapter of the American Association for Retired Persons. Every person, excluding one, who was in attendance answered the questionnaire and returned it to the investigator when completed.

#### Analysis of Data

Percentages and frequencies were used to describe the background characteristics of subjects. The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance was used to examine the following hypotheses: (1) that there is no significant difference among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students concerning their total L-C Scale scores and (2) there is no significant difference among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students concerning their sub-scale scores for each of the following sub-scales within the L-C Scale: (a) race, (b) sex, (c) women's role, (d) drugs, and (e) religion.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

#### Description of Subjects

A detailed description of 25 high school students, 25 middle age persons, 25 elderly people, and 25 college students who served as subjects in this study is presented in Table I. A general overview of the subjects is given below.

Of the entire sample, 62 per cent consisted of females and 38 per cent were males. The age range for the high school group was 15 to 18 years of age, except for two students who had passed their 19th birthday, the college age respondents ranged from 19 to 25 years of age, the middle age respondents ranged from 36 to 65 years of age, with the greatest proportion falling in the age category of 36 to 50 years, and the elderly respondents were 65 years of age and over. Of the sample, 45 per cent were married, 40 per cent were single, and 15 per cent had previously been married, but were not at the time of the sampling. Respondents' residence for the major part of life was reported to be from a community of less than 25,000 population and 47 per cent lived on a farm or in the country. The sample was predominately Protestant.

TABLE I  
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SUBJECTS BY GROUPS

<u>Group</u>	<u>Age</u>	<u>Sex</u>		<u>Marital Status</u>				<u>Residence</u>			<u>Religion</u>			<u>Total</u>
		M	F	Single	Married	Was Married	Farm	Country	Small Community	Catholic	Protestant	None	Other	
I	15-18*	12	13	24	1		11	14	2	15	1	7	25	
II	19-25	7	18	19	6		9	16	2	23			25	
III	36-65	10	15		23	2	12	13	4	17	4		25	
IV	65-	7	18	2	10	13	14	11	3	22			25	

\*Includes two students who have passed their 19th birthday.

Validity and Reliability of the  
L-C Scale

In order to obtain an index of the validity of the items in the Liberalness-Conservativeness Scale, the chi-square test was utilized to determine if each item significantly differentiated between those subjects scoring in the upper quartile and those subjects scoring in the lower quartile on the basis of the total scores. The majority (80%) of the 35 items on the scale were found to be significantly discriminating at the .05 level. In order to look more carefully at the L-C Scale, the results of the item analysis were grouped according to sub-scales (Table II).

TABLE II  
 ITEM ANALYSIS BASED ON COMPARISONS OF THE UPPER AND  
 LOWER QUANTILES OF TOTAL L-C SCORES

Sub-scale	Item No.	df	$\chi^2$	Level of Sig.
Religion	1	2	28.295	.0001
	6	3	13.932	.0030
	11	3	22.349	.0001
	16	2	31.374	.0001
	21	3	34.876	.0001
	26	2	35.904	.0001
	31	2	32.993	.0001
Race	2	3	5.033	.1694
	7	3	4.692	.1958
	12	3	14.426	.0024
	17	3	14.149	.0027
	22	3	17.448	.0006
	27	2	.850	.6539
	32	3	9.033	.0289
Sex	3	3	35.16	.3187
	8	3	20.922	.0001
	13	3	44.198	.0001
	18	3	34.994	.0001
	23	3	38.207	.0001
	28	3	25.078	.0001
	33	3	23.882	.0001
Drugs	4	3	15.019	.0018
	9	3	23.656	.0001
	14	3	26.289	.0001
	19	3	34.785	.0001
	24	3	35.480	.0001
	29	3	13.447	.0038
	34	3	23.197	.0001
Women's Role	5	3	14.114	.0028
	10	3	3.243	.3557
	15	3	9.161	.0272
	20	3	17.237	.0006
	25	3	7.258	.0641
	30	3	5.729	.1253
	35	3	22.619	.0001

The subscales relating to drugs, religion, and sex are considered to be of value because all of these items, excluding one, were found to be significantly discriminating. The racial sub-scale may be less valuable because three out of seven questions did not discriminate at the .05 level of significance. Also, since three items were found insignificant in the women's role sub-scale, this group may be of less value. It is possible, also, that the values relating to race and women's roles are less clearly differentiated among the subjects of the current study.

A split-half reliability coefficient, computed with the Spearman-Brown Correction Formula, of 0.91 was obtained in determining an index of the reliability of the items in the L-C Scale.

#### Examination of Hypotheses and

#### Discussion of Results

Hypothesis I. There is no significant difference concerning total L-C scores among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students. A significant difference was found among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students in regard to their total L-C scores. Using the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance, an  $H$  score of 45.766 was obtained, indicating that the difference was significant beyond the .001 level, as shown in Table III. The college students expressed the most liberal scores while the elderly expressed the most conservative scores. This finding agrees with the results of Harrison's (1974) study which reported a definite difference among four age groups (younger than 19, 19 to 23 years, 24 to 32 years, 32 and over) concerning various values. The investigator believes that the difference found in the present study is not unusual,

since people seem to conform to the values which are accepted and prevalent in their specific age group. The finding that the college students expressed the most liberal views concerning sexual, racial, drugs, women's role, and religious values, coincides with Cousin's (1969) theory of young adults being exposed to and possibly conforming to new and more liberal values while in the college environment. Munns (1972) found that youth conform to peer group values rather than to values of their parents. This could also account for the liberal views which were expressed by the high school and college students.

TABLE III  
KRUSKAL-WALLIS ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES  
IN TOTAL L-C SCORES ACCORDING  
TO AGE GROUP

Age Group	N	Average Rank	<u>H</u>	<u>p</u>
High School	25	54.16		
Middle Age	25	37.60	45.766	.001
Elderly	25	29.46		
College	25	80.78		

Hypothesis II(a). There is no significant difference among the high school, middle age, elderly, and college groups in the scores for the sub-scale "Race". The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance was utilized in determining if there was a significant difference among high

school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students concerning their racial attitudes. An  $H$  score of 15.111 was obtained, indicating that the difference was significant at the .01 level. College students expressed the most liberal scores and the elderly expressed the most conservative scores as Table IV illustrates. The community from which the high school, middle age and elderly samples were taken does not have any blacks in residence. This might explain the conservative attitudes of these three groups concerning racial items, whereas, the more liberal view of the college group could possibly be a result of personal interaction with persons from various ethnic groups. An unusual finding was that the middle age group had more liberal scores than did the high school students. It is possible that persons in the middle age category would be exposed to racial interaction and relations through their children who have left the small community. This finding is in disagreement with Petroni's research (1972). He found that high school students perceived themselves as more liberal than adults on the issue of racial relations.



TABLE IV  
 KRUSKAL-WALLIS ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES  
 IN RACIAL ATTITUDES ACCORDING TO  
 AGE GROUP

Age Group	N	Average Rank	<u>H</u>	<u>p</u>
High School	25	45.24		
Middle Age	25	51.54	15.11	.01
Elderly	25	37.36		
College	25	67.86		

Hypothesis II(b). There is no significant difference among the high school, middle age, elderly, and college groups in the scores for the sub-scale "Sex". When this hypothesis was subjected to the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance, a significant difference was found among the high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students in regard to their views toward sexual values. As Table V illustrates, an H score of 38.02 was obtained, indicating that the difference is significant at the .001 level. The college students displayed the most liberal scores with the high school students reporting the second most liberal scores. The most conservative scores were found in the elderly group. In a 1973 Gallup Opinion Survey it was found that only 29 per cent of young persons, age 18 to 29 years, believed that premarital sex is wrong. This finding is similar to the results of the present study in which the high school students and college students were significantly more liberal in their views toward

sexual values than were the middle age and elderly groups.

TABLE V  
KRUSKAL-WALLIS ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN  
SEXUAL VALUES ACCORDING TO AGE  
GROUP

Age Group	N	Average Rank	<u>H</u>	<u>P</u>
High School	25	51.92		
Middle Age	25	35.88	38.002	.001
Elderly	25	35.04		
College	25	79.16		

Hypothesis II(c). There is no significant difference among the high school, middle age, elderly, and college groups in the scores for the sub-scale "Women's Roles". The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance was again used in examining the attitudes of high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students toward women's roles. Table VI shows that an H score of 16.665 was obtained, which is significant at the .001 level. The most liberal scores were again obtained by the college group and the most conservative by the elderly group. It was found that the four age groups were more similar in their attitudes toward women's roles than they were in their attitudes concerning drugs, sex, or religion. The author believes

that this similarity is due to the fact that the role of women in our society is changing, and it is very probable that this changing role has affected, in some way, the lives of the subjects and/or their families.

TABLE VI  
KRUSKAL-WALLIS ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN  
ATTITUDES TOWARD WOMEN'S ROLES  
ACCORDING TO AGE GROUPS

Age Group	N	Average Rank	<u>H</u>	<u>p</u>
High School	25	51.04		
Middle Age	25	41.46	16.665	.001
Elderly	25	39.94		
College	25	69.56		

Hypothesis II(d). There is no significant difference among the high school, middle age, elderly, and college groups in the scores for the sub-scale "Drugs". In order to determine if there was a significant difference in attitudes toward drugs among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students, the Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance was applied. The difference was found to be significant as illustrated by Table VII. An H score of 31.251 was obtained, significant at .001 level. The group which showed the most conservative viewpoint concerning drugs was the middle age group, but the elderly

subjects were very near. The most liberal view was represented by the college group. According to Freeman (1972), the liberal views of the high school and college students toward drugs as compared to the conservative values toward drugs of the middle age and elderly persons, is not a surprising finding. Freeman, in his study, found that the majority of parents believed marijuana to be harmful, whereas the students felt it was neither harmful nor valuable. It is the author's belief that drug use among young people, especially college students, could be a result of environment.

TABLE VII

KRUSKAL-WALLIS ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN  
DRUG ATTITUDES ACCORDING TO AGE  
GROUP

Age Group	N	Average Rank	<u>H</u>	<u>p</u>
High School	25	56.80		
Middle Age	25	35.40		
Elderly	25	35.66	31.251	.001
College	25	74.14		

Hypothesis II(e). There is no significant difference among the high school, middle age, elderly, and college groups in the score for the sub-scale "Religion". A significant difference was found when the

Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance was utilized to examine if there was a difference among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students concerning their religious attitudes. As shown in Table VIII, an  $H$  score of 24.665 was obtained, indicating that the difference was significant at the .001 level. The most liberal scores were expressed by the college group and the most conservative scores were expressed by the elderly. The results of the L-C Scale were in agreement with Gallup Opinion Poll (1967) concerning attitudes toward religion.

TABLE VIII  
 KRUSKAL-WALLIS ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE REFLECTING DIFFERENCES IN  
 RELIGION ATTITUDES ACCORDING TO AGE  
 GROUP

Age Group	N	Average Rank	$H$	$p$
High School	25	55.76		
Middle	25	45.30	24.665	.001
Elderly	25	30.84		
College	25	70.10		

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the differences among four age groups concerning their attitudes toward race, sex, drugs, women's roles, and religion. High school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students were used as the subjects to represent the four groups.

The sample was composed of 100 subjects with 25 persons representing each age group. The high school students, middle age persons, and elderly persons were selected from Granite, Oklahoma, a rural community in the Southwestern part of the state. The college students were enrolled in the marriage course, FRCD 3143, at Oklahoma State University in May, 1976. The majority of the sample was female (62%) and Protestant. The high school sample consisted of persons between the ages of 15 and 19 years of age, the college students ranged from 19 to 25 years of age, the middle age respondents were between the ages of 36 to 65 years, and the elderly persons were 65 years and over. Forty-five per cent of the sample were married and all the respondents' residences were reported to be from a community of less than 25,000 population or from a farm. The data were obtained during the month of May, 1976.

The questionnaire included the following: (a) a description of the study; (b) an information sheet for securing various background data; and (c) the Liberalness-Conservativeness Scale designed to measure the

differences in various personal and social values between four age groups.

The chi-square test was used in an item analysis of the L-C Scale to determine those items that significantly differentiated between the subjects scoring in the upper quartile and the lower quartile groups on the basis of the total scale scores. The Spearman-Brown Correction Formula, computed with the split-half reliability coefficient was used in determining the reliability of the items in the L-C Scale.

Percentages and frequencies description were used to describe the background characteristics of the subjects. The Kruskal-Wallis Analysis of Variance was used to examine the differences in values held by the four age groups in regard to (a) race, (b) sex, (c) drugs, (d) women's roles, and (e) religion. The following results were obtained:

1. There is a significant ( $\underline{p} \ll .001$ ) difference among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students concerning their total scores of the L-C Scale.
2. There is a significant difference among high school students, middle age persons, elderly persons, and college students on each of the sub-scales of the L-C Scale.

The sub-scales and the significance levels were: (a) race ( $\underline{p} < .01$ ), (b) sex ( $\underline{p} < .001$ ), (c) women's role, ( $\underline{p} < .001$ ), (d) drugs ( $\underline{p} < .001$ ), and (e) religion ( $\underline{p} < .001$ ).

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APPENDIX

SELECTED PERSONAL AND SOCIAL VALUES:  
AN INTERGENERATIONAL COMPARISON

A graduate studies project of  
Family Relations and Child Development Department  
Division of Home Economics  
Oklahoma State University

The Department of Family Relations and Child Development at Oklahoma State University is concerned with people of all ages and their ideas and feelings about matters of concern to our society. You have been selected to help contribute information to this research project.

You are requested to assist in this research project designed to obtain knowledge about the differences in values between four age groups: high school, college, middle age, and elderly, by responding to the items on the other side of this page.

Your cooperation in this project is greatly appreciated. Your contribution in a research project of this type helps us to gain greater knowledge and insight into human relationships. Since your name is not required, please be as honest in your answers as possible. There are no right or wrong answers. Please answer exactly as you feel.



Directions: Indicate your response to each statement by circling the letters that correspond to your opinions about the statements.

Key: SA - strongly agree  
 A - agree  
 D - disagree  
 SD - strongly disagree

Please answer according to your opinion. It is important that all statements be answered. Since your name is not required, please try to give an honest response.

- |    |   |   |    |  |
|----|---|---|----|--|
| SA | A | D | SD | 1. The church plays an active role in shaping one's moral character.                                 |
| SA | A | D | SD | 2. Racial equality deserves more attention in America than does curtailing obscenity.                |
| SA | A | D | SD | 3. Sex education has no moral or ethical purpose in public education.                                |
| SA | A | D | SD | 4. Disappointment or concern would overshadow approval if a close friend admitted smoking marijuana. |
| SA | A | D | SD | 5. A woman's place is in the home.   |
| SA | A | D | SD | 6. I would not be upset if organized religion disappeared.   |
| SA | A | D | SD | 7. Black people have many just grievances, but they expect too much too soon.                        |
| SA | A | D | SD | 8. Birth control devices and information should be made available to all who desire them.            |
| SA | A | D | SD | 9. Marijuana should be legalized under state supervision.  |
| SA | A | D | SD | 10. There should be equal responsibility by man and woman for child rearing and child care.          |
| SA | A | D | SD | 11. I would not hesitate to marry someone from a different religion.                                 |
| SA | A | D | SD | 12. Black revolutionaries are harmful to the advancement of their race.                              |
| SA | A | D | SD | 13. Pre-marital sex is and always should be considered immoral.                                      |
| SA | A | D | SD | 14. I would not hesitate to experiment with marijuana.   |
| SA | A | D | SD | 15. Raising a child provides many rewards, but cannot keep most women satisfied as a full-time job.  |
| SA | A | D | SD | 16. I enjoy going to church.   |

- SA A D SD 17. I would approve of my son or daughter marrying someone from another race.
- SA A D SD 18. I am in favor of complete sexual freedom for all as long as it does not hurt anyone.
- SA A D SD 19. Alcohol is a dangerous drug which requires strict enforcement of present laws.
- SA A D SD 20. The women's liberation movement had not made any great contribution to our society.
- SA A D SD 21. A strong religious faith is essential to a productive and worthwhile life.
- SA A D SD 22. I would consider marrying someone from a different race.
- SA A D SD 23. I would approve of a young couple trying out marriage by living together for six months before actually getting married.
- SA A D SD 24. Those who use drugs are usually careless about their personal appearance.
- SA A D SD 25. A woman cannot be happy and fulfilled as a woman unless she is married.
- SA A D SD 26. Religion is an important part of my life.
- SA A D SD 27. I do not think I am racially prejudiced.
- SA A D SD 28. I do not approve of contract marriages in which the marriage would come up for renewal every few years.
- SA A D SD 29. I would not turn a friend in for using drugs.
- SA A D SD 30. There should be equal responsibility by man and woman for housekeeping.
- SA A D SD 31. I might change my religion.
- SA A D SD 32. The position of minority groups in our country is getting worse.
- SA A D SD 33. I do not think abortions should be readily available.
- SA A D SD 34. Laws dealing with drug conviction are too harsh.
- SA A D SD 35. The most important thing a woman can do is be a wife and mother.

VITA

Susan Diane Sewell

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: SELECTED PERSONAL AND SOCIAL VALUES: AN INTERGENERATIONAL  
COMPARISON

Major Field: Family Relations and Child Development

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Elk City, Oklahoma, January 24, 1953, the  
daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Glen Sewell.

Education: Attended Granite Grade School; graduated from Granite  
High School, Granite, Oklahoma, 1971; received the Bachelor  
of Science degree from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater,  
Oklahoma, in 1975 with a major in Family Relations and Child  
Development; completed requirements for the Master of Science  
degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma,  
December, 1976.