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THE DIFFERENTIATION OF LIFE-STYLES

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INTRODUCTION

This paper is an attempt to review recent literature on traditional and contemporary life-styles in the light of the cultural differentiation of tastes and preferences. We start with the assumption that tastes are neither completely determined by economic status, as was implied by Marx, nor totally individualized. Tastes are determined in part by relative position in the markets for wealth and prestige, in part by individual choice informed by education and experience, and in part by voluntarily chosen, collectively held standards that determine life-styles. Life-style differentiation takes place both inside and outside the markets for wealth and prestige and hence crosscuts them.[1] In this paper we discuss both classical life-styles generated by socioeconomic stratification and alternative life-styles generated as spontaneous attempts to reach consensus on standards of value in the absence of compelling traditional market constraints.

Empirically, tastes are revealed in economic consumption patterns; political beliefs; and moral, ethical, and aesthetic standards. The collectively held standards that actually differentiate among life-styles vary from time to time and from place to place. In the past decade American society has witnessed a proliferation of alternative life-styles. Preferences for two-career families over one-career families, ethnic reidentification over assimilation, homosexual relationships over heterosexual relationships, communal living over family living, and immediate gratification over deferred gratification, among many others, have been responsible for the emergence of distinctive life-styles. Many of these may be of purely ethnographic interest, while others will probably have measurable effects on such economic and social indicators as energy consumption, purchase of housing and durable goods, fertility, saving and borrowing patterns, and marriage and divorce.

[1]The concept is built upon the Weberian notion of style of life but attempts to extend this beyond the treatment of status collectivities.

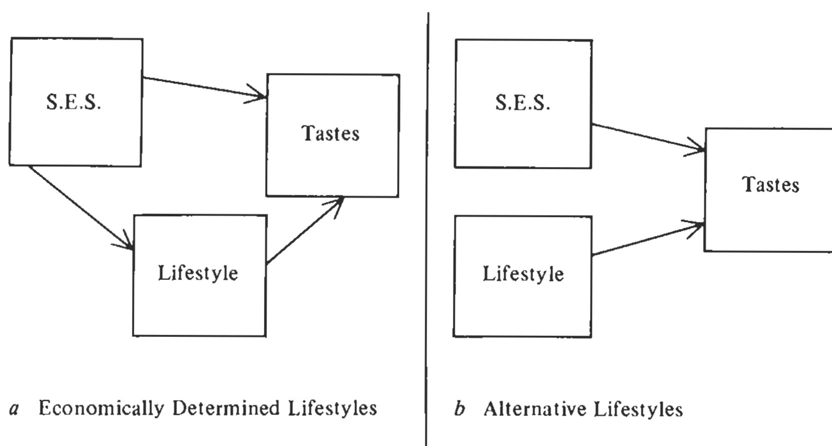

Figure 1 Traditional and alternative conception of the causal relationship among socioeconomic status, life-style, and tastes.

The differentiation of life-styles thus has serious methodological implications for demographic studies of migration and family planning as well as for attempts to predict the results of social policies and to derive measures of life satisfaction and personal happiness. We are implying that life-style must at times be considered an exogenous variable, thus giving rise to the path conception depicted in part *b* of Figure 1. Traditional life-style would continue to be conceived of as an intervening variable as in part *a* of the figure.

Life-style has been a term much used but poorly defined in contemporary social science writings. It has been confused with subculture, social movement, and status group. An ultimate goal should be to provide a distinct and analytically useful definition of life-style in terms of shared values or tastes as reflected primarily in consumption patterns but applicable also to the evaluation of intangible and/or public goods. A life-style might be defined over a given collectivity to the extent that the members are similar to one another and different from others both in the distribution of their disposable incomes and the motivations that underlie such distributions. A purely statistical definition of life-style, therefore, would have to use as input data motivations as well as consumption frequencies. Although there exist factor analysis and discriminant analysis algorithms[2] that could be used to distinguish clumps of commodities and clumps of individuals that are similar to each other, the problem of interpreting the meaning of these would probably require the existence either of a theory of life-styles or a good deal of a priori information about the goals represented within the population in question.

[2]In practice, the sort of data required for such analysis would be difficult to collect. Some sort of cluster analysis, smallest space analysis, or multidimensional scaling technique (Guttman 1968, Coleman 1971) might be used instead.

Levine (1968) proposes an alternative definition in which life-style "emerges from the mutual adaptation of parts of experience felt so intensely that their contrasts and organization produce an emotionally gratifying whole." It is a matter for research to determine the degree to which two definitions—one statistical and the other in terms of meanings—may come to coincide.

Life-style is to be distinguished from culture and subculture. A given life-style may be characteristic of a specific social class, status group, or subculture; but since life-style is defined solely in terms of shared preferences, it is possible and indeed is often the case that a life-style may be defined over a collectivity that otherwise lacks social and cultural identity. Subcultures must be underwritten with a set of shared meanings that may, among other things, justify distinctive shared preference correlations. Culture or subculture implies a degree of consensus with respect to meanings that is not always approached by the sharers of a life-style. However, during a period of cultural transition, life-styles will proliferate more rapidly than cultural systems of value. Therefore, widespread and enduring life-styles may profitably be studied for clues as to the direction of emerging culture.

By analogy, we may say that a life-style bears the same relationship to a subculture that a public bears to a social movement. A public may be characterized as a collectivity with a distinctive pattern of correlated interests, regardless of whether the collectivity has articulated strategies for the realization of these interests. A social movement may thus be defined as a self-conscious public, just as a subculture may be defined as a self-conscious life-style collectivity.

Life-style is also to be distinguished from social class and social status, though it may stem from both. With respect to consumption patterns, a social class may be approximately defined by income and financial resources; that is, by the size of the market basket that its members can obtain. In a society differentiated only by class, all individuals would strive after the same goods and services and be differentiated only by the ability to obtain them.

The consumption patterns of a status group, on the other hand, involve the factor of prestige. Thus we find not only characteristic amounts of goods and services obtained for a given status group, but also a characteristic mix of these goods and services. A higher status group will thus consume more theater and ballet than a lower status group, but less bowling, more wine and liquor, and less beer. What distinguishes a status collectivity from other life-style collectivities is the degree of consensus in the prestige market concerning the ordering of values associated with these tastes. If both beer drinkers and wine drinkers agree that a preference for wine reflects a higher set of values than a preference for beer, then beverage preference becomes a component of status differentiation. If both beer drinkers and wine drinkers prefer wine and only drink beer to the extent that they cannot afford wine, then beverage consumption patterns reflect class differentiation. If neither beer drinkers nor wine drinkers acknowledge the superiority of the other's preference, beverage consumption pattens, to the extent that they are correlated with a wide range of other distinctive consumption preferences, are indicative of independent alternative life-styles. Thus we see that consumption frequencies alone cannot distinguish between status-generated tastes and life-style–generated tastes.

Let us now turn to an examination, in the remaining two sections of this paper, first of life-styles determined by economic system location and then of those determined outside the economic system. In neither case will we be able to discuss the entire range of empirically observable life-styles. Instead, we will attempt to discuss a representative range of those that have been most extensively discussed in recent sociological literature.

CLASSIC FORMS OF LIFE-STYLE DIFFERENTIATION: ECONOMIC SYSTEM LOCATION

Socioeconomic status (SES) is correlated with so many aspects of life-style that most sociological analyses have traditionally considered SES the primary determinant of life-style differentiation. In fact, the best single predictor of life-style is SES. Socioeconomic status is associated with many indicators of family life-style: divorce rates, marriage stability, adjustment, or dissatisfaction (Williamson 1952, Goode 1965, Bernard 1966, Renne 1970); reasons for marital tension (Rainwater 1970, Scanzoni 1965); age of marriage (Furstenberg 1974); happiness (Bradburn & Caplovitz 1965, Hicks & Platt 1970); division of labor in the family (Olsen 1960); child-rearing practices and values (McKinley 1964, Kohn 1969, Pearlin 1970, Gecas & Nye 1974); and kinship ties (Farber 1971). In addition to family organization, class level has been associated with other aspects of life-style: choice of symbols of success (Mizruchi 1964); preferences for the use of leisure (White 1955, Clarke 1956); and membership in voluntary associations (Wright & Hyman 1958, Adams & Butler 1967).

Differential location in the economic structure accounts for many of the life-style differences among social classes. From correlational studies and more ethnographic accounts of life in one status group (e.g. Komarovsky 1962, Berger 1960, Seeley, Sim & Loosley 1956, Gans 1962, Liebow 1966, Rainwater 1970), it is possible to draw a picture of the likely life-style constellation of various classes. There seem to be three basic types of economically determined life-styles: (*a*) property-dominated, (*b*) occupation-dominated, and (*c*) income- or-poverty-dominated. They correspond roughly, but not completely, to conventional designations of the traditional upper class; upper middle through working classes; and the lower class or the poor. That is, the unique characteristics of the elite life-style seem to be shaped by the ownership and/or control of material, institutional, and symbolic property. The forms of life for the upper middle through working classes seem to be defined by the nature of work, with type of occupation, occupational rhythms, and occupational rewards determining "class"-based life-style clusters within this broad range. At the bottom of the class ladder, on the other hand, it is the effects of limited income and low material security that define the principal features of the life-style of the poor. Because of the great variations in where and how researchers draw class boundaries, it makes sense to talk of three kinds of economic life-styles that are not exactly coterminous with social classes.

Property-Dominated Life-styles

Property ownership and accumulation, of both a material and positional sort, create the conditions for a particular life-style constellation. Property is used here in the sense of "estates," including monetary wealth, real property, the ownership or control of banks, holding companies, businesses, etc, and positions that are given by entitlement and can be passed on by ascription. For the elite ranks of the upper class, i.e. those who possess property and family lineage rather than merely income or a currently powerful role, life-style has many traditional trappings, just as it does for traditional societies in which property and symbolic estates are among the most salient features of social life. Investment of self in the family or status group tends to predominate, with work roles distinctively secondary as definers of identity; indeed, members of this life-style group may even have no distinct occupation or work for pay.

Life-styles dominated by property ownership tend, in general, to have the following characteristics. First, the family form is likely to be a modified extended family with strong kin ties. Kinship serves both structural functions (e.g. giving members an ascribed position in the society) and symbolic functions (providing traditions and a cultural heritage) (Farber 1971, Cavan 1969). The existence of a strong and bounded kin network maintains the differentiation of the elite from the rest of society and keeps property within the family. Marriage tends to be very important, for it creates ties between families; the choice of spouse is critical. Marriage occurs not between the spouses alone but includes symbolic incorporation into the spouse's family, marked by address of in-laws by kin terms (Farber 1971). Kin may then interfere in every aspect of the lives of nuclear families. Elders have a great deal of control over the lives of all family members and there is strong age grading, with children isolated from the world of their parents and reared largely by parent surrogates (nurses, governesses, boarding school teachers) (Cavan 1969). Low fertility rates underscore the importance of elders and adults, for there are relatively few children in relation to older people. The age stratum with greatest rewards is middle to early old age. It is primarily through inheritance that the goals associated with this life-style are obtained. A combination of certainty of achievement and relative lack of control over the time at which achievement will take place lead to a high valuation of readiness (or "eternal vigilance") within this life-style.

The power of the oldest family members and the pressure to maintain continuity of family line as property is handed down through the generations reinforce an orientation toward the past. The kinship group maintains biographical and genealogical information to keep the identity of the propertied, define status, indicate connections and power, and tell stories of heroes and villains (Farber 1971). Portraits, heirlooms, historical homes, and antiques are important; family first names as well as last names are passed on, and certain occupations may remain with the family for generations (Cavan 1969). Rituals like weddings and naming ceremonies are emphasized. There is often some joint family territory, such as an estate or summer compound.

The propertied tend to occupy their own insulated and territorially distinct social world. Wealth provides the ability to create social and cultural isolation of the family group and the class itself from the rest of society by the withdrawal from public institutions and the use of private, privileged ones such as exclusive private schools and clubs; furthermore, third parties can be hired to handle the dealing of the propertied with the rest of society. The life-styles of non-wealthy, property-dominated collectivities, such as farmers, exhibit a similar tendency to insularity without, however, the same degree of institutional self-sufficiency. The presence of property creates both the pressure for insulation (to ensure the next generations' cultural inheritance and within-class marriage, for one thing) and, in the case of the rich, the ability to enforce insulation.

Occupation-Dominated Life-styles

While research has confirmed a number of important differences among levels in the range from upper middle class through working class, for purposes of life-style analysis this segment of society has in common a general shared location in the economic system: life is shaped in large part by the selling of labor for wages on the market. Distinctions within this category stem from differences in work situations: the opportunities and world views offered by different relations to the means of production, the time constraints and pressures of work, the spillover of work demands into private life, and the consumption levels made possible by the income generated by a job. Investment of self and feelings of self-worth tend to stem from measures provided by the work situation, with the first indicator of identity likely to be occupation or current job. Whether or not work is a central life interest of all wage and salary workers (Dubin 1956), it is certainly an influence on their life-style. For middle-class women, too, the occupation of housewife shapes life-style.

The "isolated nuclear family" style identified (and criticized) in sociological literature is most likely to be a feature of occupation-dominated life-styles, in comparison with the others. While kin ties may remain salient, the functions of kin are most likely sociable ones, e.g. the provision of companionship; kin relations tend to be optional ones, selected as friends would be, but with the advantage of shared history. Generational relations tend to be more egalitarian than in property-dominated lifestyles, with more joint activities and decision making and the assignment of tasks to children as part of the socialization process. There is a hope that children will do as well or better than parents, but inheritance of a very specific occupation is rare despite inheritance of a general class position (Blau & Duncan 1967). The future is more important than the past and there is greater likelihood of geographic mobility and neolocal residence. Personal ambition or ambition for children are core values of occupation-dominated life-styles.

Maturity tends to be defined by submission to the disciplines of the work place and schools, even for the youngest of children, inculcate obedience to the rhythms of work organization (Kanter 1972b, Gints & Bowles 1976). The age stratum looked to as generating the greatest rewards is that of the early middle years. Occupational and marital position and financial independence have been achieved. Stereotypically, the culmination of the strivings of the middle-class male is said to occur when

he is established on a career ladder; for the non–wage-earning female, when she has acquired a husband and the proper number of children.

Marriage tends to be very important as an institution in this cluster of life-styles, but less in the sense of dynastic alliance and more as a rite of passage to adult responsibility, respectability, and privilege. Lack of sufficient resources to hire servants combined with the high monetary valuation given to a person's time make questions of the division of labor within the marriage crucial for this cluster of life-styles. In traditional middle-class families, success of the male breadwinner in his occupation often rested heavily upon the assumption of a wide range of personal service roles by the female partner.

Within this broad category, of course, there are finer variations in life-style associated with the characteristics of particular work situations. Classical sociological analyses have viewed these as stemming from the nature of class differences. For example, studies have indicated that home ownership tends to be more highly valued as a success symbol for working than middle classes (Mizruchi 1964), and that while certain indicators of consumption preferences show no white collar/blue collar variations that cannot be accounted for by income, those higher in occupational prestige tend to engage in more frequent financial transactions (stock ownership, bank involvements, etc) (Segal & Felson 1973).

Much attention has been specifically devoted to the nature of blue-collar life-styles, in and of themselves, particularly stressing a characteristic set of values that distinguish working-class from middle-class people even where outward consumption appears to be identical, e.g. more traditionalism, person-centeredness, interest in results and not ideas, concern with obedience and outward conformity for children, pragmatism, and an acceptance of lack of mobility for self but greater hopes for children (Miller & Riessman 1961, McKinley 1964, Rainwater & Handel 1964, Shostak & Gomberg 1964, Purcell 1960, Kohn 1969, Pearlin 1970, Sennett & Cobb 1972, LeMasters 1975). These values have been attributed not to motivational and psychological valuables but directly to job conditions and the assessment of opportunities and risks stemming from them (Miller & Riessman 1961); manual occupations have been said to give rise to a different world view and sense of life possibilities than nonmanual ones (Kohn 1969).

Handel & Rainwater (1964) have pointed to the emergence of a "modern" working class (in contrast to the traditional working class) that has come to resemble the middle class, at least outwardly, in suburban home ownership, increased focus on the nuclear family (reflected in spatial distance from kin and consumption patterns), receptivity to the mass media, and greater mutuality in all aspects of husband-wife relations (Handel & Rainwater 1964). Several arguments have been made as to the factors responsible for this outward blurring of class distinctions in life-style. Handel & Rainwater (1964) attribute it to both increased prosperity (more income and job security for workers) and suburbanization. Berger (1960) had concluded that suburbanization had *not* transformed the working class, even though there was a tendency for wives to appear more middle-class than husbands; later research, however, indicated a tendency for suburban working-class families to come to resemble the middle class more than do their urban counterparts (Tallman &

Morgner 1970). An alternative view has also been suggested in Wilensky's labor-leisure studies: that the blurring has occurred because the middle classes may be becoming more like the working class, a theme echoed in analyses of the effects of bureaucratization on world views (e.g. Miller & Swanson 1958). Wilensky (1961) defined the existence of a broad "middle mass" for which work sets the boundary conditions for life but has ceased to be a significant factor in social integration.

The problems involved in accurate and precise definitions of class boundaries and the rather large amount of overlap among classes on many life-style indicators (see R. Turner 1964:213) point to the inadequacy of class as the sole economic system variable in identifying life-style. As the problem of accounting for the life-style patterns of suburban working-class families illustrates, it is often difficult to determine whether emerging patterns of valuation and consumption are to be attributed to the blurring of class boundaries or to the upward mobility of whole classes themselves as a society becomes more affluent. The latter hypothesis has been advanced by Willmott & Young (1973) in their history of "stratified diffusion." The working class, according to this theory, catches up to the economic and social position that the middle class has left behind, leading to the appearance of class line blurring, although the relative position of one class with respect to another has in fact remained unchanged.

Some analyses have begun to look at occupational culture itself (as opposed to occupational status or prestige) as a generator of life-style. Hatt (1950) had long argued for the importance of "situs," a horizontal dimension incorporating shared occupational world, in stratification research. Wilensky (1961:521–22) pointed out:

> . . . it is clear that *class cultures* (sustained by similar levels of income and education and common absorption of the mass media) and *ethnic-religious cultures* (sustained by common descent and early socialization) significantly shape social relations. It is also clear that *occupational cultures* (rooted in common tasks, work schedules, job training, and career patterns) are sometimes better predictors of behavior than both social class and pre-job experience.

Several variables seem particularly important: the absorptiveness of an occupation (the extent to which it directly demands a life-style, involving the occupants' private time and implicating their close relations); time and timing (the effects of work hours and schedules); reward and resources (the kinds of resources made available by the occupation); world view (occupational cultures as socializers and teachers of values); and emotional climate (the personal experiencing of self and world made possible by the work environment). (See Kanter 1976b for further discussion and literature review.) Studies have highlighted occupational differences in family and leisure style within the same broad class, e.g. dentists vs admen vs professors (Gerstl 1961), or in punishment techniques with children (Steinmetz 1974). We have the space here to examine only one of the above dimensions—that of absorptiveness.

Occupations differ in how much they absorb and subsume workers' lives; they fall along a continuum from highly salient and absorptive to minimally salient and nonabsorptive. It was the existence of jobs at the low end of the continuum—those

involving rather little of the person, performed for the pay involved, not constituting a central life interest for workers, and implicating little or none of their off-the-job life—that led Dubin (1956) to comment that social experience is inevitably segmented. For such workers, work, leisure, and family may indeed constitute highly separated, highly segregated worlds; each may operate on its own terms, with the other acting only as an externality (in the economic sense) or a boundary-setting condition. At the other end of the continuum, in highly absorptive occupations, work and life-style may be so closely intertwined as to make it virtually impossible to consider one without considering the other. Such absorptive occupational groups include proprietors of small retail stores who live on the premises, Peace Corps volunteers, military officers, clergy, and even teachers and police in small towns, as well as the more elite groups of executives, foreign service officers, and national politicians. Farming may be thought of as both an absorptive and a property-dominated occupation.

Absorptive occupations can be said to be modern versions of family productive systems. As such, they are one of the most important places in which work–life-style connections need to be examined, for in these kinds of work, occupational systems constrain and implicate the whole family, leisure time, and consumption patterns directly, immediately, and routinely. While the issue has been raised in the literature, there is practically no research that would guide either social theory or social policy here. (Current evidence is discussed in Kanter 1976a). For policy, especially the issues of the right of organizations to demand total absorption, the benefits and costs to families in these positions, and what organizations owe to the spouses and familes of workers in absorptive pursuits may become important social welfare questions of the future.

Finally, there is an emergent occupation-based life-style generated by the entrance of large numbers of married women (especially women with children) into the labor force; the women's movement has created the conditions for and has brought to awareness the special life-style of the two-career family. A fair number of sociological studies (e.g. Nye & Hoffman 1963, Bailyn 1970, Hoffman & Nye 1974) have treated the life-style or family relations impact of wage-earning wives and mothers, although there has been some tendency to treat this as a social problem. Two analyses used case studies to draw detailed portraits of the special life-style of families with two breadwinners (Rapoport & Rapoport 1965, Holmstrom 1972), and others have focused on the consequences for future life-styles of the continuation and extension of this pattern (Willmott & Young 1973). In families centered around two wage earners, occupations and occupational constraints, as well as time management issues, are critical in shaping life-style. Middle-class families with two wage earners and preschool children have increasingly had to confront the issue of individual versus collective parenting and the separation of biological from social parenting roles. Boocock (1973), Roby (1973), and Zablocki et al (1975c) have discussed the serious cultural implications of a possibly emerging trend toward institutionalized child care for the nonimpoverished in the United States and other advanced industrialized nations. Meanwhile, lack of availability of such alternatives and/or ambivalence about their use may have contributed to a significant drop in fertility within this life-style in recent years.

Poverty-Dominated Lifes-styles

For the lower classes, lack of financial security and a stable source of income may shape a life-style package. Marginal economic position, lack of property (even "ownership" in a career or job), and participation in a secondary labor market—a concept much in use by economists in the past decade—define the life-style context for the poor. Beginning in the early 1960s with the discovery of poverty in the midst of the "affluent society," social scientists have devoted much attention to the life-style of the poor, especially to ghetto blacks, but also to other ethnic groups with a marginal economic position (Guillemin 1975).

From a conceptual perspective, the notion of a poverty-dominated life-style presents difficulties. Strictly speaking, according to our definition only those aspects of the shared values of the poor that are chosen voluntarily should be included under the heading of life-style. However, to the extent that poverty narrows choices and prevents planning and decision making, the degree of voluntarism in so-called poverty life-styles is called into question. Without attempting to resolve this difficulty here, we point out that at the very least, an attempt should be made to distinguish between those objects of consumption that may be technically designated inferior in the sense that the frequency curve of their purchase with respect to income has negative slope, and those that remain as tastes even when income rises. The former manifest independent effects of income on consumption patterns, while the latter may be treated as life-style determined.

There is little evidence of enduring independent life-style effects upon the values of the urban poor. Attemps to locate the causes of behavioral trait persistence among poor people who have been experimented upon with income enhancement programs have been inconclusive on this issue. The methodological difficulty of distinguishing between values and socialized predispositions is at the root of this lack of clarity, pointing again to the importance of voluntarism in the definition of life-style.

The most visible aspect of the poverty life-style consists of a reliance on kin networks and the modified extended family to meet daily domestic needs (Stack 1973, Farber 1971). However, these bonds are rapidly broken by the upwardly mobile. Individuals or nuclear family units simply cannot make it on their own. Because of the male's marginal economic position, his role as breadwinner and head of the family may suffer (Liebow 1966, Rainwater 1970) and women may become very important as heads of households and authorities within husband-wife families (Aldous 1969). However, there are great differences in interpretation of this phenomenon and the degree to which it is true of the black poor more than the white poor; Rodman (1964) has pointed out that what seem to be social problems among the poor may in fact be reasonable solutions to their economic situation.

Within the poverty-dominated life-style, kinship ties keep the poor within the social system and permit the propertyless to survive with minimal social disruption. There is a need to widen the kin group as much as possible for daily support tasks to be carried out. Therefore, there is a tendency to eliminate barriers to the intersection of kin units and to blur descent groups, but to stress descent rather than affinity in kinship reckoning (Farber 1971). Women may be the most invested in the kin

network, while men may be more invested in peer groups with whom they engage in expressive pursuits during leisure time and while unemployed (Bott 1957, Liebow 1966). There is a tendency for activities and networks to be sex segregated. Marriage is not very important as an institution, for it does not necessarily solve any economic problems, and it may even add burdens or remove economic options such as welfare. Premarital chastity and marital fidelity may not be valued to the extent they are in other classes where they serve necessary functions (Farber 1971, Rainwater 1970). However, more recent research (Dreyer 1975) indicates that differences in premarital sexual behavior among social classes have been sharply diminishing in the 1970s. Among the very poor, fertility rates have tended to be high and there are relatively large numbers of children in relation to adults. On the other hand, since adult resources are limited, adults have little of a material and perhaps even symbolic sort to pass on to children, and children may be engaging in necessary labor within or outside the home; generational differences are relatively unimportant and may even be blurred (Farber 1971). Maintenance of adult authority in such situations often means a reliance on physical punishment and obedience demands more than persuasion or reasoning.

The marginal economic position and daily struggle for existence may generate a present time orientation. Success can come to be evaluated in day-to-day terms; kin relations to be organized by sentiment, eroticism, and immediate feelings. Beliefs in fate or luck may develop; people who lack control over life conditions may have little occasion to develop concepts of the ways that present acts affect future prospects (Rainwater 1960). The life stage most valued may be adolescence or youth—the time when life is most glamorous. The person might be at the height of his/her attractiveness and physical prowess, may have the highest earning potential coupled with the fewest responsibilities, and peer society may be most relevant and available (Gans 1962). Beyond the importance of peer groups and gangs, individuals and families are also subject to intervention by a number of other third parties: kin, who often take on support functions and perform immediate tasks (e.g. mother-in-law, mother's mother); and outside agencies representing established society, who may interfere in the life-style (schools, police, welfare officials). Guillemin (1975) has noted the wide range of bureaucratic officials who feel they have some say over the lives of poor urban Indians.

Many other aspects of poverty-dominated life-styles have also been examined, of course, including much attention to socialization practices. Many recent analyses have been much less pejorative than earlier studies, although it is still difficult to untangle the descriptive from the evaluative component. Most of the attention, however, has centered around the residentially stable poor, who are culturally isolated in poverty pockets and maintain a sense of community within these areas, even if family members or members of the kin network occasionally leave to find work elsewhere or return to a traditional community like the Micmac Indians do in periodically visiting a northern reservation (Guillemin 1975). There has been relatively less attention paid to the life-style of the migrant poor, such as migrant farm workers (see Nelkin 1970) or itinerant street people, other than the classic studies of hoboes and tramps (Bahr 1970, 1973).

LIFE-STYLE AS AN INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: BEYOND ECONOMIC LOCATION

At the same time that some sociological analysis has permitted the identification of those life-styles most centrally shaped by location in the economic or production systems, other work has indicated that for a growing segment of the population, economic location no longer dominates the definition of a life-style. In Wilensky's (1961) terms, social integration and consumption patterns may no longer stem from occupational or economic location. The very poor and the very powerful, the members of "greedy occupations" and of two-career families, may still find their life-styles (and behind that, their characteristic patterns of shared values) more or less automatically given by economic system location. Wilensky and then later analysts have pointed to a large segment of the population (Wilensky's "middle mass") for whom consumption is relatively independent of role in the production system, and for whom career no longer provides an automatic form of social integration. The emergence of the counterculture and life-style experimentation has taken place among people for whom occupational and economic role no longer provided a coherent set of values and for whom identity has come to be generated in the consumption rather than the production realm, and affluence has permitted a choice of goods from which to make up a life-style package. For Bell (1973), indeed, one sign of the coming of the post-industrial society was the relative independence of the production, consumption, and distribution realms: that for many participants, each system operated by different principles and different rules. Individuals are relatively free to make a range of independent, even hedonistic, consumption decisions little constrained by their productive roles.

Life-style and Life Cycle

It is important to distinguish life-style from stage in the life cycle. When SES is held constant, the best remaining predictor of life-style, as measured by consumer behavior, is stage in the life cycle (Clark & Foote, 1955–1961). There has been a tendency, therefore, to overidentify particular life-styles with their modal age cohorts, ignoring the wide range in age distribution actually found among the adherents of most life-styles. Thus, for example, communes have been treated as a youth phenomenon, although there is evidence that about a quarter of all members of contemporary American communes are over the age of thirty (Zablocki 1972, 1975a). Such age-cohort stereotyping of life-styles could conceivably blind researchers to the role of broadly based life-styles in transforming culture.

Nevertheless, many of the adherents of alternative life-styles are undoubtedly recruited from a certain few life stages whose developmental tasks require experimentation (Erikson 1964). The amorphous period between adolescence and adulthood that has been identified as youth (Coleman 1974, Havighurst 1975) involves a great deal of life-style experimentation. So does the equally amorphous period following the increasingly common event—termination of first marriage (Goode 1965). Less extensively, and for somewhat different reasons, the final period of life,

after retirement from work and child-rearing, tends to be associated with life-style experimentation (Streib 1968, Hochschild 1973, 1975).

All of the above examples suggest a link between life-style experimentation and anomie, and the first and the last examples also suggest a connection with exclusion from the labor force. Both of these factors are clearly operating with respect to youth. The Gallup Poll and the Yankelovich survey each document a continuous decline in acceptance of traditional moral constraints among youth from 1959 to 1972 (Bengston & Starr, 1975). In both surveys, this decline is significantly greater among youth than within the population as a whole. At the same time, Havighurst (1975:125, 128, 131) has documented the demographic trends that have led to the exclusion of large proportions of youth from the labor market:

> To employ a biological metaphor, every society must ingest a generation of children and digest or socialize them into adults who can carry on the business of the society. The process sometimes gives the society discomfort, and that is happening in the 1970's to the American society. . . . The society must find new ways of absorbing the generation of youth into adulthood during the period from 1970 to 1990, . . . But, the highly productive American economy simply does not use more than half of the young people aged sixteen through twenty-one, and uses some of them only on part-time jobs.

It would be a mistake, however, to ascribe a single life-style or life-style cluster to that stage in the life cycle that has been designated youth. As Lipset & Raab (1970), Coleman (1974), Bengston & Starr (1975), and others have demonstrated, there is an extremely wide range of alternative values and life-styles held by youth (whose apparent homogeneity is largely a journalistic myth). It would be more appropriate to say that youth can be a cause of the search for alternative life-styles than to argue that any particular life-style itself is explainable by the fact of youth. A similar argument can be made for distinguishing other stages of the life cycle that are rich in alternative life-styles from the specific life-styles associated with these stages.

Values and Value Coherence

New life-styles arise in a society to the degree that members of the society cease to agree on the value of the currency of the markets in commodities and prestige[3] or at least come to recognize other independent sources of value. This implies more than simply that preferences or tastes differ. It implies that even a minimal basis of consensus, with respect to an ordinal ranking of preferences, is absent. Such minimal consensus has been called value coherence (Riker & Ordeshook 1973).

[3]Agreement on the value of this currency need not be expressed by behavioral unanimity, although such agreement includes the situation of unanimity. However, it also includes situations in which preferences differ but there is agreement on an ordering of these preferences. With respect to the commodities market, such agreement manifests itself through the existence of goods whose demand curve has a negative slope with respect to income (known as "inferior goods"). With respect to the prestige market, such agreement manifests itself through "payments" of deference to consumers with higher tastes.

There has been little systematic work in sociology on the measurement of values. Vernon & Allport (1931) began a rather fruitless empirical tradition of seeking, out of context, for a small number of basic value categories from which all others could be derived. While Vernon & Allport's derived categories—theoretical, economic, aesthetic, social, political, and religious—may now seem naive, more recent work (Scott 1959, Rokeach 1973, Yankelovich 1974) has made little progress at bridging the gap between objective and subjective meaning of value labels. However, Osgood & Snider's semantic differential technique (1969) shows promise of being the methodological tool that may accomplish this task.

Even less in sociology has been written on the subject of value coherence. The term is taken from economics and political science where it has been used in attempts to resolve Arrow's paradox (Arrow 1963, Riker & Ordeshook 1973). Its applications to the study of culture have been primarily due to the work of anthropologists (Sapir 1924, Benedict 1934, Kroeber 1957). Kroeber (1944) argued "that style patterns have specific potentialities that are realized in climactic spurts of creativity and are then exhausted, leading to their abandonment and the generation of new styles, and that periods of societal breakdown and reconstitution are accompanied by losses of style." If this theory is correct, the proliferation of alternative life-styles in the last ten years may be explained in terms of the general societal breakdown for which other evidence is available.

Macrosociologists have advanced two alternative hypotheses to explain the proliferation of life-styles in American society since 1945. These may be referred to as the consumer society hypothesis and the transitional society hypothesis, respectively. Both perspectives agree that there has been a general breakdown of cultural coherence in American society. However, the consumer society theorists (Lewis, 1973, Bell 1973, Gersuny & Rosengren 1973, Gartner & Riessman 1974) explain this in terms of society having reached a sufficient level of capital accumulation to be able to generate a sufficient degree of leisure time for a large enough number of people that alternative standards of value and alternative life-styles become a permanent feature of the social structure. (Such views might see a shrinking of life-style differentiation in a time of economic recession, such as the present, when economic considerations again come to dominate many life-style choices.) The transitional society theorists (Etzioni 1968, Kahn 1967, Brzezinski 1970), on the other hand, have argued that the differentiation of life-styles is a phenomenon associated with the breakdown of one encompassing cultural tradition and occurs prior to the emergence of the new culture. Insofar as this debate can be resolved by research, a close examination of the growth and diffusion of life-style patterns themselves may be of importance. It is also important to distinguish between the actual proliferation of new life-styles and their "discovery" by the media and the scholarly community. Some ways of life that did not receive much attention until recently have actually existed in some form for much longer. There have been recurrent outbursts of commune formation throughout American history, for example; the 1840s resembled the 1960s in both the amount and kind of social movement agitation and life-style experimentation (Kanter 1972a, 1973). Anarchistic and mystical com-

munes have continually been options for the culturally radical fringe (Veysey 1973). However, the rising interest in such alternatives still deserves exploration.

The study of alternative life-styles, then, to the extent that it is distinct from the study of social deviance[4] is really at base a study of the decline of the power of the economic and status systems of a society to impose upon most of the members of that society a scale upon which life-styles and tastes can be unambiguously ranked. Where such a scale exists, we say that a society's values are coherent, however diverse and polarized they may be. In this paper we assume that to the extent that the wealth and prestige markets fail to impose standards of taste and valuation in terms of relative position in these markets, individuals will seek other means of attaining value coherence. If this assumption is correct, alternative life-styles will not be formed at random, but rather in terms of shared strategies for regaining value coherence.

How do individuals attempt to cope with loss of value coherence? Without claiming to exhaust the possibilities, we will concentrate in this section on four kinds of response (cf Etzioni 1972) to value incoherence as follows:

1. Regression—a return to earlier, less differentiated stages of socialization and culture.
2. Etherealization—the substitution of symbols for real things as the relevant objects of value.
3. Community—the attempt to recreate or rediscover a community of values through emotional investment.
4. Collective behavior—direct response to charismatic stimuli in the attempt to crystalize ephemeral states of value coherence into permanent ones.

Observed life-styles do not fall neatly into one or the other of these four categories. The categorical scheme is not of life-styles themselves, but of social mechanisms leading to the differentiation of life-styles. The four types of response correspond to four functional prerequisites for a viable culture: well-defined roles, a symbolic framework, a sense of community, and the legitimation of authority. The category of regression can be seen as a simplifying response to an old culture grown so complex that conflicting role obligations have become intolerable. The category of etherealization can be seen as an attempt to agree on the symbols necessary for the creation of shared meanings necessary for a culture. The category of community can be seen as the attempt to reconstruct the network of noncontractual relationships from which culture must spring. Finally, the category of collective behavior can be seen as the charismatic response to the breakdown of traditional and legal-rational bases of authority. This framework is applied to the field of alternative life-styles in order to call attention away from the exotic elements of individual life-styles back

[4]Hitherto, the study of new life-styles has in fact been associated primarily with the field of social deviance. In this paper we have been taking a different approach. Under the rubric of "alternative lifestyle," we are concerned with systems of preferences that are neither condemned nor embraced by public opinion. Therefore, we specifically exclude discussion of criminal or other pariah modes of living.

to what is more significant, an examination of their functional role in the transformation of culture.

Regression

Loss of value coherence and the proliferation of standards of morality and opportunities for evaluations over a wide range of alternative commodities are associated with an advanced stage of civilization and a high degree of societal complexity. It is only to be expected, therefore, that some will retreat from this complexity in an attempt to find new standards of behavior. Such regression may give rise to what are called the hedonistic life-styles. The specific content of hedonistic life-styles varies quite a bit, such content being a function of cultural differences, psychological types, and the vagaries of individual taste. Such life-styles have in common, however, the application of the yardstick of personal pleasure as the unique standard of valuation.

Generally associated with hedonistic life-styles is the exaltation of anything that appears to lead to personal growth. Under such a formulation, the inability to find a common ground of valuation with other people provokes a contraction of the boundaries of self to those of the person. Psychology can then be reduced to biology, and the criterion of pleasure becomes an unambiguous tool by which to rank preferences and reach decisions. The self-orientation of hedonistic life-styles found support in the "human potential movement," which created a market for alternative therapies and encounter sessions (Gustaitis 1969), often serving as a first step in life-style change. Seeley (1967) has pointed out that the mental health movement functions as a secular church, relieving psychological suffering in a society in which more material forms of suffering had been eradicated for many people. It is a short step from the belief that psychological stress can be relieved to the notion that pleasure, sensation, and bodily indulgence are worthwhile goals. Some writers, such as Laing (1971) and Cooper (1970), even argued that fully human persons were those who lacked societally imposed inhibitions (See Kanter 1974 for a critique of these theories). Growth and freedom, in the radical therapy view, were held to be associated with a childlike lack of physical or emotional repression.

Sexual freedom thus emerged as an ideological position—the basis for embryonic social movements and life-style definitions—and unconventional sexual preference gained a rationale for becoming a badge of identity for some people. "Swinging" and group marriage are hedonistic styles of sexual behavior in which married couples seek to extend the range of permissible sexual relationships beyond the monogamous unit and to subject such relationships to a degree of institutional control. In the "swinging" life-style (Bartell 1971), extramarital relationships may take on the characteristics of friendships or neighborliness, but such partners may not become additional spouses or family members. In the group marriage life-style (Constantine & Constantine 1973, Ramey 1974), on the contrary, familial roles and familial obligations are expected of all partners. Collective child-rearing roles in such extended family units are sometimes considered to be as important as sexual roles. Sociometrically, the swinging life-style collectivities tend to be open networks, whereas group marriages tend to be closed and exclusive cliques.

Much has been written about these life-styles in recent years. There is surprisingly little of definite sociological value in this literature. Constantine & Constantine (1973) studied a large number of group marriage households and noted their tendency toward rapid disintegration. Zablocki (1972) has noted a similar pattern among communes that have undertaken group marriage experiments. Bartell (1971) has pointed out the political conservatism and substitution of sensation for intimacy among swingers. In a continuation of the ancient Jovian argument, Bernard (1973) maintains that men benefit from swinging more than do women, while Bartell claims that women are the primary beneficiaries.

Another type of hedonism has been identified by Adler (1967) as antinomianism. Antinomianism is a particular recurrent form of existential life-style in which morality is transcended on the basis of perception of a cosmic and all-justifying love. As Adler (1967:22) puts it:

> The antinomian fears diffusion and depersonalization. . . .
>
> In this situation, and with such needs, the physical, the visceral, and the concrete are of greater moment than the abstract, the generalized and the cognitive. The antinomian personality values most the immediate and the vivid, the uninhibited and the outrageous. Feeling, texture, touch, warmth become more important than central modes which are more likely to make for a discrete self differentiated from objects. Visual modes are manipulated and distorted by drugs and by fasting so that the discrete components melt, merge and fuse.

Regressive life-styles have also resulted from the desacralization of many of the moral elements of culture during the second half of the twentieth century. To some extent this has been simply a continuation of a long-term secular trend in Western society toward the rationalization of what had previously been part of the sacred domain. In the past ten years, the widespread use of perception-altering drugs among youth has accelerated this propensity to debunk the sacred values of Western culture. Furthermore, drugs provided many people with the sense of breaking and transcending limits—both social and psychological. One resulting perception is that all moral systems are really games (DeRoup 1974) with rules developed consciously or unconsciously by the participants. Individuals thus become free to choose their own games either by entering old moral systems as players rather than as believers or else by inventing new systems. Life-styles formed in this manner have in common a rejection of science and rationality and, in particular, a rejection of the notion that there can be any absolute standard of truth or value. The following (Gustaitis 1969) is a typical example of the value perspective of this kind of life-style:

> It takes only the very slightest shift of perspective to see everything the turned-on way—and the very slightest shift to flip yourself over a cliff. . . . A quick trip across the turn-on scene has, of course, not made me into some kind of a glorious superfreak. But I do understand a little better now how every event is woven in multiple intricate patterns that change with every point of view, and how each pattern has its own dynamic that you can choose to follow once you see it. The more patterns we are aware of, the more freedom we have to choose our own lives.

Those hippie communes that Kanter (1972a) characterized as retreatist can be seen as attemps to institutionalize hedonistic life-styles, to substitute present impulse for future planning:

> The dominance of psychological over religious or political rhetoric is itself indicative of their diminishing scope. "Doing your own thing" is a pervasive ethic in many contemporary communes, which places the person's own growth above concern for social reform, political and economic change, or the welfare of the community.

V. Turner (1969) also agreed that hippies opted out of the status-bound social order, stressing personal relationships rather than social obligations and polymorphic sexuality as an attempt to stabilize and continually re-experience the necessarily ephemeral pleasures of "communitas": spontaneous, emotionally charged, role-less human rituals.

Etherealization

We will define etherealization as the substitution of symbols for things as the objects of value. In any period of value dissensus such transformation has an obvious utility. Material goods are always in scarce supply and therefore demand a standard of ordinal valuation. Symbols, on the other hand, are in infinite supply; and to the degree that a person transfers concern from concrete objects to their symbols the need for ordinal valuation decreases, and the possibility of assigning very large or infinite value to a great many such intangible objects becomes feasible. Living in a world of symbols decreases the need to make choices. Etherealization has been a recognizable element in intellectual, spiritual, and emotional life-styles that have proliferated within the past decade.

Intellectual life-styles are characterized by the high valuation given to ideas, utopian schemes, or ideologies. Etzioni (1972) has characterized this life-style as a retreat from disenchantment with the compromises necessitated by political activity. Because the opinions of intellectuals with regard to ideas are influential in shaping public policy, considerable attention has been devoted to the way in which intellectual influence flows within the social network of this life-style. Kadushin (1974) has attempted to trace the network linkages among American intellectual elite and an earlier work (1966) has tried to demonstrate by similar means how the adherence to various schools of psychotherapy are influenced by network ties.

Aron (1962) and Burnham (1970) have traced connections between the intellectual life-style and political behavior. Aron saw the danger of intellectual etherealization primarily in the tendency to embrace absolutist and totalitarian ideologies driven by an almost religious quest for the absolute idea. Burnham, writing at a later time, saw precisely the opposite difficulty in intellectual etherealization. Looking at liberalism rather than communism as the opium of the intellectuals, he has argued that the etherealization of values allows the liberal the luxury of seeing all sides of all issues and thus of being paralyzed with respect to the ability to take any real action.

Proliferation of spiritual life-styles is seen in the rapid growth of new sects and cults outside of the established churches and the development within the churches

of life-style alternatives (e.g. opportunities for church involvement that fall short of the total commitment of monasticism or priesthood but involve considerably more commitment than that of the ordinary church attender). Needleman (1970) has discussed the appearance and rapid growth of religious sects devoted to oriental religions in America. Zen Buddhism from Japan; a variety of Hindu and Yogic religious ideas from India; Subud from Indonesia; and Sufism from the Middle East have all gained a fair number of adherents and established stable, ongoing religious organizations in America within the past fifteen years. All of these movements have in common the attempt to transcend material concerns and gain an awareness of the cosmic unity of all life and experience. This is seen particularly clearly in some of the newer of these movements—the Divine Light Movement and the Movement for Krishna Consciousness, both of which promote a totally introspective evaluation of self-knowledge and an abandonment of attachment to material things. Lofland (1966) offers a picture of the characteristics of seekers and process of conversion in one such sect. Veysey (1973) sees such groups as outgrowths of recurrent mystical themes in American cultural radicalism.

Emotional etherealization has been best exemplified in the growth of the encounter-group movement and related movements stressing value of relating and turning on. Gustaitis (1969), Leonard (1973, 1975) and Smith (1975) have provided discussions of the development of these life-styles. Although life-styles characterized by both spiritual and emotional etherealization remain for the most part anti-intellectual, there has been in the last few years a tendency to blend aspects of the spiritual and of the emotional within the same life-style.

Finally, our discussion of etherealization should mention the life-style most notable by its comparative absence in contemporary American society. This is the monastic lifestyle. For most of the previous history of our culture, the monastic alternative was the most important choice open to those who were for one reason or another unable to concur with the value system of the society as a whole (Cohn 1970, Merton 1969). However, of the various life-styles that we have been discussing, monasticism seems to have thrived the least during this period of life-style proliferation. Indeed, what writings we have on monasticism in America and western Europe indicate a crisis in those monastic groups that have survived as holdovers from earlier times rather than a regeneration of interest in such organizations. However, to some extent this may be a definitional distinction in that a number of the new religious sects and cults that were discussed above utilize forms of organization such as the Ashram and the totalitarian commune that are monastary-like in many of their values and organization attributes without being called monastaries (Zablocki 1971).

Community

There are two kinds of life-styles based primarily on the strategy of community, i.e. emotional investment of self in a subsocietal collectivity of one's own choosing. In the first kind, emotional investment is made in some already existing community to which traditional bonds may already exist but in greatly attenuated form. We refer to such life-styles as ethnic life-styles, but we include in this category identifica-

tion not only with ethnic groups but also with groups based on age grading, sex, or geographical region. The second category within this rubric is represented by those life-styles that seek to create new utopian or experimental foundations for communal identification—the communitarians.

Berger (1971) has argued that "the most durable and effective subcultures in the United States have been the ones which combine class, ethnic, and religious factors to create a symbolically closed community." He contrasts the full cultural life that is experienced, for example, in the Jewish ghetto and to a greater extent in the Amish rural communities with open cultural identifications of the great majority of Americans, whether urban or suburban in location. Suttles (1972:267–68) has argued that the quest for community that has characterized many of the important social movements of the past decade in fact reflects a desire for the cultural integrity that is attributed to such closed, isolated enclaves. He argues the following:

> A . . . likely consequence of the quest for community of sentiment—one where everyone can be his true moral self—is that the utopian images evoked tend to make insigificant any actual communities that have existed, community that is defended according to what it might become rather than for what it is or has been. Such utopias are a powerful lure tempting us to reconstruct history and dismiss the present.

In the discussion of ethnic life-styles the voluntary aspect of life-styles becomes particularly salient. All ethnic groupings are to a greater or lesser degree culturally distinct from each other and from mainstream American culture. However, these differences are not what we are referring to when we speak of ethnic life-styles. What is relevant to ethnic life-styles is the voluntary commitment to the conservation or rediscovery of an ethnic heritage. It was expressed in the upsurge of voluntary identification with ethnic heritage that was expressed during the 1960s in student demands for ethnic studies programs in colleges and the surfacing of ethnic interests as an important political consideration outside of local machine politics for the first time in many years (Gordon 1964, Laumann 1969, Rossi, Berk & Eidson 1974).

The evolving relationship of the American Jews to a larger American society and culture illustrates how new life-styles can be built out of the materials of old subcultures. Goren (1970) provides an excellent historical ethnographic account of the original attempts to set up a Kehillah (a totally encompassing apparatus for community responsibility and control among the New York Jews during the early part of the twentieth century along the model of similar communal organizations that had existed in Europe). Such a Kehillah might have provided an enduring basis for American Jewish value coherence. However, the incompatibility of American pluralism with the existence of closed communal enclaves of any size and importance in an urban setting led to the abandonment of this idea and to its replacement by what Sklare (1974:105) has referred to as the subcommunity. Regarding the idea of a subcommunity, Sklare states:

> If American social organization did not encourage groups who wish to establish themselves as fullfledged communities and if European models were considered neither achievable nor desirable by American Jews, American society did offer an alternative: the subcommunity. The subcommunity is a community of sentiment rather than of coercion.

> It exists within the interstices of the social order and accommodates itself to that order. The subcommunity is a community of association. Such associationalism can be strong: a subcommunity may be the prime focus of the individual's social attachments. Nevertheless, it is not accorded an official standing; the rights of the individual are derived from the status as a citizen rather than from the status as a member of a group. Furthermore, loyalty to the subcommunity is presumed consistent with loyalty to the community and the remote situation in which loyalty to community and subcommunity conflict, society expects that the subcommunity will modify its program, defer its demands, and demonstrate its loyalty to the concept that the needs of the community have primacy.

In recent years, however, the Jewish subcommunity has foundered on the issue of value incoherence. Significant numbers of individuals desire for there to be a greater degree of value coherence than comes about naturally through the participation in a subcommunity of voluntary association. In response to this in the late 1960s a proliferation of more tightly knit and value-constraining Jewish fellowship organizations known as Havarim (Neusner 1972) were developed. These fellowships provided strong network support for the stylistic revival of many of the external identifiers of the Jewish ethnicity.

The evolution of Black ethnic life-styles has been considerably more complex. McCord et al (1969) have discussed seven specific life-styles within the Black ghetto alone. These he classifies as Stoic, Defeated, Achiever, Exploiter, Rebel-Without-a-Cause, Activist, and Revolutionary. It is questionable, however, whether these are properly defined as life-styles or as character types. Although the vagueness with which the concept of life-style is defined allows the researcher considerable latitude in the fineness of subdivision that will be drawn, the lack of a unified heritage of cultural experience among urban Blacks has undoubtedly been responsible for the emergence of a relatively large number of separate styles of life.

Bullough (1967) in a study of alienation among ghetto and nonghetto Blacks, has provided one of the few examples of the use of life-styles as an independent variable in empirical research. Bullough found that among ghetto residents, those with an integration-oriented life-style scored significantly lower on a measure of powerlessness than those who had ghetto-oriented life-styles. Among those living in integrated neighborhoods, however, life-style was not significantly associated with powerlessness. It thus might be hypothesized that life-style operates as a reference group effect on cultural expectations.

Life-styles based upon ethnicity are not limited to immigrant or minority populations. White Anglo-Saxon Protestants have also experienced a resurgence of interest in ethnic heritage which to Anderson (1970) is indicative of that subcommunity's increasing consciousness of itself as a de facto minority. Manning (1975), however, has argued that it is lack of ethnic consciousness in particular and the values associated with the consciousness of not being "different" that characterize the life-style of the WASP. The Southern WASP (Reed 1972) has convincingly demonstrated the persistence of a distinctive constellation of value traits. According to Reed, these may be characterized as: greater attachment to local community, positive attitudes toward the private use of force and violence, and fundamentalism and conservatism in religious beliefs and practices.

Life-styles oriented around community are not confined to ethnic groups. In American society both sex and age have provided common attributes about which communal life-styles have developed. A style of life associated with the concept of machismo has been popular among working-class youth, both male and female, since at least the end of World War I. In the American society such life-styles often revolve around crime or semicriminal activities. Urban territorial gangs and migratory motorcycle clubs are two prominent organizational forms of this life-style (Thompson 1972, Matza 1967). Suttles (1972) has argued that "the proliferation of tastes in a more cosmopolitan society may also bring about a finer partitioning of socioeconomic and age groups" and sees evidence for this phenomenon in the growth of youth communes and increasingly age-homogenous suburbs.

Communes represent one of the clearest manifestations of the proliferation of alternative life-styles. Indeed, communes can be seen as attempts to create the structural conditions necessary for the intentional development and maintenance of deliberately designed styles of life. Beginning in 1965 the communitarian tendency that had been dormant in American society for more than a half a century began to show itself once again. Tens of thousands of communes, both rural and urban, have come into being in the United States between the years 1965 and 1975 (Zablocki 1975b). Most of these have been extremely short-lived, lasting no more than two or three years. Communes are distinctive among the alternative life-styles, both in the tremendous variety of alternatives that have been experimented with and in the degree of divergence from modal patterns of valuation which the isolation and mutual reinforcement of communal living make possible. Zablocki (1971), with respect to the Bruderhof, and Bugliosi (1975), with respect to the Manson family, both indicate how life-styles almost totally alien to the values accepted as normal by the larger society can be successfully maintained over an extended period of time in a small, enclosed group setting. Control of boundaries and renunciation of external social ties are among the commitment mechanisms that Kanter (1972a) found differentiated long-lived from short-lived communities in the past. Bettelheim (1969), in his analysis of the Israeli kibbutzim, also stresses the importance of isolation for the maintenance of such widely divergent life-styles. He points out that kibbutzim have not existed in Israeli cities and comments that "Kibbutzim can exist only (it seems) if the group life is not interfered with by meeting nongroup members at every step" (p. 283). Berger & Hackett (1974) have argued that while communal living has been identified with the radical political philosophies of the new left during the 1960s, "there is a sense in which the more serious rural communards, despite their apparent total rejection of middle-class industrial styles of life, may be said to be conservative in the sense that this term is sometimes applied to rural or small-town folk who resist the technological incursions of modernity" (p. 181). Kanter (1972a) has made a similar point in arguing that communal living of the 1960s and 1970s, unlike its analogue in the nineteenth century, has been oriented towards the structuring of alternative families rather than alternative societies.

Although the great diversity in ideological types among the communes, ranging from religious to political to hippie to utopian, etc, make it impossible to characterize a single set of values associated with communal living, there is a distinctive

characteristic, particularly of the rural communes with regard to an orientation toward work and livelihood: a pioneer willingness to tolerate what many people would consider a mere subsistence and a highly monotonous diet, to make do with few luxuries or labor-saving devices, to wear only secondhand or homemade clothing, enable a subsistence homesteading type of economic system to work within the American economy. This pioneer simplicity of living is accompanied by a pioneer self-reliance and diversification of skills. Much of the activity of rural commune members has involved a cultivation of such skills as carpentry, plumbing, mechanics, and canning, and a wide range of communal-oriented publications, e.g. *Whole Earth Catalog* and *Green Revolution,* offer practical advice on how communitarians with little or no money can make much of what they need out of materials at hand. The rudiments of a distinctive communitarian technology have emerged of which geodesic dome architecture, organic gardening, and homeopathic medicine are examples.

While media attention in the past decade focused primarily on rural communes as an outgrowth of social ferment of the 1960s, scholarly interest also turned to more traditional, multigenerational established ethnic-religious communes with roots in earlier periods: the Bruderhof (Zablocki 1971) and the Hutterites (Bennett 1967, Hostetler 1975). These long-lived communities are shown to have many of the characteristics associated with strong commitment in enduring communes of the past (Kanter 1972a), including an austere self-sacrificing life-style, highly organized production and consumption systems, shared property, transcendent values, and a belief in authority. The Jesus-movement communes are a new version of this pattern.

In the 1970s a new type of middle-class or "domestic" commune, mostly in urban areas, has been characterized by none of these traits, but rather a concern with alternative styles of life that are compatible with the holding of jobs and the maintenance of more conventional standards of living (Kanter 1974b, Zablocki 1975b). An interesting borderline case between the community type of life-style based upon ethnicity and those based upon communitarianism are those deliberate adaptations of ethnic life-styles by those not biologically identifiable with those life-styles. Certain ethnic groups have been historically popular as absorbers of converts. Individuals born outside of the ethnic group find cultural aspects of the life-style attractive. A most interesting sociological treatment of this phenomenon was written by a nonsociologist, Norman Mailer, in his book *The White Negro* (1957). Such ethnicity is expressed in dress and bearing, preference for foods and music and, perhaps most importantly, jargon or style of speech.

Collective Behavior

So far the methods for dealing with value dissensus that we have discussed have involved particularistic solutions to the problem; none propose a transformation of society. Let us now turn to an examination of life-styles based upon collective behavior—the attempt to crystallize the ephemeral states of value coherence into permanent ones. Life-styles based upon collective behavior range from the most politically trivial slavish followings of fad and fashion to full-scale and total life commitments to all-encompassing revolutionary social movements. Social move-

ments are not life-styles, but because a social movement involves an ideology that orients its followers toward a coherent set of values, the context of the social movement generally provides an opportunity for a life-style to develop around it. Such an opportunity characteristically will be selected only by a minority of the advocates or participants in a social movement, so that for instance the Communist party in America during the 1930s gave rise to a distinctive life-style for some but not all of the participants in that social movement.

For a society in transition between one legitimate value structure that is passing and another that has not yet emerged, the formulation of life-styles around the strategy of collective behavior, particularly those associated with organized social movements may be, as Etzioni (1972:17) suggests, the only viable alternative in the search for value for the socially and politically conscious individual. As he sees it:

> Such a lifestyle views the generation of public goods (justice, health, education) as the prime societal source of meaning. Thus it seems to provide the most encompassing legitimation for society undergoing transformation. During the critical rebelling period it can generate the political energy needed to undo the institutions inherited from the past. In the reconstruction period it justifies some limitation on self-indulgence, and it also justifies the services of collective needs.

Political life-styles need not be progressive, however. Lipset & Raab (1970:165) discuss right-wing conservative life-styles in connection with the concept of status deprivation. They argue the following:

> While the preservatism of the upper class and often the middle class may be both class directed and status directed, the preservatism of the lower economic class must be chiefly status directed. Therefore, the common core of effective right wing extremist movements is symbolic rather than instrumental in nature. This does not mean that such movements do not also have instrumental goals, but it is the symbolic core which distinguishes them and gives them their particular aspect of similarity in religious movements.

Life-styles based upon collective behavior are not to be associated only with politics. World-saving and world-transforming religious sects, discussed earlier under the heading of etherealization, also involve important elements of community and collective behavior. Indeed, religious sectarian ideologies, if anything, will lend themselves more readily to the legitimation of the greedy institution perspective (Coser 1974) which may be necessary to make a highly distinctive life-style viable in a hostile or indifferent society. The hippie life-style, which has been also referred to as hippie counterculture (Westhues 1972, Cavan 1972), illustrates the processes both of regression and of collective behavior. Westhues associates hippyism with rejection of the notion of calculation and efficiency and an approach to life that includes or may include economic communism, deviant sexual relationships, "hang-looseness," apoliticality, rejection of status, and symbolic rewards of the dominant society and social isolation.

CONCLUSION

We have attempted to review and synthesize recent literature on life-styles and their differentiation. We have first discussed traditional life-styles generated by the eco-

nomic and status system of this society, and we have associated the emergence of several new life-styles with societal loss of value coherence. In so doing we have attempted to call into sociological question what the microeconomist tends to take for granted—the differentiation of tastes and preferences. To the extent that a person's position in the markets for wealth and prestige still leave some degree of freedom of choice, differentiation of life-styles results. People seem to steer clear of absolute individualism in their tastes. To the extent that considerations of economics and prestige relax their hold on individual choice, style enters with constraints of its own.

We have not in this paper been able to discuss more than a fraction of many of the distinctive life-styles currently visible on the American social landscape. Life-styles associated with gay liberationists, Jesus freaks, greasers, surfers, nudists, "ropers and dopers," hermits, hoboes, and urban guerrillas, among many others, have not been discussed. The fact that the study of life-styles is sometimes seen as equivalent to the study of each particular group, however, reflects an unfortunate tendency in the sociological literature to date. Much of the focus in discussions of new or unconventional life-styles has concerned descriptive attempts to document the unique and colorful properties of each group, rather than to address more universal and theoretical sociological questions. The study of life-styles and life-style groupings can usefully illuminate such matters as the transmission of tastes and values, the nature of the collective experience (Zablocki 1971), the correlates of commitment and social cohesion (Kanter 1972a), or the transformation of social institutions as consumers shift their preferences.

We also suggest that not specific life-styles themselves but their range and diversity constitute the most interesting sociological problem for investigation. Lifton (1971) and Erikson (1970) have written from the psychoanalytic viewpoint about the possibility that life-styles may come to represent not new bases of stable culture or subculture but temporary niches of value coherence among which people may wend their lives. The concept that Lifton (1971:57) has developed to express this idea is that of the protean personality, named after the mythical figure of Proteus who was able to assume any form at will, but was unable to maintain any one form for an appreciable amount of time. Lifton has used the concept to explain the startling rapidity with which such individuals can move among radically different ideologies, social classes, cultural groups, and styles of life. Lifton sees this protean personality not simply as the basis of an alternative life-style, but as a possible candidate for the future emergent personality structure of much of the human race:

> I have elsewhere described the Protean style of self-process as an interminable series of experiments and explorations, some shallow, some profound, each of which can be readily abandoned in favor of still newer psychological quests; and emphasized that, while risking various forms of diffusion, it is by no means pathological as such, and may in fact be one of the functional patterns necessary to life in our times. Other characteristics of the Protean style are symbolic fatherlessness which, whatever its pain, permits one "an image of repeated, autonomously willed death and rebirth of the self"; forms of guilt, anxiety, and rage that tend to be free-floating and relatively unformed and unrelated to clear origins; a strong ideological hunger together with distrust of comprehensive and formed ideologies and a preference for ideological fragments; a profound inner sense of

> absurdity which finds expression in a tone of mockery; pervading suspicion of counterfeit nurturance; various forms of polarized ambivalence toward science and technology; and a tendency toward exploring and creating new rituals of transition—*rites de passage*—within the life cycle, with a strong preference for those which encourage various forms of experiential transcendence. I stressed the prevalence of the Protean style in recent literature, art, film, political and social innovation, and virtually every form of contemporary culture—to the point of stimulating a reactive opposite, a "constricted style," emphasizing closure and an image of restoring a perfectly harmonious past that never was. Finally, the Protean style itself can best be understood as a radically experimental quest for new combinations of immortalizing modes—for a sense of immortality that permits and requires sustained flux.

If this is correct, then the future sociological research should be addressed not to the analysis of particular life-styles themselves, but to the process of transition of individuals among life-styles with the hope of discovering patterns of life-style mobility and characteristic life-style careers. It will also be interesting to examine the confrontation between the protean style of continual quest, on the one hand, and the desire of certain life-style groups to create enduring or closed communities, on the other hand. The fact that value choice and life-style proliferation can come into conflict with the need of many life-style groups for belief in their claims of ultimate meaning would seem to ensure the eventual fragility of any particular way of life in modern Western society. Choice and true belief are uneasy partners. The very differentiation of life-styles in the present would seem to create the psychological conditions for more life-style quests in the future.

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