THE ADOLESCENT CITIZEN

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A Publication of The Tufts Civic Education Center

The Free Press of Glencoe, Illinois

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CHAPTER SIX

Mass Communications and the Citizenship of Secondary School Youth

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THE TASK OF THIS CHAPTER IS TO HELP PROVIDE PART OF the background of evidence needed to plan for next steps in the citizenship education of high-school-age youth. The present focus is on relationships between varied attributes of adolescent citizenship and the mass media of communications. The area of studies reviewed lies in the general field of mass-communications research.

The first two sections deal with patterns of participation in communication and citizenship activities, and with some relationships between social attitudes, conduct, and the mass media. The third section continues to review research evidence, but in the structure of some theoretical implications that might be suggestive of major dimensions of influence. The final section presents further implications for research and action.

Since in any such review of research the emphasis inevitably tends to shift, sooner or later, to the problem of effects, some preliminary remarks on the nature of mass-communication effects might be appropriate.

The basic long-term "effect" of mass communication is the slow infiltration and coloring of the individual's view of the world, noted the recent statement of the Educational Policies Commission on *Mass Communication and Education*.[1] And it continued in a paragraph worth citing:

> Communication changes people, not by sharp, well-directed steering, but in a slow and almost imperceptible alteration. The opinion which a seventeen-year-old student has about the Soviet Union is not the result of hearing one newscast, or even many newscasts; it is a soft-edged amalgam of things read, seen, talked about in the dormitories, worried about in the middle of the night. Communications feed all these processes. His opinions about religion, diet, bridge, and Social Security are a mosaic of the same kind, made of thousands of now forgotten pieces. Communications supplied most of the pieces. Some of the things seen and heard persuaded; some offended; many simply bored him, but nevertheless had an effect; some were perceived even though he was unaware of perceiving. Communication research has only begun to assess this complex.

Attempts to assess this complex brought to light certain broad regularities and consistencies in mass-media-related behaviors of many kinds. They have also uncovered paradoxical reversals and sobering uncertainties. In a recent statement of general principles emerging from studies on mass-media effects, Klapper[2] arrived at some conclusions; I would like to paraphrase them in part and to point them in the direction of our special interests.

1. Mass communication functions in and through a nexus of mediating factors and influences. It is selected and used in terms of existing developmental and peer-group needs. Therefore it tends to be a reinforcing and conservative influence, rather than one impelling toward change. Its conservative tendency is further enhanced by cultural industries' need for holding large audiences on the basis of consumer wants.
2. When mass communication does function in the service of

change, we usually find that (a) the particular issue involved is not too salient to group norms, or (b) the particular person is not well integrated into a group structure, or does not value his membership too highly, or (c) group norms themselves are impelling toward change through switch in loyalties, through dysfunctioning of old norms, or through the emergence of new situations relatively unrelated to existing attitudes.

3. In certain situations there may be direct effects, especially as measured by averages of individual behavior without much regard to the social context in which these behaviors are put to use. These direct effects, whether of the change or of the reinforcement type, are determined not only by content but also by the context of the communication activity, and by the availability of channels through which to translate perceptions into overt behavior.

These general statements might serve as a framework for the examination of research evidence, to be amplified and qualified as we go along. But before we turn to our review of research, let me offer some additional suggestions.

Today's adolescent generation is the first to reach maturity in what is in many ways a new American popular culture. While adolescent subcultures have been studied from many points of view, there is a relative paucity of research concerning the increased demands of mass-produced popular culture on young people's attention and time, and its effects on the quality of teenage life. Compared to our knowledge of what it takes to be a consumer or a member of this or that audience, our insight into what it means to grow up in the new American culture is slight.

Some note with concern that teenagers claim a large, and in some respects dominant, share of this popular culture as their own. But we are reminded in the recent summary of the Purdue studies on adolescent attitudes that "the idols, living and dead, may indeed be unhealthy symbols of an unhappy time. But let's remember that . . . all are the creation of adult minds and adult money."[3] And, as Edgar Dale once wrote, "The mass producers of entertainment and the advertisers are sometimes in closer touch with the needs and wants of children and young people than are their teachers."

I am pointing out these basic facts of American cultural life to avoid the subtle misanthropy often implied in examinations of popular tastes and habits. The "people get what they deserve" philosophy ignores the actual choices and terms of decision faced by the adolescent or by the businessman; in short, it ignores the social realities of the cultural scene.

Public Affairs

No matter how we try to measure it, the conclusion is inescapable that the "average" American high school student's knowledge of and interest in public affairs and social problems is, to put it mildly, low and resistant to change. As Remmers and Radler[4] discovered, high school civics courses produce no significant effects on political or social awareness; indeed, where differences are noted at all, they seem to be the opposite of what might have been expected. And, as Jacob found,[5] neither do college courses in social science produce significant shifts in social attitudes and values. What about the mass media?

The mass media provide an assortment of powerfully concentrated and compelling views of the world pretty much as the customers wish to see it. Media-content analysts observe that public affairs and politics in popular drama and fiction play a role that is generally both unsavory and insignificant. Private goals predominate over public goals; teachers and scientists often appear in a most uninspiring light; and the portrayal or omission of minority groups is such as to seek out hostile predispositions even among the indifferent.[6]

Swanson's study of adult news readership[7] sheds some light on the general public-affairs content and readership of 130 daily newspapers. The study found that the number of news stories devoted to international, national, state, and local governmental affairs, to labor, loyalty investigations, politics, taxes, and finance was a total of eighteen and two-tenths per cent of all the stories appearing in the papers. The combined readership of all these stories was only fourteen and one-tenth per cent of the total readership of all stories.

On the whole, adolescents exhibit no more interest in public affairs in the media, or in life, than their elders. Only three per cent of the Gillespie and Allport[8] sample of American college freshmen (a relatively select group) chose "being active or serving in public affairs" or "being a useful citizen of one's country" as an accomplishment to be "most proud of." One in five American students conceived of "participation as a citizen in the affairs of your community" as a source of any satisfaction at all. These percentages seem fairly close to defining the over-all proportion of adolescents (and adults) who expose themselves to mass-media content directly concerned with public affairs, who entertain notions of civic pride or responsibility, or who see any sense in course work along these lines.[9]

The newspaper is considered a source of *news* to six out of ten high school students. Of those, three in five read foreign news, and one in five admits glancing at political news. The majority claim to read for entertainment.

Berelson's study of "What 'Missing the Newspaper' Means"[10] shows the range of "rational" and "nonrational" uses to which the newspaper is actually put. Reading the paper serves a variety of substitute gratifications and ritualistic functions which have little, if anything, to do with the functions of the press in a self-governing society. They are, however, intimately related to its marketing and commodity roles, some of which seem to have a special appeal to juvenile dispositions. The reading of crime and disaster news and of comic strips, for example, is most popular in the teens.[11]

Radio news is the "most disliked" category on the air, but seven out of ten adolescents report being unable to escape it.[12] About three per cent of high school students express interest in TV news programs; few, if any, show interest in panels or forums devoted to public issues.[13]

These findings, however, perhaps conceal as much as they reveal of the actual patterns of mass-media utilization in relation to public affairs. For one thing, we can expect fractionated audiences and interest in media of such diversified appeals. But even more importantly, these "on the whole" data hide significant differences in the distribution of attention among the media, in

the ebb and flow of attention with time, and in the actual quality of public life in different communities and in different subcultures within communities.

MEDIA FACTORS

Younger persons from better-educated families tend to use more sources for news and public-affairs information and spend *proportionately* less time on newspapers than do the others.[14] While generally people now rely on television most for political *campaign* information, younger people with a superior home and school background appear to use both magazines and radio more than do the others.[15] Whether one tries to relate informational level to television[16] or to movies,[17] one finds that *among the better informed* more use the medium than among the less informed or less interested. One also finds, however, that among the addicts of *any one medium* there is a larger percentage of the uninformed and uninterested.

These observations are consistent with the view that media habits and preferences function in the context of general patterns of life. Gedelecia,[18] for example, showed that those who devote more time to a more diversified use of the media also tend to be more active in civic affairs. Equally significant, however, was his finding of a reversal: the more likely a person is to be a user of varied media, the less likely he is to be a member of a labor union. Diversified use of the media thus tends to go with greater selectivity and generally richer patterns of middle- and upper-class life. Conversely, the media offer no corresponding richness of appeal for those less identified with the values of a middle-class, consumer-oriented popular culture. Here we find greater concentration on fewer media, as well as special reliance on content types which tend to correlate negatively with social awareness and public-affairs participation.[19]

Additional suggestions are implicit in the data collected by Katz and Lazarsfeld[20] on the flow of mass-media influence. They found "opinion leadership" primarily a higher-class group affair. But while "opinion leaders" *exposed themselves* more to more media than did the others, they tended to *rely* on each of these media *less* than did the others and to place greater reliance on personal

contact. The "nonleaders" apparently did not read, hear, or see public-affairs content in the media as widely as the "leaders." However, they were apparently influenced more by what they did find in the media than were the leaders.

In a large-scale study of children's radio listening, Ricciuti[21] found that content preferences reflect, among other things, public-affairs orientation. Regular listeners to educational, drama, and news programs on the air scored higher on all tests of intelligence and general scholastic achievement (including history-civics and attitude toward law) than did nonlisteners. Regular listeners to crime, adventure, popular music, and daytime serial programs scored consistently lower on most of these tests.

Herzog[22] found that the pattern of life in which listening to daytime serials looms large is distinct from other patterns primarily in the listeners' low level of education and lack of interest in public affairs. Gerbner's study of the somewhat similar content and social role of the confession magazine[23] suggested some reasons for such results.

There is general agreement in studies that girls show less interest than boys in public affairs and in news reading in general.[24] However, if the adult sex pattern is any indication, girls would be more likely to read news of a "human interest" type and news or features about health, safety, charity, education, and the family. Also girls would tend to favor local over national and world news against the reverse order of interest for boys.[25]

Many of the conflicting data on public-affairs interest and participation can be accounted for in terms of differences in "the times" or in the communities observed. During the thirties and early forties, for example, Democrats showed a preference in public affairs for radio (through which Roosevelt often spoke) as against a greater Republican reliance on newspapers (through which he didn't). This effect was observed in later campaigns;[26] but it also coincides with class-related preferences among the media.

During World War II, high school students showed a marked increase of interest in foreign affairs, war news, religion, and pictures in general. (The last probably reflects the generally increased number of news "readers.") Correspondingly, interest

decreased in society and fraternal news, sports, labor, school, and (appropriately enough) in travel news.

The obvious conclusion was voiced in the Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee studies on the role of the mass media in voting.[27] It appears to be this: a large part of political and public-affairs exposure is a matter of pressure and stimulation exercised by the social environment rather than a matter of any of the mass media pursuing any special functions as agencies of citizenship development in democratic society.

COMMUNITY FACTORS

Certain differences in adolescent patterns of public-affairs participation and news-seeking behavior undoubtedly reflect community differences. Studies reviewed and conducted by Wiebe[28] clearly indicate that "educability" in public affairs is directly related to the availability of community facilities for *acting* upon such education. These studies show that people become motivated and interested to the degree that they find personally appropriate and directly accessible channels for translating information into action. To the degree that such facilities are lacking, information and education are not only likely to be avoided, but are likely to backfire; they raise the general level of *apathy* and *disinterestedness*.

This is part of a variously described phenomenon: Merton[29] terms it "anomie"; Brodbeck[30] observed it among teenagers as the striking pattern of "emotional quietism" in class discussion of public affairs; Rosenberg[31] explained it in terms of alienation from society; and Lazarsfeld and Merton[32] described it as the "narcotizing dysfunction" of the mass media. In the absence of meaningful primary contact with public affairs in his community and nation, the reader seeks, and the press provides, an ever broader array of substitute gratifications. Furthermore, under these conditions, even the exposure to a flood of information may narcotize rather than energize the average reader or listener. Under such circumstances, even the public affairs news seeker

> . . . takes his secondary contact with the world of political reality, his reading and listening and thinking, as a vicarious per-

> formance. He comes to mistake *knowing* about problems of the day for doing something about them. His social conscience remains spotlessly clean. He *is* concerned. He *is* informed. And he has all sorts of ideas as to what should be done. But, after he has gotten through his dinner and after he has listened to his favored . . . programs and after he has read his second newspaper of the day, it is really time for bed. . . . In this peculiar respect, mass communication may be included among the most respectable and efficient of social narcotics.[33]

These visions of self-reinforcing apathy, fed by the media and fed by education, regardless of whether educators do too little or too much, may be overdrawn; but they do point to the quality of public *life* in the community as a decisive factor in citizenship. Young people cannot help but learn that activity in the private and the economic spheres is most applauded and rewarded. Politics appears in the light of uninspiring, if not corrupt, housekeeping activity.[34] The consequent feeling of remoteness from meaningful action in public affairs is seized upon by the media to portray politics (if at all) for its entertainment value, as a spectacle. Nor has the impact of these developments escaped teachers and social scientists; politics is increasingly viewed in textbooks as a delicate game of pressure and counterpressure in some self-equilibrating field, rather than as a matter of ideology and principle of personal relevance to every citizen. Let me also include here communication researchers, who, as Albig's study[35] showed, vastly expanded their measurement and discussion of communications activity "in terms of process, technique, stimuli, impact, effects, and semantic analysis, but not in terms of the ethical and value problems of communications content and effect."

Future research can ill afford to waste energies looking for single "devils" or for singular remedies. More profitable, instead, might be to go on with the much more rewarding task of inquiring into the broadest possible context of circumstances in which young people can and do assume more self-directing roles.

Before we can speculate profitably about new patterns, however, we must go on to observe more of what is known and note more precisely what is not known of the existing patterns. It is

possible now to begin to identify two polar clusters of interrelated behaviors that appear to hinge on a meaningful association of mass-media activity with public-affairs participation in our culture. We can characterize these two clusters as (1) the seeking-out pattern, and (2) the avoidance pattern. The first one is a predominantly upper- and middle-class pattern, although by no means a general characteristic of these classes. The second one is the dominant and a characteristically lower-class pattern.

SOME FACTORS IN AVOIDANCE BEHAVIOR

While the two clusters appear to be basically socially and culturally determined, there is, of course, no one-to-one relationship between these patterns and social status or any other single criterion. Research, especially in connection with citizenship education campaigns and public informational attempts, is replete with examples of "paradoxical" findings that testify to the durable elasticity of the dominant avoidance pattern. This, of course, is in harmony with our previous general observations on learning through communication.

Those who might be assumed to "need" most a certain type of message, a message which is not in harmony with group-anchored norms or even unrationalized behaviors, will be the least likely to expose themselves to it and the most likely to "misperceive" it; *i.e.,* adapt it to their existing structure of behavior and attitudes. (This principle is one psychological source of the difference between the public-affairs orientation of the mass media, which cannot afford to lose appeal by cultivating the minority market of seeking-out patterns, and of education, which cannot afford to "succeed" by exploiting the dominant cultural characteristic of avoidance patterns.) Reporting some classic experiments on how the understanding of antiprejudice messages is evaded by prejudiced people, Cooper and Jahoda[36] remarked that such "evasion appears as a well-practiced behavior, which receives encouragement from the social structure in which we live."

It may not be entirely irrelevant to relate one recent illustration[37] of the flexibility of avoidance patterns. It comes from Cannell and MacDonald's study[38] of the impact of health news on attitudes.

The subject of the inquiry was the publicity given to the relationship between smoking and lung cancer. It was found that this news split the population four ways: along class lines (as measured by educational level) and between smokers and nonsmokers. Among nonsmokers, the more highly educated tended to accept the relationship as demonstrated. Among smokers, the finding was reversed: the more highly educated smokers tended to *reject* the relationship more than the less-educated smokers. Sophistication, too, may serve the purposes of evasion. Behavior may act as an anchor resisting shifts in attitude as much as attitudes tend to organize behavior in patterns consistent to their structure.

Learning the Social Sciences from the Lively Arts

For the above subtitle, I am indebted to Arthur J. Brodbeck[39] and his associates, who conducted a series of interviews with high school students to discover some mechanisms operating among adolescents exposed to some of the more serious mass-media materials which might facilitate or inhibit interest in the social sciences.

They found indications that films and the other media do have an impact on adolescents, but that the stimulation they provide is not utilized within the peer group nor in the classroom to further interest in social issues. Conversation among teenagers about serious pictures and programs on "Communism," "segregation," and "union rackets" appeared to be reduced to Marlon Brando's style or the funny mannerisms of screen Communists. The study found evidence of strong emotions aroused and suppressed. To be carried away by ideas was thought to be odd. The teenagers were exposed in these materials to highly charged problems of social life, commented the investigators, but both parents and teachers conspired to "protect" them from full and open discussion of these problems.

Teachers were reported to look upon mass-media materials as primarily interfering with studies, or as consisting of nothing but

"trash." Students suspected teachers of being afraid of what the "others" would think if they introduced into the classroom social problems depicted in the mass media. Under these circumstances, the interviewers reported, high school students were reinforced in their sense of the "forbidden" about some of their mass-media activities; they turned to them more for thrills alone; their behavior was altered by exposure to the media, but the change was unreflective, unchecked by rational discussion; and, as if to mirror the stance taken by teachers and parents, talk about social problems raised in the media was not considered "cool" in the peer group.

Provocative as these suggestions are, they need to be submitted to systematic verification. Considering the significance of these problems and the large amount of research of all sorts that has been done in communications and education, it is strange, to say the least, that no such systematic effort has even been attempted on a major scale in the last thirty years.

THE SHUTTLEWORTH AND MAY STUDY

It was in 1929 that a group of research workers, supported by the Payne Fund, began the only large-scale investigation ever conducted of a mass medium's relationship to the information, attitudes, emotions, health, and conduct of young Americans. The results have been summarized by Charters.[40]

In one of the most extensive and systematic of these studies, Shuttleworth and May investigated the reputation, conduct, and attitudes of groups of fifth- to ninth-grade pupils, totaling 1,400 subjects. The first part of the study consisted of a special analysis of data gathered by the Character Education Inquiry. The data were grouped by frequency of movie going. One group included the frequent "movie goers" who attended movies twice a week or more, with an average attendance record of three to four times a week. The other group was composed of "non-movie goers," who reported attendance once or twice a month. The groups were matched for sex, intelligence, school grades, home background, national origin, community, and father's occupation. A summary tabulation of probably significant differences found between the two groups is reproduced in Table I.

Table I[41]

Probably Significant Differences Between Movie and Non-Movie Children

(From Shuttleworth-May)

Measures	*Group Having the Highest Average*	*Critical Ratios*
Deportment	Non-movie	7.3
Scholastic marks	Non-movie	3.8
Teacher ratings, character traits	Non-movie	3.5
Pupil ratings, "Guess Who"	Non-movie	4.6
Reputation for cooperation	Non-movie	4.0
Reputation for self-control	Non-movie	3.4
Total reputation	Non-movie	9.4
Cooperation, total conduct score	Non-movie	6.2
Efficiency cooperation	Non-movie	4.7
Envelopes cooperation	Non-movie	4.1
Self-control	Non-movie	3.6
In-school honesty	Non-movie	4.1
Named more often on "Guess Who"	Movie	3.5
Named more often as best friends	Movie	3.3

Let us elaborate on the more salient findings. Each pupil was rated on reputation by two teachers and by his classmates. Teachers' ratings on character traits consistently favored the non-movie group. Significant trait differences and critical ratios were reported in deportment (CR 7.3), school marks (CR 3.8), and character traits (CR 3.5).

Students were given twenty-four-item "Guess Who?" tests, asking them to guess who fitted certain designated characteristics. The difference "in favor" of the non-movie group was 4.6 times its probable error. On an item count, movie children were mentioned most frequently, in relation to non-movie children, on the following characteristics: "This one is always picking on others and annoying them." "This one is always trying to get by with the least possible trouble and effort to himself." "This one doesn't obey the rules if he can get out of it." Non-movie children were mentioned most frequently in answers to: "Here is someone who is kind to younger children. . . ." "Here is someone who is always doing little things to make others happy." "This is someone who is decent and clean in all conversation."

On other tests, movie children were found to do poorer work in

their school subjects, exhibited less self-control both as measured by ratings and by conduct tests, were slightly less skillful in judging what the test makers considered the most useful and helpful or sensible thing to do in problem situations, and were slightly less emotionally stable. There were no significant differences in honesty, persistence, suggestibility, and moral knowledge.

The combined teacher-pupil reputation score favored the non-movie children by 9.4 of its probable error.

On a cooperation test which involved working for an individual as against a class prize, the non-movie children "won" by a significant (CR 4.7) margin. On four batteries of Hartshorne and May tests, only the difference on the "Good Citizenship" battery approached significance (CR 2.5), again in favor of the non-movie group.

However, equally interesting was the observation that movie children were mentioned on all tests much more often than were non-movie children. Their names appeared to come more readily to mind; they were better known to more of their classmates. Their movie going appeared to be a part of their own peer-group integration. And while they were perhaps not so highly esteemed for their reputations and general conduct, they were more *popular among their peers*. On a "best friend" test, movie children were superior (CR 3.3). It was suggestive of a dating pattern, possibly associated with movie going, that among the girls twice as many movie goers as non-movie goers named *boys* as best friends.

At the conclusion of this first phase of the study based on the analysis of the Character Education Inquiry data, the investigators noted the absence of differences on many other tests. They suggested that movie children and non-movie children were essentially alike and that most of the differences were behavioral, rather than in possession of ethical or moral knowledge; *i.e.*, the ability to distinguish between "right and wrong."

Following these suggestive findings derived from a generalized test of conduct and reputation, the investigators decided to narrow their scope to specific attitudes that may be more directly related to motion-picture content. They drew up a list of hypotheses derived from the findings of these and other studies and from

assertions made most frequently by critics of the movies. They designed questionnaire tests to measure these hypotheses and gave these tests to equated groups of 416 movie and 443 non-movie students. It is worth while to cite from their summary in some detail:

> There is evidence to show that movie children admire or are more interested in cowboys, popular actors, dancers, and chorus girls while non-movie children are more interested in such types as the medical student and college professor. Interest in a type, however, does not indicate approval. In the case of chorus girls, the movie children more than non-movie children say that few chorus girls are worth-while members of society. According to expectations the movie children tend to say that most policemen torture and mistreat those suspected of crime; that most Spaniards are impractical, romantic, and love-makers; that few Russians are kind and generous. Contrary to expectations, the movie children deny that social workers are busybodies; the movie children believe that few Frenchmen are romantic and impractical. . . .
>
> While there are no differences in attitudes toward crime and criminals, there is some evidence that movie children believe that few criminals escape their just punishment. On the question of the criminal reforming and also involving indirectly sex attitudes, there is evidence that under certain conditions the movie children expect the hero to carry the girl off by force or compel her to dance with him. No difference was found in approval or disapproval of such conduct.
>
> Akin to these two tendencies which involve judgment of what is likely to happen is the willingness of the movie children to strain all probability in order to enable the hero to escape. Consistent with the data of Chapter II[42] showing the movie children to be poorly adjusted to school is evidence showing that the movie children believe few teachers to be too easy and few schoolbooks to be interesting. . . .
>
> In the field of miscellaneous dislikes the movie children are relatively more indifferent to distress and famine in India and China and relatively more concerned over losing a good friend. The movie children read more but the quality of the reading is not as high. They go to more dances. They report more recreations in which parents participate.[43]

Some Theoretical Implications

Shuttleworth and May's general summary and interpretation of the findings of their classic study is an original and little-remembered source of much "recent" theorizing about mass-media uses and effects among young people. Their significance, if anything, is heightened by default: the study has never been duplicated by more refined methods on a comparable scale. Nor am I aware of any substantial criticism of the procedures employed or results arrived at by these investigators.[44]

Aside from the substantive importance of these findings in regard to citizenship conduct and social attitudes of movie fans (which may or may not be specifically generalizable to today's conditions), there are theoretical implications in these data which permit us to structure our review of further evidence along more suggestive lines. These implications could not be fully developed by the authors themselves; today, however, considerable research may be cited to support their relevance to further tasks.

First, we should note some weaknesses in the shotgun approach of using a large number of subjects, presuming to equate major differences, and focusing on the single variable of movie attendance. In such a study (as, *e.g.*, also in that of Ricciuti), the area of overlapping is maximized. Differences in community life are difficult to account for and tend to wash out differential effects of movie attendance. Related differences also tend to obscure differential uses of content. Indeed, ninety per cent of the total number of comparisons made by Shuttleworth and May showed no significant difference between the two groups.

Secondly, the differences that *were* obtained in this early study suggest certain hypotheses which, while perhaps not entirely novel, can now be more clearly formulated and illustrated with supporting research.

Shuttleworth and May themselves noted that "in the area of attitudes where we expected to find differences and labored diligently to frame questions to reveal them, the total of our findings is more negative than positive whereas the Character Education tests of conduct and reputation which seemed far removed from

the movies have handsomely rewarded a modicum of labor with many significant differences."[45] They were also struck by the high specificity of such attitude differences as were found between the movie and non-movie children.

These observations suggest, as other studies also indicate, that patterns of life and conduct bear a greater relationship to mass-media consumption than do overt attitudes. They further suggest that attitudinal relationships, when found, tend to be specific to mass-media content and thus to function in the context of the behavior patterns of which certain content preferences and consumption habits are a part.

A further significant observation made by Shuttleworth and May is the statement that many of the findings classified under "attitudes" really involve children's "judgment of what is likely to happen" rather than what is approved. Movies had more to do with their perception of reality and conception of what the facts might be than with their explicit *evaluation* of reality. And finally, the behavior and attitude of movie fans appeared to come close to a class-linked pattern.

These suggestions, consistent with other studies, will be discussed under the categories of (1) behavioral primacy; (2) specificity of attitudes; (3) reality orientation; and (4) class-linked behavior patterns.

BEHAVIOR *vs.* MORAL STANDARDS

One significant impression derived from some of the findings reviewed in this paper is the apparent primacy of *behavioral* over ideological differences. Adolescents (as well as adults) can reflect official ideology without exhibiting corresponding behavior and without necessarily rationalizing a conflict between the two.

The implications we can derive from this notion (well established in modern educational practice) include the suggestion that differences in citizenship behavior, reputation, and general social conduct need not correspond to similar differences in conscious judgment. Ideology and attitudes resist change; behavior is more adaptive. Behavior need not be rationalized at all—and it appears that in the teenage peer groups it rarely is. But when it is, the

rationale is specific. It might conflict with other unchanged parts of ideology. And it probably comes later.

Brodbeck[46] subjected a group of adolescents to a comic book whose theme was extreme and unpunished violence by a child toward parents who appeared to invite, if not deserve, such treatment—a subject calculated to have a maximum potential for arousing aggression. It did; but the marked behavioral changes were not matched by corresponding changes in conscious attitudes toward aggression. The same condemnation of severely aggressive acts remained.

Applying the insights of this study to the high school interviews, Brodbeck[47] suggested that adolescents may be influenced in that way toward social issues. They may still believe in "fair play," for example, but after concentrated and peer-group mediated exposure to media products in which violence is the rule, they may be more willing to "go along with a crowd." Once acted out, teenagers may tend to justify their roles and gradually build standards to accommodate them. Or they may not worry about changing "standards" at all.

SPECIFICITY OF ATTITUDE CHANGE

The next notion emerges from the above. It is this: (a) attitude change is a function of alterations in behavior; (b) its nature, extent, and duration are dependent on a supporting environment and culture; and (c) it is likely to be specific to the related behavior rather than generalized.

The principle of specificity of effect is well known to communication research.[48] I am suggesting an extension of that principle in the direction of behavior-oriented specificity.

Many experiments show significant changes in attitude following exposure to communication. But most of these were concerned with communication technique and strategy, or with measuring the impact of subject matter alone. None, so far as I know, investigated the hypothesis that the *relevance of content to actual behavior patterns* (whether consciously rationalized or not) is a more significant variable than either technique or content by itself.

Some notable examples of research on mass-communication influence in areas closely related to citizenship education suggest that: (a) attitude change occurs when relevant to behavior actually

practiced, even if not officially sanctioned; (b) attempts fail or backfire when not congruent with actual practice or when not directed to existing channels of action—even if officially sanctioned and overtly approved; (c) when attempts to change attitudes are irrelevant to either actual behavior, readily available channels for action, or strongly held norms, attitudes may shift in the direction of *any* authoritative and persuasive communication; and (d) training in "propaganda analysis" by itself either has no effect on susceptibility or increases resistance to all kinds of attempts and is therefore irrelevant to the direction of attitude change.[49]

To the extent that this line of reasoning is correct, it would underline the complexity and stress the necessity of research in a social setting where the communication and attitude variables can be found in meaningful relationship to actual uses and to specific conduct.

REALITY ORIENTATION

Another theoretical category of potential relevance to future research concerns the special relationship of mass-media exposure to the reality orientation of the adolescent. By reality orientation, I mean a person's conception of what the facts are and what the possibilities might be, aside from how he feels about these facts or possibilities.

Many aspects of life have little or no anchor in personal or group experience. This is especially true for young people who grow up and search for identity and role orientation in what has been described as in many ways a no man's land. Popular culture helps them define the reality of many aspects of life that are new, remote, neglected, or even tabooed by other cultural agencies of society, yet have a direct personal relevance to developmental and social tasks. Popular culture provides opportunities for experimentation in implicit approaches and points of view toward each of these aspects and problems of life. In popular culture, this is done as it can best (or alone) be done: through vivid, dramatic, and largely imaginary representations of human problems and of the human condition.

We have seen evidence in the Shuttleworth and May studies that judgments of what the facts or possibilities are ("what is likely to happen") may be more closely related to mass-media

exposure than is overt evaluation of these "facts." Similar clues can be derived from the research of others who searched for mass-media effects. Rosenthal,[50] for example, found that while radical motion-picture propaganda tended to make the specific social practices advocated by radicals more possible, and thus more acceptable, it also led to greater agreement with the statement that "radicals are enemies to security."

In a questionnaire study based on 478 grade-school children, Scott[51] found indications of reality orientation specifically related to popular TV western and mystery programs. Unfortunately, no control group was used (or available) to test the significance of these relationships. In a more carefully designed study, Siegel[52] set out specifically to test the hypothesis that children's reality expectations are influenced by dramatic presentations in the media. She exposed matched groups to versions of a radio drama identical in all respects except the ending. She found significant differences in children's expectations of the roles in real life that might be taken by the main character involved in the drama.

Studies in films by Albert,[53] and in comic books by Brodbeck,[54] yielded similar results. In these, the investigators also found a relationship between reality orientation and actual behavior. "The more reality reference the child gave the story," reported Brodbeck, "the more he tended to have his conduct affected by it." In this respect, dramatic communication might be analogous to the "reality testing" functions of socio-drama.

CLASS-RELATED CLUSTERS OF BEHAVIOR

We can classify many of the major relationships between different types of media activity and citizenship behaviors into the two polar clusters mentioned previously; *i.e.* the seeking-out pattern and the avoidance pattern.

A composite profile of each of these patterns, based on relationships found in a number of studies,[55] would show the following:

1. The seeking-out pattern of behavior appears to be positively associated with more diversified exposure to the media; more selective exposure, including a greater share of public-affairs materials; less dependence on any one source of media mate-

rials; opinion leadership coupled with greater reliance on interpersonal stimulation and influence; higher level of information; greater activity outside the peer-group sphere; higher reputation among teachers and classmates; higher grades in school; and lower popularity among school peers.

2. The avoidance pattern is found most closely associated with being a "fan" of any one medium, to the relative exclusion of others; with lower grades in school; anxiety elements in personality; lower reputation and conduct in the eyes of both teachers and classmates, but higher popularity among peers; relative social isolation from activity outside the peer-group sphere; lower levels of information and political interest or activity; and what appeared to investigators to be lack of cooperation, greater deceptiveness, less useful reality orientation toward common problem situations.

Since some of these relationships emerged from the Shuttleworth and May studies, which claim to have equated their groups on the basis of father's occupation (generally a fair index of social status), some explanation might seem appropriate. The most plausible one appears to be the suggestion, advanced by the investigators themselves, that perhaps "the equating process was not observed far enough." Be that as it may, in their evaluation of this study, Hoban and van Ormer were also "struck by the notion that this list of superior behavioral characteristics of the persistent movie-abstainer includes many items involved in social status."

The number of significant relationships that appear to hinge on social class and the general plausibility of these patterns indicate that social class might bear a particular relation to both citizenship and mass-media behavior. The extent, nature, and precise meaning of this association would seem to be a major task for future research to investigate.

Conclusion and Implications for Research and Action

The goals and skills of democratic citizenship are conspicuous by their absence from the world of the mass media. The functions

of a free press in a self-governing society have been overshadowed by the necessity of competing for attention in a market of consumer desires and gratifications. Adolescents form a sizable share of this market. In general, they conform to its pressures.

The over-all context of association between mass-media uses and citizenship behaviors is not conducive to the development of the "seeking-out pattern" in regard to interest in or concern with social problems. There are, however, great differences in patterns of community and social life. The effects of the media in this context tend to be conservative and reinforcing rather than to impel toward change. Mass-media influences might be observed most profitably in relation to actual conduct rather than to general attitudes, and in regard to judgments of the reality of certain aspects of life.

Too little is known about the citizenship and mass-media behavior that might be peculiar to an adolescent subculture; and the differential impact of mass-media materials upon youth of different social classes has not been investigated in sufficient depth.

SOME HYPOTHESES FOR RESEARCH

1. Both the high school and the mass media of communication represent "society" communicating to its youth. These two major secular agencies of adolescent socialization assume differentiated functions in the life of the student, but these functions are implicitly related in behavior.

   a. Differences in citizenship behavior in school and community are associated with different patterns of mass-media activity.
   b. Avoidance-type behavior is related to monopolization of attention by relatively few content types or media.
   c. A content analysis associated with the avoidance pattern will reveal representation of life more suggestive of general *conduct* associated with this pattern than will a content analysis associated with any other pattern of behavior.

2. In a high school relatively successful in providing meaningful channels of citizenship activity for students, mass-media patterns will assume a different role and complexion even when amount of "leisure time" is held constant.

3. The most important influence of mass-media content on the citizenship of adolescents is in structuring their orientation toward the realities of public life and toward actual community participation, rather than in directly affecting attitudes.

4. Social class is a significant factor related to both citizenship conduct and mass-media behavior.

a. The avoidance syndrome is a major obstacle to citizenship education. Mass-media patterns associated with this syndrome strongly support its other behavioral manifestations. Citizenship education *alone* will not change the class orientation of behavior, but will lead to unrationalized conflicts between conduct and ideology and to increased anxiety.

b. Opportunities for group self-direction and participation in citizenship activities, when accompanied by a change in mass-media consumption patterns, will lead to a greater alteration in the avoidance syndrome, regardless of class, than when not accompanied by a change in media patterns.

SOME IMPLICATIONS FOR AN ACTION PROGRAM

1. Among the instructional objectives of the action program, attention should be given to the development of self-direction in the selection and use of mass-media products. The "cultural island" concept of citizenship education (if such is to guide the plan of action) should serve not so much the purposes of isolation as the purposes of comparison, contrast, and sharpened awareness of the everyday influences which pervade the life of the student. If this objective is to be achieved, it is necessary to formulate specific goals, methods, and desired outcomes in this area.

2. The experimental action program should be regarded as a social laboratory that transcends the walls of the school. A study of the community, homes, and families of participating students and an investigation of selected dimensions within the patterns of popular culture activity, even on a modest scale, will provide a meaningful backdrop against which to conduct and appraise the program. Such investigation is necessary also for the testing of the major hypotheses advanced in this chapter.

3. While the specifics of an action program or of related research are beyond the scope of this chapter, it might be suggested

here that the planning and testing of educational objectives and the design and execution of research, while not necessarily isolated from one another, should proceed independently to best preserve the integrity of both.

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