

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND CONSERVATIVE OPINIONS

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The process of determining the limits of sociology is characterized by the development of concepts and the specification of certain assumptions about human behavior. At present there is considerable difference of opinion over which concepts and assumptions are the most efficacious for the discipline. As Chinoy (1961:13) points out:

. . .these differences. . .do not usually reflect arguments about truth or falsity, but instead flow from alternative judgments about which aspects of reality are more or less important, or more or less relevant to the problems at hand.

The importance of concepts to sociological problems and sociological theory is great. Concepts serve to delineate the categories which will tell us the most about our subject matter (Kaplan, 1964:52). They are mental images which have been generalized from the particulars of human experience. The scientist may use whatever concepts he finds useful, but it is important to note that the terms in which scientific questions are posed limit the range of admissible answers (Kaplan, 1964:79,52).

Assumptions are also important to sociological problems and sociological theory. All sciences make at least two assumptions:

- (1) events are causally linked (or at least they exhibit regularity);
- (2) the cause or causes of an event (or regularity) are ultimately knowable.

In addition to these basic assumptions, different disciplines make their own assumptions to facilitate the solutions to their chosen problems.

The concepts one employs and the assumptions one makes determine his theoretical perspective. This chapter seeks to present the perspective which lies at the foundation of this thesis. Following the statement of the perspective is the presentation of the sociological problem. This, in turn, is followed by definitions of concepts which are basic to this study.

The Sociological Perspective

Man is a social animal; he interacts with individuals and groups. Social ordering emerges as social interaction produces predictable regularities in the behavior of individuals. Social values, beliefs, and norms arise out of this process of social ordering as men adapt to their environment and give it meaning. Social values are defined herein as shared conceptions about what is desirable or undesirable in social life. Social beliefs are shared ideas about the nature of man and his social life. Social norms are expectations for behavior of a moral nature. They are viewed as "right," and hence they "ought" to be adhered to by the members of a social organization.

Shared values, beliefs, and norms come to constitute the basis of social organization. Their existence is perpetuated through the process of socialization. This process is one whereby an individual becomes integrated into the group by learning the expectations of that group. However, values, beliefs, and norms do not remain static. They change as men respond to new problems and new situations. To the extent that values, beliefs, and norms are an adjustment to a situation

which existed in the past, they are an incomplete adjustment to the present. An individual's values, beliefs, and norms are current to the degree that his adjustment has been recent and complete.

Values, beliefs, and norms are of interest to the sociologist because they are a guide for social interaction as well as a product thereof. They provide the social bond for the integration of individual and group goals. Finally, and most important for the sociologist, the knowledge of values, beliefs, and norms is essential for the understanding and prediction of human behavior.

The Problem

During the past decade the media of mass communication reported what they viewed as a new sociological phenomenon--the generation gap. Young people were said to adhere to different values, beliefs, and norms than their elders. In addition to the area of life styles, the gap was said to exist over many issues, such as war, racism, poverty, law enforcement, and patriotism. With respect to these and other issues, little agreement was said to exist. Perhaps the childhood socialization process had failed in its intended objectives. Perhaps it was too successful in instilling the ideal values of the culture.

Understanding the media's flair for the sensational, the sociologist must view such rhetoric with a healthy amount of skepticism. The word "gap" certainly implies a high level of polarization, not merely a difference of degree. Of course this whole issue is by no means a new one. Throughout the history of American sociology it has

generally been held that older people are more conservative than younger people. The nature of the concept conservatism is such, however, that it has little practical meaning until it is applied to a concrete, temporal situation. This thesis will attempt to do that.

Can the generalization that older people are more conservative than younger people be applied to the specific controversial issues of the day? What is the relationship between a person's age and his opinion on timely controversial topics? Because an opinion is a conclusion or judgment about a specific event, it should reflect the values, beliefs, and norms to which an individual subscribes.

It has already been stated that an individual's values, beliefs, and norms are current to the extent that his adjustment to his environment has been recent and complete. In a rapidly changing social environment, an individual is faced with the necessity of constant adjustment. If an individual finds adjustment uncomfortable or unprofitable, he may resist change. This type of orientation is usually termed conservative.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to apply an empirical test to the generalization that there is a positive relationship between age and conservatism. If older people really are more conservative than younger people, older people should exhibit this value orientation in their opinions on contemporary issues. By investigating the relationship between age and conservative opinions, an empirical test of the theoretical relationship between age and conservatism can be achieved.

The secondary purpose of this thesis is to determine the relative importance of age as a variable related to conservative opinions. This will be accomplished in two ways. First, although much information exists concerning the question of whether older people are more conservative than younger people, few have approached the problem from the other direction. This is what Zetterberg (1965: 135) calls a retrospective test. In other words, are people who express conservative opinions older than those who express non-conservative opinions? The answer to this question should give an indication of the relative importance of age as a variable related to conservative opinion. Secondly, assuming age is an important independent variable with respect to conservative opinions, perhaps other variables are more important. Three variables, all related to one's socialization experience, will be investigated and compared with age. These variables are: level of formal education, region of the country of one's childhood, and size of the community of one's childhood. A test of the relationship of these variables to conservative opinion will also assist in gaining an understanding of the relative importance of age as a variable.

An additional and related question concerns the nature of the relationship between age and conservative opinions. Is the relationship dichotomous, or is it one of gradation? A judgment on this question will be made via an analysis of all the above tests.

Because the specific controversial topics selected for study are race, law enforcement, and patriotism, the problem being posed is

certainly timely. It is practical enough to be of interest to a wide range of people. Although the actual sample is limited in scope, the results of this study may provide an insight into a wider population. More important from the viewpoint of the sociologist, this study provides a scientific approach to a problem which has heretofore been the purview of journalists. It demonstrates how sociological theory can be applied to a specific contemporary problem. Conversely, this particular research effort provides an empirical check on an existing theory.

Definition of Terms

Although this thesis is not directly concerned with conservatism, it is concerned with conservative opinions. Therefore, treatment of some of the dimensions of conservatism is necessary to evaluate what would constitute a conservative opinion on a given issue.

A review of some of the literature on the subject indicates that there are many dimensions to conservatism. Bo Anderson (1965: 189-191) lists four broad aspects of conservatism: (1) the socio-economic dimension which is concerned with the extent to which federal and state governments should promote welfare policies for the benefit of needy individuals and communities; (2) a lack of tolerance of and a concern over expressions of socialist and atheist opinions, and a low tolerance for non-conformity in general; (3) a belief in a domestic Communist threat and the danger of internal subversion; and (4) a general opposition to internationalism and a tendency toward isolationism.

Adorno, et al. (1950:153-155), in The Authoritarian Personality, also present four aspects of conservatism of which all but one referring to economic issues are significantly different from those cited by Anderson. First is a support of the American status quo. Related to this is the idealization of existing authority and the belief that the "American Way" is working well. Problems are either ignored or are attributed to something other than defects inherent in the existing social structure. A second dimension is resistance to social change which is characterized by opposition to innovations or alterations of the existing politico-economic forms. Adorno notes as a final dimension of conservatism an adherence to the values of practicality, ambition, and upward class mobility.

A. B. Wolfe (1923:12) writes:

Conservatism, generally speaking, is simply that system of sentiments, that mental attitude, which causes the individual to accept with equanimity and approval things-as-they-are, which desires little if any change, and which opposes with vigor any proposal for radical transformation.

Otto Pollak (1943:176) treats the relative nature of conservatism when he defines it as the "tendency of a significant majority of the members of a group to preserve old patterns and to reject new ones in contrast to other groups in the same society."

Because conservatism is a nominal concept, the variance in the definitions given by different authors can be understood. For purposes of this study conservatism is defined as a value orientation characterized by support of the status quo, a sentimental attachment to traditional modes of thought, resistance to social change, and a low

tolerance for non-conformity. More specific positions flow from this basic orientation such as the opposition to internationalism and the idealization of existing authority. This study is not concerned with economic conservatism.

Two other terms will be employed--moderate and non-conservative. No attempt has been made to find a theoretical reciprocal to conservative such as liberal, progressive, or radical. Instead, the term non-conservative is used as an operational alternative to conservative. If agreement to a given statement is construed as conservative with respect to the theoretical definition of conservatism, then disagreement will be treated as a non-conservative response. The term moderate will also serve as an operational category. Indecision or a series of equally divided responses will be labeled moderate. The term is meant to have no political connotation; it is used only in the sense of meaning between two extremes.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The subject of age and conservatism is not new. A review of pertinent literature reveals seventy years of interest on the part of sociologists in the relationship between the two. Because conservatism is a value orientation, it has been and will continue to be of interest to the student of social behavior.

The contributions of previous writers, reviewed below, fall into five categories: (1) those which posit a relationship between age and conservatism, (2) those which attempt to explain the relationship, (3) those which test the relationship, (4) those which deny the relationship, and (5) those which indirectly treat age and conservatism thereby lending empirical support to the generalization that a relationship exists. Taken as a whole these contributions form a historical, theoretical, and empirical background for the specific problem treated by this thesis.

No pertinent literature has been intentionally omitted from this review. Somewhat divergent positions are included to give the reader a balanced view of what has preceded this thesis and the problem studied therein. The overriding question this chapter seeks to answer concerns the nature of the relationship between age and conservatism and the effect this relationship has on the expression of opinions on controversial topics.

Classic Sociologists

Sociologists have long been cognizant of the fact that there exists a relationship between age and conservatism. Over sixty years ago Charles Horton Cooley (1962:327), considered by many to be the "father of social psychology," wrote:

The young notoriously tend to innovation, and so do those of bold and restless temperament of any age; the old, on the contrary, the quiet, the timid, are conservative.

W. I. Thomas, (Janowitz, 1966:75), another classic sociologists, stated:

When . . . the community enters in contact with the outside world, the youth are naturally the first to develop new attitudes and to import new values.

At the turn of the century, Thorstein Veblen (1934:199) spoke of the relationship between prestige and conservatism. Admittedly he did not directly treat age, but to the extent that the wealthy, more reputable part of the community is older, what he wrote has import for the present study. Veblen wrote that ". . . conservatism is a characteristic of the wealthier and therefore more reputable portion of the community" Throughout his famous work he characterized the leisure class as a conservative influence on a society.

Generalizations

A number of authors have reached similar conclusions though empirical support may be lacking. Warren Thompson (1935:270) predicted an increase in conservatism as a consequence of an aging population in the 1935 edition of Population Problems. In a text devoted to social problems Harry Elmer Barnes (1939:228) wrote:

Since, on the whole, growing conservatism seems to go hand in hand with increasing age, a population in which older persons predominate will be likely to become far more conservative in both business and politics.

Writing in the American Journal of Sociology George Lundberg (1927:731) concluded that ". . . radicalism is the attitude of the new, young, and dynamic society; conservatism the attitude of the old comparatively static society." In a 1948 text Paul Landis (1938:241) wrote: ". . . a certain conservatism comes with age and a certain amount of inertia accumulates with experience." Jessie Bernard (1957:468) writes in a 1957 text that ". . . even with the same amount of education, older persons tend to be more conservative than younger persons."

Empirical Generalizations

Paul Lazarsfeld (1968:24) commented on the relationship between age and conservatism in The People's Choice. In his study of the 1940 election in Erie County, Ohio, he found that voting patterns tended to support the generally held assumption that old people are more conservative than young people. This conclusion is based on the stereotype of Republicans as conservative and Democrats as liberal. He (1968:25) also stated that ". . . advancing age may not bring political conservatism, but it does bring social conservatism."

In a 1943 report Otto Pollak (1943) found the relationship between age and conservatism indeterminate. Using existing public opinion and market research data he tested the hypothesis that old people are more conservative than young people. These data divided respondents into two age categories with either forty or forty-five as the dividing line.

Although Pollak found a larger percentage of conservative people among the older group in each study, in no case was the difference of such magnitude to be statistically significant. He concluded that there was a need for further research.

A year later a comprehensive study was concluded by Robert S. Henshaw. In an unpublished study referred to by Hans Toch (1953:391), Henshaw reported that ". . . in general, conservatism of opinion varies directly with increasing age in contemporary America."

Explanations

A number of efforts have been made to explain the apparent relationship between age and conservatism. A. B. Wolfe (1923:57), in a work dated 1923, wrote that as people reach middle age they become more and more conservative because:

They become more and more the products of long-continued habit and routine . . . they [have] acquired property and other interests dependent upon the continuance of the status quo; and very possibly experience has taught them to fear life and to wish to protect their children from the dangers . . . which attend one who gets off the beaten trail.

The prestige of age is also dependent upon a minimum of change. In Wolfe's (1923:56) words:

. . . in matters which concern directly the social basis of the continuance of prestige, those who hold the established positions will insist upon a prescriptive following of the old norms.

Kingsley Davis (1940) presents numerous observations closely related to the problem at hand in "The Sociology of Parent-Youth Conflict." Though not directly concerned with conservatism and age, he does treat the subject of divergent viewpoints between generations.

Davis (1940:524-525) believes that personality development is characterized by a constantly decelerating rate of socialization. His terminology apparently refers to the cumulative nature of social experience. For Davis, the effect of this phenomenon is to make the period of youth the time of major socialization. Once attitudes, meanings, values, and norms have been internalized, any change concerning these factors is difficult. One's whole life has been based on these initial concepts. Davis (1940:527) also believes that as one grows older he tends to gravitate more and more toward a status quo ideology. A person becomes less concerned with utopian ideals and more concerned with "operating ideals." Put simply, idealism wanes as pragmatism waxes.

According to Davis (1940:523) the first important variable affecting the degree of parent-youth conflict in a given society is the rate of social change. Within a period of rapid change the time interval between generations can become historically significant. When this situation of rapid change exists, youth is reared in a different milieu than the parents. Thus a period of rapid social change in concert with Davis' concept of the decelerating rate of socialization is likely to produce differences of orientation between parent and youth.

An article by Hans Toch (1953) is even more germane to this study. He believes that there are two likely explanations for old people being more conservative than young people. In his view, it is either because of the process of aging and the concomitant personality changes involved, or it is because individuals of different ages are reared in different times with different influences. The author terms

the former explanation psychological and the latter cultural. To support the psychological explanation, which he favors, Toch presents an impressive array of longitudinal data which reveal changing opinions in the direction of conservatism with increasing age. According to Toch (1953:394) the cultural hypothesis is not sufficient to explain his findings. As people become older their attitudes apparently change in a conservative direction as a result of personality changes.

Another View

All sociologists are not in agreement with the empirical generalization that there is a positive relationship between age and conservatism. One such author is Sylvia Sherwood. In a fairly recent article she submits an explanation of her own. After a review of pertinent literature Sherwood (1961:42) writes:

. . . rather than being a function of age or aging, conservatism of a given age group will be a function of the impact of the political, economic, and social era in which members grew up.

In addition to this general statement Sherwood (1961:43) presents two dimensions of the relationship between age and conservatism.

1. The basic orientation of a generation toward change, resulting from the decisive experience during their formative years; and
2. Situational factors, such as the extent to which they are likely to be directly affected by proposed changes, the extent to which they have problems which are not being solved adequately by current practices, etc.

Sherwood essentially denies any relationship between age and conservatism. She (1961:43) believes that ". . . when the old and young are compared at any given point in history, either may be more

conservative or anything else for that matter than the other." If her contention about the era in which one was raised is true, one would expect those raised during the New Deal to be less conservative than those raised during the Eisenhower era. Translated into specific ages that would mean that today's youth are more conservative than people presently in their thirties if the assumption that the New Deal was less conservative than the Eisenhower era is true.

A more recent article by Downing and Salomone (1969) presents a similar explanation for a different though related problem. Their study was concerned with attitudes of Louisiana State University in New Orleans faculty toward the Vietnam War. Although the results of their survey are presented by academic rank, the authors suggest that age might be more important.

Their findings revealed a curvilinear relationship between academic rank and attitudes toward the war, with the highest percentage of those favoring withdrawal from Vietnam at the extremes of rank. Noting the relationship between the extremes of rank and age, the authors suggest that the importance of age in their findings can be partially explained by the connection between age and historical and political eras in the lives of the respondents. They (1969:43-45) delineate three principle periods: (1) the 1930's, when social reform was prevalent and anti-communism was less significant than hostility toward right wing groups; (2) the cold war period of the 1940's and 1950's when anti-communism was popular and communism was viewed as a monolithic threat; and, (3) the era of peaceful coexistence with the communist world.

Judging from the periods described and the ages of the respondents, it becomes evident that Downing and Salomone are not referring to the childhood socialization experience. Apparently they are positing some period of early adulthood when political attitudes are formulated, but they are unclear on this point. Although the study did not directly treat age and conservatism, it is still relevant. The authors recognized the possible significance of age as a variable with respect to opinions on a controversial issue.

Additional Evidence

Empirical studies dealing with controversial issues, though not directly treating age and conservatism, seem to support the statements of the majority of authors cited above. In Communism, Conformity, and Civil Liberties, Samuel Stouffer (1963) reported his finding that the younger the person the more tolerant of non-conformity he was. Stouffer also found a positive relationship between education and tolerance. Because the young tend to be better-educated, some of the age differential in tolerance can be explained in terms of education. However, even when education is controlled, Stouffer's (1963:90) data clearly demonstrate that the young are more tolerant of non-conformity. Another variable studied with respect to age was "rigidity of categorization." The older generation was more likely to be "rigid categorizers." Closely akin to this finding was Stouffer's (1963:98) discovery that the older generation is less likely to oppose authoritarian and conformist child rearing practices.

Some relatively recent studies dealing with opinions and attitudes toward controversial issues serve as practical evidence of the positive relationship between age and conservative opinions. The results of these studies are reported by age group and issue. If the issues yield to a conservative, non-conservative dichotomy, then the value of the studies is clear.

Attitudes regarding school desegregation are the subject of an article by Lewis Killian and John Haer (1958). Depending on their opinions, 536 respondents were classified as "accepters," "compliers," "delayers," or "resisters." The authors define the "resister" as one who regards the Supreme Court desegregation decision as bad and indicates a willingness to defy the law in order to preserve segregation. They (1958:164) found the typical "resister" was over fifty and had not finished high school. If opposition to school integration (change) is viewed as a conservative position, then the positive relationship between age and conservative opinions is supported by this study.

Chester Hunt (1960) reported on a study of attitudes toward housing integration in Social Problems. He (1960:207) found that with respect to the integration of private housing, "The general attitude of neutrality or acceptance was most marked in those above eighth grade education . . . and who were in the age bracket between 20 and 40." Hunt used a dichotomous age breakdown with forty as the dividing line. Hostility to integration of housing among the over forty group was three times more prevalent than among the under forty group. As was the case in the previous study, the importance of age as a variable is evident.

Paul B. Sheatsley (1966) analyzes a National Opinion Research Center (NORC) survey of 1963 in an article entitled "White Attitudes Toward the Negro." The original NORC survey used a Guttman scale of pro-integration sentiment to measure white attitudes toward blacks. The data revealed a clear relationship between age and scores achieved. The highest pro-integration score was registered by the youngest group, and the lowest score was attained by the oldest group. The two age groups in between followed the trend. An additional finding which pertains to the relative importance of age is that concerning the region of the country where respondents resided. When scores were divided into regional categories, this proved to be a far more important variable than age with respect to pro-integrationist sentiment.

A study with similar subject matter was conducted by Leonard Marascuilo and Kathleen Penfield (1966). As was the case with the previous research, the authors do not treat conservatism and age directly. Still, they do investigate a controversial topic which lends itself to a non-conservative, conservative breakdown. The purpose of their study was to determine what the average citizen of Berkeley thought about proposals to reduce racial imbalances in the city's schools. The sample size was 756. The results of the survey show a very strong relationship between attitudes and age among the white respondents. Nearly eighty per cent of the 21-30 age group favored a change in school boundaries to achieve greater racial balance. Only thirty per cent of the fifty plus category favored such action. The middle category followed the trend with slightly less than half favoring the proposal.

If opposing the change is construed as the conservative position, then the positive relationship between age and conservative opinions is again supported.

Summary

It appears that the connection between age and conservatism has been of interest to sociologists for a long time. During the early part of the century the relationship was discovered via verstehen methods. More recently empirical methods have been employed. Though a complete consensus does not exist, two generalizations can be made in light of the work that has been done to date. First, old people are more conservative than young people. Secondly, there is a positive relationship between age and conservatism. The subtle difference between these generalizations is important. The first refers to a simple dichotomous situation, whereas the second refers to a progressive or continuous relationship.

On the theoretical explanations for the relationship between age and conservatism, consensus does not exist, although many of the explanations are closely related. Three categories of these explanations can be identified and grossly labeled as cultural, psychological, and practical.

The cultural explanation says that people of different ages were reared during different periods of time. As such they were exposed to somewhat different cultural influences. Because of the cumulative nature of socialization and the generally accepted understanding that values

and attitudes change slowly, different age groups can be expected to possess different viewpoints. By definition the oldest group would adhere to the most traditional values, and the youngest group would espouse the most novel perspectives. Individuals can digress from this pattern, although it generally holds for groups taken as a whole.

Defenders of the psychological explanation hold that increasing conservatism is part of the aging process. Personality changes sometimes related to physiological changes may make adaptive behavior more difficult. New ideas may be viewed as confusing, and therefore are resisted by the old. Though this possible explanation is of interest, the sociologist should look for a social answer to a social problem.

Proponents of the practical explanation believe that men become more pragmatic and less idealistic as they mature. This is said to result from increased experience in social relationships. In the "school of hard knocks" men learn what works and what does not work and tend to support the latter. As one accumulates prestige and material goods, he is less apt to be receptive to innovation. The possession of prestige and material goods gives one a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Threats to the system in the form of change may be viewed as personal threats and therefore resisted.

Of the three basic positions the cultural and practical explanations are of the most interest to the sociologist. A combination of these two positions could lead to a theory of social conservatism. They are presented here as plausible explanations for the relationship that is being studied.

Hypotheses to be Tested

Based on the evidence reported in this chapter, two hypotheses are offered below.

Hypothesis I. Taken as a group, older persons express more conservative opinions than do younger persons.

Hypothesis II. There is a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions.

To achieve the second purpose of this thesis four additional hypotheses will be tested. Based on the indirect evidence reported in this chapter, the first hypothesis is presented in alternate form. Because insufficient evidence exists to predict direction for the final three hypotheses, they are presented in null form.

Hypothesis III. Taken as a group, people who express conservative opinions are older than people who express non-conservative opinions.

Hypothesis IV. When education is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Hypothesis V. When the geographic region of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Hypothesis VI. When the community size of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

In an effort to achieve a better understanding of the data collected, each major hypothesis will be divided into three sub-hypotheses for additional testing. These sub-hypotheses will refer to conservative opinions on issues related to race, law enforcement, and patriotism.

Hopefully, this approach will provide added insight into the relationship between age and conservative opinions.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

At the heart of any scientific inquiry is an adequate research design. Successful data collection and analysis ultimately rest on the initial methodological approach to the research problem. Also, the reader of a scientific report must have knowledge of the research design to properly evaluate the findings presented.

In an effort to achieve the stated objectives of this study four major steps were taken: (1) selection of the population to be studied, (2) selection of a data collection technique, (3) construction of adequate measures of opinion that would reflect a conservative value orientation, and (4) selection of fruitful modes of analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to treat each of these steps and to explain the rationale behind the decisions which were made.

The Sample

The population selected to be studied in reference to the previously defined problem is composed of the wives of Virginia Polytechnic Institute faculty members. Virginia Polytechnic Institute is a land-grant university located in the town of Blacksburg. This small town, nestled in the Appalachian Mountains, is forty miles west of Roanoke, Virginia, and has a population approaching 10,000 excluding the students of V.P.I. The university has a student body numbering 11,000.

When the original selection was made, the many advantages of the subject population were considered. It was assumed that all adult age groups would be adequately represented, as this was necessary to allow adequate testing of the hypotheses. Since geographic mobility is characteristic of many faculty members, it was assumed that faculty wives would represent many regions of the country. Hopefully, these women would also have been raised in communities of varying sizes. The level of formal education of this population was expected to range from high school to graduate school. This was an important factor if level of education was to be compared with age as an independent variable related to conservative opinion.

In addition to the necessary attributes of this population, the faculty wives were viewed as an articulate, accessible group. Because opinions on controversial issues are the data sought, it is important that the respondents have definite opinions, and that they be able to express them. In view of the relatively isolated location of V.P.I., the accessibility of the population studied was certainly important.

Of course this population was known to have limitations. It is female, predominately middle-class, and white. For this study sex is not defined as an important variable. However, the use of one sex is important in the respect that it does provide a controlled variable. The possible class limitation is not as serious as it might first appear. Although these women may presently be viewed as middle-class, their childhoods were hoped to represent a somewhat broader spectrum of stratification. With regard to the race limitation, it too acts as a

control. Additionally, the section of the interview which deals with race would not lend itself to a multi-racial sample. Finally, the overwhelming majority in America is white, so the population selected is not racially atypical. In addition, although perhaps not empirically exhibited, a majority of "border" and "Southern" universities are de facto segregated on the faculty level.

For reasons of economy, a survey of the entire population was not attempted. In the interest of representative findings a probability sample was drawn with each faculty wife having an equal chance of selection. This objective was achieved via a table of random numbers. Elements of the population were drawn until a final sample size in excess of one hundred completed interviews could be insured. This was done to allow legitimate use of percentages. From the total population of 748 a draw of 140 was conducted. Thus, a seventy-five per cent response rate, low for interviews, would still leave 105 respondents. After the actual sample was drawn, a small number of respondents was drawn from the remainder of the population. This was done to provide a sample for a test of the research instrument. The selection was accomplished after the initial draw so as not to affect the validity of the actual sample.

From the original 140 names drawn, 121 interviews were completed. Seven of the sample had moved, two faculty members had no wife or were separated, three respondents were sick, one did not speak English, four could not be reached, and two were excused. Of the 121 interviews completed three were not usable. One woman had just arrived in the United

States, and she was not knowledgeable on the scale items. Another woman refused to give her age. A third individual was indecisive and generally unable to respond to the items on the interview schedule. As a result of these eliminations the total sample size is 118.

The age distribution of the respondents will permit adequate testing of the hypotheses. By placing the respondents in ten year categories as had been done in Table I, the distribution can be observed. Fifteen per cent of the respondents are in the 20-29 category, 42 percent are in the 30-39 category, 18 per cent are 40-49, and 25 per cent are 50 or over. Of the total, 68 persons are under 40 years of age, and 50 persons are 40 or older.

With respect to formal education, the sample is well-dispersed. Table II reveals that high school graduates comprise 12 per cent of the sample, 26 per cent have had some college, 33 per cent are college graduates, 15 per cent have had some graduate school, and 14 per cent have a masters or professional degree. With almost 90 per cent having some college and over 60 per cent having at least a college degree, the sample must be described as well-educated.

The religious affiliations represented within the sample are somewhat limited. There are no Jews, and less than ten per cent of the sample are Roman Catholics. With the exception of Lutherans, the major Protestant denominations are well represented. This rather limited distribution noted in Table III precluded an investigation of religious affiliation as a variable related to conservative opinions.

TABLE I
AGE OF RESPONDENTS*

Age	Number	Per Cent
20-29	18	15.25
30-39	50	42.37
40-49	21	17.79
50 +	29	24.57
Total	118	99.98

*As of December 31, 1969

TABLE II
FORMAL EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS

Education	Number	Per Cent
Finished High School	14	11.86
Some College	31	26.27
Finished College	39	33.05
Some Graduate School	18	15.25
Masters or Professional	16	13.55
Total	118	99.98

TABLE III
RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION OF RESPONDENTS

Denomination	Number	Per Cent
Baptist	17	14.39
Blacksburg Christian Fellowship	1	.84
Christian Church	2	1.69
Church of Christ	2	1.69
Episcopalian	15	12.71
L D S (Mormon)	1	.84
Lutheran	4	3.38
Methodist	23	19.49
Presbyterian	19	16.10
Roman Catholic	11	9.32
Unitarian	6	5.08
United Church of Christ	1	.84
Zoroastrian	1	.84
None	15	12.71
Total	118	99.92

According to Hollingshead's (Lasswell, 1965:89) index of social class, the entire sample is within the same class. However, as Table IV depicts, the fathers of the respondents represent all major occupational groups. As children, only twenty per cent of the respondents were in the class they now occupy by virtue of their husband's education and occupation. For this reason it may be said that the sample is comprised of individuals from a broad spectrum of social strata.

All but eight of the sample spent their childhood in the United States. By applying Stouffer's (1963:110) regional breakdown to the sample it was found that 53 per cent of the sample spent most of their childhood in the South, 21 per cent in the East, 21 per cent in the Middle West, and 6 per cent in the West. These data may be found in Table V. With respect to the community size categories in Table VI, 22 per cent of the sample grew up in a rural area, 37 per cent in a small town, and 41 per cent in a city. The definition of community size was supplied by the respondent.

The sample selected for study satisfies all the original objectives. It covers a broad age range and spans a number of educational levels. The respondents were raised in all regions of the country, and they grew up in communities of all sizes. No serious shortcomings that would prejudice this study were noted in the sample.

The Instrument

The highly structured interview was selected as the data collection technique. This type of interview specifies (a) the exact

TABLE IV
OCCUPATIONS OF RESPONDENTS' FATHERS

Occupation	Number	Per Cent
Professional	23	19.49
Proprietor, Manager, Official	33	27.96
Clerical	7	5.93
Skilled Worker	21	17.79
Semi-Skilled Worker	12	10.16
Unskilled Worker	2	1.69
Farmer	20	16.94
Total	118	99.96

TABLE V
CHILDHOOD REGION OF RESPONDENTS*

Region	Number	Per Cent
East	23	20.90
South	58	52.72
Middle West	23	20.90
West	6	5.45
Total	110	99.97

*Eight foreign born respondents have been omitted.

TABLE VI
CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY OF RESPONDENTS

Community	Number	Per Cent
Rural Area	26	22.03
Small Town	44	37.28
City	48	40.67
Total	118	99.98

wording of questions, (b) the sequence in which the questions are asked, and (c) the answer categories which are to be used (Gorden, 1969:38). This type of instrument provides many advantages. Because it employs the fixed-alternative type question, the researcher is able to obtain relatively complete information about the topic with which he is concerned (Phillips, 1966:117). Additionally, this type of instrument can be easily standardized and tabulated. Since the questions, answers, and order are all predetermined, the scheduled interview takes less skill to administer than the open ended interview. In comparison to the mailed questionnaire, the structured interview schedule is likely to achieve a higher response rate (Gorden, 1969; Phillips, 1966; Simon, 1969). In view of the above advantages the structured interview schedule was deemed the most appropriate instrument for this study.

The primary disadvantages of the interview technique are the length of time and the number of personnel required. However, these were not serious considerations since this study was part of a previously planned larger effort by a number of graduate students. The field work for that larger effort was conducted in December, 1969, and January, 1970.

The particular format selected is the Likert-type summated scale (Likert, 1932). The most obvious advantages of this type of scale are its ease of administration, coding, and tabulation. Responses may be pre-coded, thus facilitating data collection, placement on IBM cards, and computation. The scale obtained is ordinal in that it provides a ranking of respondents in terms of their overall responses.

The rationale behind this type of scale is that since the statements presented are either positive or negative with respect to the object measured, the probability of answering a series of these statements positively or negatively is directly related to the attitude of the respondent (Selltiz, et al., 1961:238-241).

According to Selltiz, et al., (1961:370) the primary disadvantage of the Likert-type scale is the fact that different response patterns can produce similar results. This may be viewed as different ways to arrive at the same place. For example if a test of simple arithmetic were administered, it is highly probable that different individuals could obtain similar overall scores by correctly solving different problems. This does not necessarily detract from the validity of the test. Pragmatically, this type of scale does provide for a rough ordering of respondents on the property being measured (Phillips, 1966: 185; Selltiz, et al., 1961:369-370).

The selection of the actual topics upon which opinions would be sought first involved a decision as to the number of topics which would be necessary. One topic was considered insufficient for a test of the hypotheses. If the choice was poor by reason of the subject matter, the population surveyed, or a combination thereof, spurious findings could be the outcome. The use of two topics could produce inconclusive results if the findings were divergent. Therefore, three was viewed as an adequate number of subjects upon which opinions would be sought.

The actual topics would have to meet four requirements: (1) They would have to yield to a conservative, non-conservative division;

(2) They would have to be controversial to the extent that they involved beliefs, values, and/or norms; (3) They would have to be of such a nature that the respondents would not be personally involved; and (4) They should not involve issues which would be seen as strictly moral questions.

Examples of issues which violate one of each of these requirements will be helpful to understand the decision process involved. With respect to the first requirement, the war in Indochina would not be acceptable since opinions about the war are not readily classified as conservative or non-conservative. Although the issue of whether or not the United States should build a supersonic jet transport is controversial, it does not directly involve social beliefs, values or norms and thus fails to fulfill the second requirement. An issue such as the women's liberation movement would not be suitable for treatment because this is an issue in which respondents could be personally involved if they were female. Such personal involvement violates the third requirement. Even a highly controversial issue such as abortion would be unacceptable for this survey since it would be viewed as moral or religious by many Americans and consequently fails to meet the fourth criteria.

Three topics which appeared to meet the necessary criteria are race, law enforcement, and patriotism. These titles are used in a general sense to denote the area within which the more specific issues lie. Thus the interview schedule (see Appendix A), aside from demographic questions, is arranged in three sections: The first section

deals with racial issues, the second section deals with issues related to law enforcement, and the third section deals with issues related to patriotism. Within each of these major areas three or four specific positions have been selected which are indicative of a conservative value orientation on the general topic in question.

The first section of the interview schedule is primarily concerned with opinions about Negroes. Three aspects of a conservative position on this topic were selected: (1) a belief in the innate inferiority of Negroes, (2) a belief that Negroes are presently too aggressive, and, (3) a belief in the social segregation of Negroes. These views are considered conservative because they reflect opposition to change and an attachment to traditional modes of thought.

Section one is comprised of statements 1 through 8. Statements 4, 5, and 7 refer to the belief in the innate inferiority of Negroes. Accordingly, statement 4 reads "Negroes are no different essentially from other people"; statement 5 refers to the biological undesirability of miscegenation; and statement 7 says that "All races of men have the same faculties and general ability to learn"

The belief that Negroes are too aggressive as of late is measured by statements 1, 6, and 8. Thus statement 1 says that "The older generation of Negroes is more desirable than the present generation." Statement 6 is more direct in as much as the respondent can agree or disagree with the sentence "I believe that Negroes have been too pushy lately." Statement 8 refers to "Negro civil disorders of the past few years."

The final aspect treated in section one concerns opinions about the social segregation of Negroes. Statements 2 and 3 measure this aspect with the first statement referring to segregation in housing and the second referring to segregation in schools.

Section two is comprised of statements 9 through 16. Four aspects of a conservative position on law enforcement were selected: (1) a belief in a criminal type, (2) confidence in the police, (3) a belief in strong penalties for criminal behavior, and (4) a lack of confidence in recent decisions by the judicial system. These positions are conservative in as much as they reflect one or more of the following characteristics: attachment to traditional modes of thought, respect for established authority, intolerance of nonconformists, and a dissatisfaction with change.

Within section two, statements 12 and 16 refer to the criminal type. Statement 12 denies a criminal type saying that "Criminals are really no different than anybody else . . . ," whereas statement 16 refers to the existence of "born criminals."

Items 14 and 15 are measures of confidence in the police. The first refers to the behavior of the police during the 1968 Democratic National Convention; the second item refers to police graft and corruption.

The third aspect treated in section two, a belief in strong penalties for criminal behavior, is measured by statements 10 and 11. Item 10 suggests increased penalties for criminal offenses, whereas item 11 suggests abolishment of capital punishment. In the first

instance agreement is the conservative response, and in the second instance disagreement is the conservative response.

The fourth and final aspect of the law enforcement section, a lack of confidence in recent judicial decisions, is measured by items 9 and 13. Statement 9 deals with recent Supreme Court decisions, and statement 13 deals with the courts in general.

The third major topic, patriotism, is comprised of statements 17 through 22. Three aspects of a conservative position on issues related to patriotism were selected for inclusion: (1) the belief that a citizen has certain basic responsibilities to his country such as military service and loyalty, (2) an attachment to symbols such as the flag and the American Way, and (3) an appreciable degree of xenophobia. The statements which measure the first two aspects include a degree of authoritarianism due to the correlation between conservatism and authoritarianism (see Argyle, 1966:101-104). These positions are deemed conservative in as much as they reflect one or more of the following characteristics: attachment to traditional modes of thought, intolerance of nonconformity, opposition to internationalism and a tendency toward isolationism.

Within this last section, statements 19 and 21 refer to citizen responsibilities. Statement 19 is direct in that it reads "Patriotism and loyalty are the first and most important requirements of a good citizen." Statement 21 refers to a citizen's responsibility to fight for his country.

Attachment to the flag and the American Way are measured by statements 22 and 18 respectively. Statement 22 says that "There is no acceptable excuse . . . for refusing to salute the flag during the National Anthem." Statement 18 refers to the "true American way of life."

The third aspect of a conservative position on patriotism treated by this study is the subject of items 17 and 20. Both are designed to be measures of xenophobia. Statement 17 refers to a threat to "basic American institutions," and statement 20 refers to "a threat to our national security."

Seven of the items included in the interview schedule have been taken from other sources. Items 3, 4, and 7 are from Hortense Powdermaker's (1939) After Freedom. Items 17, 18, 19, and 21 are from The Authoritarian Personality by T. W. Adorno et al. (1950). The remainder of the scale items originated with this study.

All of the items on the schedule have five possible responses: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and strongly disagree. The scoring system employed is that originally proposed by Likert (1932:91) in that a score of from one to five is awarded to each possible response with the higher score denoting the most conservative response. The responses of an individual are summed to provide a scale score on a particular section or on the total schedule. An individual who scores high on the scale is defined as having given more conservative responses than one who scores lower. Additionally, a categorization of respondents on a given issue or on the entire schedule was achieved by

defining an average score of three and one half or more as conservative and an average score of two and one half or less as non-conservative. Respondents falling in between were labeled moderate, meaning between extremes. In this manner an operational definition of "more conservative opinions" as well as "conservative opinions" has been achieved.

Validity

External validity of a Likert-type scale cannot be directly determined (Selltiz, et al., 1961:156; Phillips, 1966:185). However, since the statements in the interview schedule are in the form of opinions, and since the data sought are opinions, the only question to be answered is whether agreement or disagreement to a given item is the conservative response. This was accomplished on the basis of the definition of conservatism presented earlier, and an item by item explanation of this process was provided in the previous section. The veracity of the respondents taken as a group was assumed.

An internal validity check was accomplished by administering the original interview schedule to forty undergraduate students in questionnaire form. Questions which had been designed to measure the same dimension of a topic were compared by employing Goodman and Kruskal's gamma for tied categories (Freeman, 1965). Items which demonstrated a low agreement with others in the same category were dropped. Additionally, two items were dropped because they used the term "colored people" rather than Negro. A total of ten of the original thirty-two items were thereby eliminated. A listing of those items is included in Appendix B.

Controls

The conduct of variable analysis requires that the researcher be wary of intervening variables which may explain an apparent correlation between two other variables. To minimize the effect of intervening variables, the researcher attempts to control or hold constant factors other than those being studied. The major variables of this study are age and opinions. Other factors which affect opinion can produce spurious results if they vary with age in the population being studied.

To avoid such spurious findings three variables have been investigated to see if they vary according to age within the subject sample. These variables are education, geographic region of childhood, and community size during childhood. While this list is not exhaustive, it does include major variables which may be related to opinion.

Within the subject sample there is no statistically significant relationship between age and the level of formal education achieved. Comparison of these two variables yielded a Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient of .0959. If the sample is divided into the four age groups shown in Table VII, then the median education of each group is a college degree. The median education of the entire sample is also college completion.

Similarly, there is no significant relationship between age and the region of the country in which the respondent spent her childhood. Of particular interest here is the South, which often is viewed as the most conservative region of the country. If a disproportionate number

TABLE VII
EDUCATION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE

Age	High School	Some College	Finished College	Graduate School	Masters or Professional
20-29	3	5	6*	3	1
30-39	5	15	19*	5	6
40-49	3	2	7*	3	6
50 +	3	8	7*	7	4
Total	14	30	39*	18	17

*Location of median

of older or younger persons in the sample grew up in the South, spurious findings could result. To check for this possibility a contingency table and a chi-square test of independence were employed. Table VIII reveals no statistically significant relationship between whether one was over or under 40 and whether or not one grew up in the South. Forty was used because it is the approximate mean age of the sample. Eight respondents born in foreign countries were omitted.

A comparable test was conducted to determine if there was a relationship between age and the size of the community in which the respondents were raised. The original community size categories of city, small town, and rural area were condensed into an urban and non-urban dichotomy. The same two age groups employed above provided the other variable. Using the chi-square test, no statistically significant relationship between the variables was found in Table IX.

The above findings are very important. Three possible intervening variables have been eliminated. If within this sample older people are found to express more conservative opinions than younger people, it is not because they are more or less educated; it is not because a disproportionate number of them grew up in the South; and it is not because a disproportionate number of them grew up in non-urban areas. These three major variables are not related to age within the subject sample.

Statistical Procedures

The statistical procedures employed to test a hypothesis are dependent upon the nature of the hypothesis and the type of data

TABLE VIII
REGION OF CHILDHOOD BY AGE

Age	South		Non-South		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	
20-39	35	(32.69)	27	(29.31)	62
40 +	23	(25.31)	25	(22.69)	48
Total	58		52		110*

*Eight foreign born have been omitted.

$$\chi^2 = .79 \quad \text{d.f.} = 1 \quad \text{p. less than .50}$$

TABLE IX
CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY BY AGE

Age	Urban		Non-Urban		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	
20-39	29	(27.66)	39	(40.34)	68
40 +	19	(20.34)	31	(29.66)	50
Total	48		70		118

$\chi^2 = .25$ d.f. = 1 p. less than .70

available. For this reason each general hypothesis will be presented to be followed by a description of the particular statistical technique which is deemed appropriate.

Hypothesis I. Taken as a group, older persons express more conservative opinions than do younger persons.

A contingency table will be used to test this hypothesis. The terms older and younger are operationally defined as 50 years of age or over and 29 years of age or younger respectively. This division will allow for a comparison of the youngest and oldest categories in the sample. The categories non-conservative, moderate, and conservative will serve as the dependent variable. These labels refer to the scale score obtained by the respondent rather than the respondent herself. For this nominal-ordinal contingency table, the chi-square test of independence is deemed an appropriate test statistic.

Hypothesis II. There is a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions.

The independent variable in this case is the age of the respondent, and the dependent variable is the opinions of the respondent. The assertion is that with increased age there is increased conservative opinion. What is needed to test this hypothesis is a measure of linear correlation. An appropriate test statistic is Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient. The age of the respondent will be compared to the scale score she achieves. The former is ratio data, and the latter is ordinal data.

In the past the correlation coefficient has been restricted to data of at least an interval nature, but two statisticians, Hays (1963:

510) and Nunnally (1967:20-30), have explained that this statistic may be used with ordinal data as long as the original order of the data is preserved. If this is done, there is no need to make further assumptions concerning normality or scales of equal interval.

Hypothesis III. Taken as a group, people who express conservative opinions are older than people who express non-conservative opinions.

What is required here is a comparison of the average age of those who express conservative opinions with the average age of those who express non-conservative opinions. In other words, a test of the difference between two means is in order. The variances of the true population are unknown, and the sample sizes may vary considerably. In this case a "t" test is appropriate with the proper formula for degrees of freedom. The formulas for this test and the degrees of freedom are found in Walpole (1968:230).

Hypothesis IV. When education is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

The relationship between age and conservative opinion will have already been found in the test of the second hypothesis. This relationship will be expressed in terms of a correlation coefficient. The same process will be repeated using an ordinal scale of education as the independent variable. The two coefficients will be compared to see which has the greater absolute value. The coefficients of determination will be compared to determine which independent variable explains the greater proportion of variation in the dependent variable.

Hypothesis V. When the geographic region of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Hypothesis VI. When the community size of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

These two hypotheses are presented together because they both will require the same test statistic, and the results of the tests of both will be compared to the results of the test of the first hypothesis. The nominal categories of geographic region and community size that were used in the section on controls will be used as the independent variable. The opinion categories of non-conservative, moderate, and conservative will serve as the dependent variable. A contingency table and chi-square test of independence will be employed in each case. The data distributions obtained, the contingency coefficients, and the statistical levels of significance will be compared with those obtained in the test of the first hypothesis to see if these last two hypotheses may be rejected.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The problem as originally outlined for this thesis concerns the relationship between age and opinions on contemporary controversial issues. A review of pertinent literature suggested that there is a positive relationship between age and conservatism, or at least that older persons are more conservative than younger persons. If these generalizations are true, then one would expect older persons to exhibit a greater degree of conservatism in their opinions on controversial issues which involve values, beliefs, and norms. This relationship between age and conservative opinions was empirically tested, and the results are presented below.

In order to determine the relative importance of age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, two additional, but closely related, areas were delineated, and tests were subsequently applied. One was to determine if people who expressed conservative opinions were significantly older than those who expressed non-conservative opinions. The second test involved a comparison of the import of age as compared with three other variables--education, region of one's childhood, and community size of one's childhood.

To accomplish these stated objectives, three topics were selected upon which respondents could express their opinions via agreement or disagreement to specific statements. The three topics to which these statements refer are race, law enforcement, and patriotism. These three

topics have been combined to form a scale of conservative opinions. The scores obtained on this scale by the respondents constitute the data which was used to test the six major hypotheses offered earlier. For purposes of clarity and further understanding, each major hypothesis was also sub-divided with respect to the specific topics included in the scale. All hypotheses are presented in null form for purposes of testing.

No particular level of significance is advanced at this juncture as the measure of what is or is not significant. Each case will be judged individually in light of the test employed, the results obtained, and other factors which are judged relevant. As Winer (1962:13) points out, "The frequent use of the .05 and .01 levels of significance is a matter of convention having little scientific or logical basis."

Hypothesis One

Hypothesis I. Taken as a group, older persons express no more conservative opinions than do younger persons.

An analysis of the data in Table X demonstrates that within the sample group the older persons did express more conservative opinions. Conversely, they were less likely to express non-conservative opinions. This can be seen by comparing the observed frequencies with the calculated expected frequencies. Within the conservative category, the younger group's observed frequency is less than the expected frequency; whereas the older group's observed frequency exceeds the expected frequency. Within the non-conservative category the reverse is true.

TABLE X
 OPINIONS ON COMBINED TOPICS BY AGE

Age	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
20-29	10	(6.13)	7	(10.34)	1	(1.53)	18
50 +	6	(9.87)	20	(16.66)	3	(2.47)	29
Total	16		27		4		47

$$\chi^2 = 6.00$$

$$d.f. = 2$$

p. less than .05

$$C = .34$$

Additionally, over half the younger group scored in the non-conservative category; whereas less than one fourth of the older group did so.

A chi-square test of independence reveals that the probability of achieving the results presented in Table X by chance is less than five per one hundred. Thus the null hypothesis can be safely rejected. A contingency coefficient (C) has been calculated to provide an estimate of the extent of association between the two variables. This statistic is useful when dealing with nominal data (Siegel, 1956:196). The correlation calculated here, $C = .34$, is significant at the .05 level (as judged by the value of X^2) and will be used later when different variables related to opinion are compared.

Hypothesis I-A. Taken as a group, older persons express no more conservative opinions on issues related to race than do younger persons.

As was previously the case, the older group did express more conservative opinions. A review of the data in Table XI shows that the older group's observed frequency in the conservative category exceeded the expected frequency; whereas the reverse is true for the younger group. Additionally, two-thirds of the younger group scored in the non-conservative category. Among the older group only approximately one-third did so. Within the conservative category, the frequency of the older group was proportionately over twice as great as that registered by the younger group.

A chi-square test of independence reveals that the probability of achieving the results presented in Table XI by chance is less than .10. Although this would generally be viewed as a borderline case for

TABLE XI
OPINIONS ON RACE BY AGE

Age	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
20-29	12	(8.43)	5	(7.66)	1	(1.91)	18
50 +	10	(13.57)	15	(12.34)	4	(3.09)	29
Total	22		20		5		47

$$\chi^2 = 4.64$$

$$\text{d.f.} = 2$$

$$p. \text{ less than } .10$$

$$C = .30$$

rejection of the null hypothesis, the distribution of the data argues strongly in favor of rejection. A contingency coefficient of .30 was calculated indicating a degree of association not unlike that noted in the previous test.

Hypothesis I-B. Taken as a group, older persons express no more conservative opinions on issues related to law enforcement than do younger persons.

The results shown in Table XII are similar to those in the previous two tables. Within the conservative category the older group's observed frequency exceeds the expected frequency. The reverse is true for the younger group. Over one-fourth of the older group scored in the conservative category; whereas only one-sixth of the younger group did so.

The probability of the results noted in Table XII occurring by chance is less than one in ten. In view of the distribution observed and the previous findings, the null hypothesis may be rejected. A contingency coefficient of .33 was calculated. This degree of association is comparable to the .34 noted in the test of the major hypothesis.

Hypothesis I-C. Taken as a group, older persons express no more conservative opinions on issues related to patriotism than do younger persons.

Although the test statistic presented in Table XIII is comparable to that noted in the test of the two previous sub-hypotheses, the data distribution is not nearly as conclusive. Within the conservative category the differences between the observed frequencies and the expected frequencies are negligible.

The differences which account for the magnitude of the test

TABLE XII
 OPINIONS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT BY AGE

Age	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
20-29	9	(5.36)	6	(8.43)	3	(4.21)	18
50 +	5	(8.64)	16	(13.57)	8	(6.79)	29
Total	14		22		11		47

$\chi^2 = 5.71$ d.f. = 2 p. less than .10 c = .33

TABLE XIII
 OPINIONS ON PATRIOTISM BY AGE

Age	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
20-29	11	(7.28)	4	(7.66)	3	(3.06)	18
50 +	8	(11.72)	16	(12.34)	5	(4.94)	29
Total	19		20		8		47

$\chi^2 = 5.91$ d.f. = 2 p. less than .10 C = .33

statistic ($\chi^2 = 5.91$) are found in the non-conservative and moderate categories. The younger group is more non-conservative and less moderate than can be accounted for by chance; whereas the opposite is true for the older group. The data presented would support a hypothesis that younger persons are more likely to express non-conservative opinions than older persons, but they do not support rejection of the hypothesis being tested. Accordingly, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected. The contingency coefficient of .33 reflects an association between age and opinions, but it is somewhat misleading in this instance.

Hypothesis Two

Hypothesis II. There is no correlation between age and conservative opinions.

Hypothesis II-A. There is no correlation between age and conservative opinions on issues related to race.

Hypothesis II-B. There is no correlation between age and conservative opinions on issues related to law enforcement.

Hypothesis II-C. There is no correlation between age and conservative opinions on issues related to patriotism.

The sub-hypotheses are presented along with the major hypothesis because the results of the statistical test for each of the four can be clearly presented in one table. Table XIV illustrates these data. In each case the independent variable is the age of the respondent, and the dependent variable is the score attained on the survey instrument or the section of the instrument indicated. As explained earlier, Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient was employed as a

TABLE XIV
CORRELATION OF AGE WITH CONSERVATIVE OPINION BY TOPIC

Topic	Correlation Coefficient*	Significance Level**
Combined	.26	.01
Race	.25	.01
Law Enforcement	.25	.01
Patriotism	.17	.05

*Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient

**Fisher's "z" transformation

measure of linear correlation. The significance level indicated by Fisher's "z" transformation allows for a test of each hypothesis.

Referring to Table XIV again, the results of the computations on the combined topics provide the test for the major hypothesis. The correlation coefficient indicates a positive correlation of .26 between age and conservative opinions. The probability of this occurring by chance is less than .01. Thus the null hypothesis may be safely rejected. Within the sample surveyed there is a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions.

On issues related to race a correlation coefficient of .25 was calculated. This was found to be significant at the .01 level. Accordingly, the null form of Hypothesis II-A may be rejected. Within the sample surveyed there is a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions on issues related to race.

The test of Hypothesis II-B reveals similar findings--a correlation coefficient of .25 significant at the .01 level. Again the null hypothesis may be rejected. The alternate hypothesis that there is a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions on issues related to law enforcement may be accepted.

The results of the test of Hypothesis II-C show a less significant relationship. This is in agreement with the test of Hypothesis I-C which also dealt with the topic of patriotism. In this instance, by using interval and ordinal data, a significance level of .05 was calculated. A positive correlation between age and conservative opinions

of .17 was found. The null hypothesis may be rejected in favor of the alternate hypothesis.

Hypothesis Three

Hypothesis III. Taken as a group, people who express conservative opinions are no older than people who express non-conservative opinions.

The test of this hypothesis, as well as the related sub-hypotheses, involves a problem rooted in the nature of the population being studied. The average education of this sample is a college degree. This compares with the national average of 11.8 years of schooling (U. S. Bureau of Census, 1966:13). As will be amply demonstrated in the test of Hypothesis IV, there is a negative correlation between education and conservative opinions. It can also be reasonably argued that members of a university community are apt to be opinion leaders with regard to new ideas. For these and other unknown reasons, very few respondents attained a conservative score on the summated scale, or on the three individual sections of the instrument. The immediate effect of the small sample size in the conservative category is a low degree of freedom number. The lower the degrees of freedom value, the higher the value "t" must be at a given level of significance. Even more important, the value of "t" itself is directly affected by the sample sizes.

The data used to test Hypothesis III are found in Table XV. The respondents who scored in the conservative category are 6.04 years older than the non-conservative group. This cannot be viewed as a very great

TABLE XV
MEAN AGE BY OPINIONS ON COMBINED TOPICS

Opinions	Number of Respondents	Mean Age	Significance Level
Conservative	7	43.14	.20
Non-Conservative	50	37.10	

$t = 1.36$

$d.f. = 7.21$

difference. Furthermore, the conservative group at age 43.14 cannot be characterized as especially old any more than the non-conservative group at age 37.10 can be characterized as especially young. At the calculated .20 level of significance, a difference of this magnitude would occur by chance one time in five. This low level of significance does not justify rejection of the null hypothesis.

Hypothesis III-A. Taken as a group, people who express conservative opinions on issues related to race are no older than people who express non-conservative opinions.

The data in Table XVI reveal an age difference between the conservative and non-conservative groups of 7.30 years. The respondents classified as having expressed conservative opinions are older. With the given sample sizes, this difference is significant at the .10 level. The null hypothesis may be prudently rejected. As was the case above, the difference is not great, and with a mean age of 45.44 the conservative group cannot be fairly characterized as old. However, as will become apparent when Tables XVII and XVIII are reviewed, the conservative group is oldest on this topic of race.

Hypothesis III-B. Taken as a group, people who express conservative opinions on issues related to law enforcement are no older than people who express non-conservative opinions.

The data presented in Table XVII illustrate the effect a considerable increase in the size of the conservative group over previous tests can have on the significance level. Seventeen persons with a mean age of 44.18 scored in the conservative category. The mean age of the 43 persons who scored in the non-conservative group is 36.86. The difference between the means is 7.32, which is only .02 greater than

TABLE XVI
MEAN AGE BY OPINIONS ON RACE

Opinions	Number of Respondents	Mean Age	Significance Level
Conservative	9	45.44	.10
Non-Conservative	74	38.14	

$t = 1.62$

$d.f. = 9.19$

TABLE XVII
 MEAN AGE BY OPINIONS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT

Opinions	Number of Respondents	Mean Age	Significance Level
Conservative	17	44.18	.025
Non-Conservative	43	36.86	

$t = 2.27$

$d.f. = 23.23$

that registered on the issue of race. This difference between these two samples is significant at the .025 level. The null hypothesis may be safely rejected. Again the difference in age between the two groups is not large, although the conservative group is older.

Hypothesis III-C. Taken as a group, people who express conservative opinions on issues related to patriotism are no older than people who express non-conservative opinions.

The two tests of hypotheses which treated conservative opinions related to patriotism as a dependent variable of age revealed a weak relationship. The retrospective approach yields comparable results, which are found in Table XVIII. The test of this hypothesis involves no problems with respect to sample size or degrees of freedom. The mean age of the conservative group is 39.29, and the mean age of the non-conservative group is 37.07. The difference between the means is slightly in excess of two years (2.22). This difference, which must be viewed as negligible, is significant at the .30 level. The null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Because Hypothesis III is the first major hypothesis that cannot be rejected in null form, a methodological note is in order. Failure to reject a null hypothesis does not constitute acceptance of that hypothesis. With respect to Hypothesis III, it may be said that no significant difference was found between the mean age of those who expressed conservative opinions and the mean age of those who expressed non-conservative opinions. However, there is insufficient evidence to say that no significant difference exists between the means.

TABLE XVIII
 MEAN AGE BY OPINIONS ON PATRIOTISM

Opinions	Number of Respondents	Mean Age	Significance Level
Conservative	17	39.29	.30
Non-Conservative	46	37.07	

$t = .72$

d.f. = 25.02

Hypothesis Four

Hypothesis IV. When education is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Hypothesis IV-A. When education is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning race, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Hypothesis IV-B. When education is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning law enforcement, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Hypothesis IV-C. When education is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning patriotism, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Table XIX presents the data for the comparisons referred to in all four hypotheses. The correlation coefficients which were calculated for the test of Hypothesis II are presented in the column on the extreme left of the table. These figures show the positive correlation between age and the summated scale of conservative opinions as well as the correlation between age and conservative opinions relating to the specific topics listed. The correlation coefficients presented in the next column were computed by using the respondent's level of formal education as the independent variable instead of her age.

The correlation between age and the scale of conservative opinions is .26 as compared to a correlation of -.38 between education and the scale score. Education is clearly a more important variable within the sample surveyed. The relationship between education and conservative opinions is negative. In other words, the more educated

TABLE XIX
CORRELATION OF AGE AND EDUCATION WITH
CONSERVATIVE OPINIONS BY TOPIC

Topic	Correlation Coefficient*		Coefficient of Determination	
	Age	Education	Age	Education
Combined	.26	-.37	.07	.14
Race	.25	-.38	.06	.14
Law Enforcement	.25	-.30	.06	.09
Patriotism	.17	-.27	.03	.07

* Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient

a person is, the less likely he is to express conservative opinions.

If a correlation coefficient is squared, an estimate of the proportion of variation explained by the independent variable can be obtained. The result of this process is termed the coefficient of determination, and it is symbolized by r^2 (Mueller and Schuessler, 1961:303).

By comparing the coefficients of determination found on the right side of Table XIX, the greater importance of education as a variable related to conservative opinions can be clearly seen. The r^2 value for age with respect to the scale total is .07 as compared to .14 for education. Within the sample surveyed education explains twice the proportion of variation in conservative opinions that age does. Hypothesis IV may be safely rejected.

With respect to opinions on issues related to race, the relative importance of education is even greater than it was on the combined topics. A correlation coefficient of .25 with age as the independent variable compares to a value of -.38 with education as the independent variable. The r^2 values show a greater divergence. Age explains 6 per cent of the variation in opinions on race as compared to 14 per cent when education is the independent variable. Hypothesis IV-A may be rejected. There is a difference when education is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues dealing with race.

The difference in the correlation coefficients obtained when the score on the law enforcement section serves as the dependent variable is not as great as was the case with opinions on racial issues. The correlation with age is again .25, but the correlation with education drops somewhat to -.30. The r^2 value for age is .06 as compared to .09 for education. According to these figures education explains 50 per cent more variation in opinions than does age. Therefore, Hypothesis IV-B may be rejected.

The data relating to the third sub-hypothesis is especially interesting in light of previous tests concerning the topic of patriotism. In testing Hypotheses I-C and III-C, no significant relationship between age and conservative opinions on issues concerning patriotism was found. The correlation between age and opinions on issues related to patriotism was computed to be .17 in the test of Hypothesis II-C. Yet when education is substituted for age as the independent variable, a correlation coefficient of -.27, significant at the .01 level, is the result. The difference in the r^2 values is even greater. The coefficient of determination for age and opinions on this topic is .03, as compared to .06 for education. This means that education accounts for over twice the variation in the dependent variable as age does. Hypothesis IV-C may be rejected.

Hypothesis Five

Since Hypothesis V and all remaining hypotheses in this study necessitate the use of nominal data, the contingency tables used to test

the first hypotheses will serve as the measure of the relationship between age and conservative opinions. This procedure will allow for fair comparisons with other variables, and it will avoid the problems of comparing contingency coefficients with correlation coefficients.

Hypothesis V. When the geographic region of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

To test this hypothesis the respondents have been dichotomized into the categories South and Non-South. Eight persons who were not born in the United States have been excluded. Table XX is intentionally comparable to Table X which was used to test Hypothesis I. In this case the regional categories have been substituted for the age categories. A comparison of the two tables provides an adequate test of Hypothesis V.

Table XX shows a negligible relationship between the region of one's childhood and conservative opinions. Very little difference between the observed and expected frequencies can be noted. This is reflected in the low chi-square value of 1.15. Similarly, the contingency coefficient, which is an estimate of the extent of the association, is only .10 at a significance level of .70. With age as the independent variable (see Table X) a contingency coefficient of .34 was calculated. The level of significance was .05. Age is clearly the more important variable. Therefore the null form of Hypothesis V may be rejected.

Hypothesis V-A. When the geographic region of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning race, there is no difference in their relative importance.

TABLE XX
 OPINIONS ON COMBINED TOPICS BY
 REGION OF CHILDHOOD

Region	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
South	24	(23.73)	29	(30.58)	5	(3.69)	58
Non-South	21	(21.27)	29	(27.42)	2	(3.31)	52
Total	45		58		7		110*

*Eight foreign born have been excluded.

$$\chi^2 = 1.15 \quad \text{d.f.} = 2 \quad \text{p. less than .70} \quad C = .10$$

The results of a comparison of the relative importance of age and region on the issue of race are not as clear as they were in the previous comparison. Table XXI shows that there is a relationship between the region of one's childhood and conservative opinions on racial issues. Although the significance level of .20 is not high, respondents who were raised in the South were more likely to express conservative opinions than those who were not. Also, respondents raised in the South were less likely to express non-conservative opinions than those who were raised in other regions of the country.

With age as the independent variable (see Table XI) a significance level of .10 and a contingency coefficient of .30 were computed. These figures compare with .20 and .20 respectively with region of one's childhood as the independent variable. Age appears to be the more important variable so Hypothesis V-A may be prudently rejected with respect to the sample surveyed.

Hypothesis V-B. When the geographic region of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning law enforcement, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Table XXII amply demonstrates that on this particular issue the relationship between region of one's childhood and conservative opinions is at best minimal. A contingency coefficient of .08 and a level of significance of .70 serve to point out the weakness of the relationship. On the same issue with age as the independent variable (Table XII), a contingency coefficient of .33 and a level of significance of .10 were registered. The implication is clear. The null hypothesis may be rejected. Age is the more important variable.

TABLE XXI
 OPINIONS ON RACE BY REGION OF CHILDHOOD

Region	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
South	30	(34.80)	21	(18.45)	7	(4.75)	58
Non-South	36	(31.20)	14	(16.55)	2	(4.25)	52
Total	66		35		9		110*

*Eight foreign born have been excluded.

$\chi^2 = 4.38$ d.f. = 2 p. less than .20 C = .20

TABLE XXII
 OPINIONS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT BY REGION OF CHILDHOOD

Region	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
South	19	(21.09)	29	(27.95)	10	(8.96)	58
Non-South	21	(18.91)	24	(25.05)	7	(8.04)	52
Total	40		53		17		110*

*Eight foreign born have been excluded.

$$X^2 = .75 \quad \text{d.f.} = 2 \quad \text{p. less than .70} \quad C = .08$$

Hypothesis V-C. When the geographic region of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning patriotism, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Table XXIII shows that on issues related to patriotism, respondents raised in the South are both more likely to express conservative opinions and non-conservative opinions than persons from other regions. Put another way, respondents raised in the South were less likely to express moderate opinions. Respondents who spent their childhood in regions other than the South were more likely to score in the moderate category and less likely to express conservative or non-conservative opinions than the expected frequencies would indicate. In view of the data distribution observed, there appears to be no relationship between the region of one's childhood and conservative opinions on issues concerning patriotism.

A comparable finding was the result of the test of Hypothesis I-C. No significant relationship between age group and conservative opinions on issues related to patriotism was found. Because neither the region of one's childhood nor age group has proven to be an important variable, Hypothesis V-C may not be rejected.

Hypothesis Six

Hypothesis VI. When the community size of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Investigation of the observed and expected frequencies presented in Table XXIV reveals that the opinions of urban respondents were both

TABLE XXIII
 OPINIONS ON PATRIOTISM BY REGION OF CHILDHOOD

Region	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
South	24	(23.20)	24	(26.89)	10	(7.91)	58
Non-South	20	(20.80)	27	(24.11)	5	(7.09)	52
Total	44		51		15		110*

*Eight foreign born have been excluded.

$$\chi^2 = 1.86 \quad \text{d.f.} = 2 \quad \text{p. less than .50} \quad \text{C} = .13$$

TABLE XXIV
 OPINIONS ON COMBINED TOPICS BY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY SIZE

Community	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Urban	24	(20.34)	20	(24.81)	4	(2.85)	48
Non-Urban	26	(29.66)	41	(36.19)	3	(4.15)	70
Total	50		61		7		118

$$\chi^2 = 3.38$$

$$d.f. = 2$$

p. less than .20

$$C = .17$$

more conservative and more non-conservative than those of the non-urban group. The respondents in the urban group were less likely to score in the moderate category than were the members of the non-urban group. It would appear that the individuals who grew up in an urban area held stronger convictions on the issues presented than their non-urban counterparts. The data in Table XXIV show a relationship between childhood community size and opinion, but they do not exhibit a relationship between childhood community size and conservative opinions.

In the test of Hypothesis I where age was the independent variable and conservative opinions the dependent variable, a significant relationship was found. The data presented for that test may be found in Table X. A contingency coefficient of .34, significant at the .05 level, was computed. Age is clearly a more important variable related to conservative opinions than is the size of one's childhood community. Therefore, Hypothesis VI may be rejected.

Hypothesis VI-A. When the community size of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning race, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Hypothesis VI-B. When the community size of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning law enforcement, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Hypothesis VI-C. When the community size of one's childhood is compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions on issues concerning patriotism, there is no difference in their relative importance.

Since the data distributions for each of these sub-hypotheses are so similar, they have been listed together. Tables XXV, XXVI, and

XXVII, all reflect a distribution comparable to that discussed in the treatment of Hypothesis VI. A comparison of the observed and expected frequencies on each table reveals that the observed frequencies of the urban group always exceed the expected frequencies in both the conservative and non-conservative categories. The observed frequency displayed in the moderate category is always less than the expected frequency. Conversely, the non-urban group's observed frequencies are always less than the expected frequencies in the conservative and non-conservative categories and always exceed the expected frequencies in the moderate category.

All of these differences account for the various chi-square values indicated. It is important to note that a chi-square statistic does not indicate direction, nor does a contingency coefficient. The former indicates association; the latter is an estimate of the degree of association. One must look to the data itself to make inferences about direction.

Tables XXV, XXVI, and XXVII, show varying degrees of association between childhood community size and opinions. The nature of the relationship is a greater polarization of opinion on the part of the urban respondents as compared to the non-urban respondents. No relationship between childhood community size and conservative opinions is indicated.

Because childhood community size was not shown to be an independent variable related to conservative opinions on any of the specific topics, only a review of the importance of age to the various topics is necessary to determine if the null hypotheses may be rejected.

TABLE XXV
 OPINIONS ON RACE BY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY SIZE

Community	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Urban	36	(30.10)	8	(14.24)	4	(3.66)	48
Non-Urban	38	(43.90)	27	(20.76)	5	(5.34)	70
Total	74		35		9		118

$$X^2 = 6.59$$

$$d.f. = 2$$

$$p. \text{ less than } .05$$

$$C = .23$$

TABLE XXVI
 OPINIONS ON LAW ENFORCEMENT BY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY SIZE

Community	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Urban	20	(17.49)	21	(23.59)	7	(6.92)	48
Non-Urban	23	(25.51)	37	(34.41)	10	(10.08)	70
Total	43		58		17		118

$$\chi^2 = 1.07$$

$$\text{d.f.} = 2$$

$$p. \text{ less than } .70$$

$$C = .09$$

TABLE XXVII
 OPINIONS ON PATRIOTISM BY CHILDHOOD COMMUNITY SIZE

Community	Non-Conservative		Moderate		Conservative		Total
	fo	fe	fo	fe	fo	fe	
Urban	20	(18.71)	17	(22.37)	11	(6.92)	48
Non-Urban	26	(27.29)	38	(32.63)	6	(10.08)	70
Total	46		55		17		118

$$\chi^2 = 6.38$$

$$d.f. = 2$$

$$p. \text{ less than } .05$$

$$C = .23$$

The test of Hypothesis I-A showed that age was related to conservative opinions on issues concerning race. Because age was shown to be so related and child community size was not, Hypothesis VI-A may be rejected.

Likewise, age was shown to be related to conservative opinions on issues concerning law enforcement in the test of Hypothesis I-B. Because such a relationship could not be shown with childhood community size as the independent variable, Hypothesis VI-B may be rejected.

No significant relationship was discovered between age and conservative opinions on issues concerning patriotism in the test of Hypothesis I-C. Nor was any relationship found between childhood community size and conservative opinions on issues concerning patriotism (see Table XXVII). Accordingly, Hypothesis VI-C may not be rejected.

Summary

Six major hypotheses concerning the relationship between age and conservative opinions have been tested in this chapter. The first two hypotheses were concerned with the existence and direction of the relationship. The last four hypotheses were concerned with the relative importance of age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions.

The test of Hypothesis I revealed that older persons tended to express more conservative opinions than younger persons. The difference noted between the two groups was statistically significant, but in absolute terms it was not great. Similarly, the data concerning the

test of Hypothesis II revealed a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions. Although statistically significant, this relationship accounted for only seven per cent of the variation in the opinions expressed.

In the test of Hypothesis III no significant difference was found between the mean age of those who expressed conservative opinions and the mean age of those who expressed non-conservative opinions. Although those who expressed conservative opinions were older, the difference was not great, nor was it statistically significant.

When education was compared to age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions in the test of Hypothesis IV, education was found to be the more important. As an independent variable education explained twice the variation in the expression of conservative opinions than did age. In the test of Hypothesis V, age was found to be more important than the geographical region of one's childhood as an independent variable related to conservative opinions. The only topic on which childhood region had a bearing was that of race. The test of Hypothesis VI showed that the size of one's childhood community was not related to the expression of conservative opinions. Therefore, age was judged to be a more important independent variable with respect to conservative opinions. A summary of the findings and conclusions derived from this thesis may be found in the final chapter.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The research herein reported was approached from a sociological perspective. Therefore, this thesis began with the assumption that man is a social animal who gives meaning to his environment. As definitions become shared, social values, beliefs, and norms emerge. These shared values, beliefs, and norms become the basis of social organization.

The possession of such a perspective makes it difficult to accept the existence of the much talked about "generation gap." If young people really do subscribe to values, beliefs, and norms which differ substantially from those of their elders, then the social bond is disintegrating. A more plausible explanation concerns the nature of values, beliefs, and norms. They do not remain static, but rather, they change as men respond to new problems and new situations. An individual's values, beliefs, and norms are current to the degree that his adjustment to the surrounding environment has been recent and complete. Perhaps, young people have an advantage in this effort.

Throughout the history of sociology, it has generally been held that older people are more conservative than younger people. However, conservatism is a nominal concept which has little practical meaning until it is applied to a specific, temporal situation. That is what this thesis has attempted to do. If older people are in reality more

conservative than younger people, older people should exhibit this value orientation in their opinions on contemporary, controversial issues.

By investigating the relationship between age and conservative opinions, an empirical test of the theoretical relationship between age and conservatism was to be accomplished. Additionally, it was hoped that an understanding of the relative importance of age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions could be achieved.

A review of pertinent literature revealed that sociologists have held a long standing interest in the relationship between age and conservatism. Though a complete consensus does not exist, two generalizations may be offered: (1) old people are more conservative than young people, and (2) there is a positive relationship between age and conservatism. The first generalization posits a simple dichotomous situation, whereas the second refers to a progressive or continuous relationship.

The authors reviewed suggest three possible explanations for the generalized relationship between age and conservatism. These explanations may be labeled cultural, psychological, and practical. The cultural explanation says that people of different ages were reared during different periods of time. Almost by definition the oldest group would adhere to more traditional values than the youngest group. Proponents of the psychological explanation hold that increasing conservatism is part of the aging process. New ideas may be viewed as confusing, and therefore would be resisted by the old. According to

the practical explanation, men become more pragmatic and less idealistic as they mature. The possession of prestige and material goods gives one a vested interest in maintaining the status quo. Of these three basic explanations, the cultural and practical explanations are of the greatest interest to the sociologist.

To test the relationship between age and conservative opinions, as well as the relative importance of age, six major hypotheses were offered. The population selected to test these hypotheses consisted of wives of Virginia Polytechnic Institute faculty members. An equal probability sample of these women was interviewed by Department of Sociology graduate students. The sample was found to possess the necessary attributes which would allow for an adequate test of the hypotheses.

Data collection was achieved via a structured interview schedule. The particular format selected was the Likert-type summated scale. The controversial issues upon which opinions were sought concerned the general topics of race, law enforcement, and patriotism. Twenty-two items comprised the final scale. On each item a score of from one to five was awarded to the possible responses, with the higher score denoting the most conservative response. The responses of an individual were summed to provide a scale score on a particular section or on the total schedule. A categorization of respondents was achieved by defining an average score of three and one half as conservative and an average score of two and one half as non-conservative. Respondents falling in between were labeled moderate, meaning

between extremes. The total score served as an ordinal scale of conservative opinions.

The six major hypotheses presented in Chapter II were tested. The first two dealt with the existence and direction of the relationship between age and conservative opinions. The last four hypotheses were aimed at achieving an understanding of the relative importance of age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions. Additionally, each major hypothesis was divided into three sub-hypotheses. These referred to conservative opinions on issues related to race, law enforcement, and patriotism.

In alternate form Hypothesis I predicted that older persons would express more conservative opinions than would younger persons. The eighteen respondents under thirty were compared to the twenty-nine respondents fifty and over. It is interesting to note that the members of the younger group were teenagers in the early Sixties. If a "generation gap" existed within the sample, this comparison would reveal it. The test of the hypothesis revealed that the older group did tend to express more conservative opinions than did the younger group. However, even though the difference noted was statistically significant, it was not great in absolute terms. The relationship also held for the topics of race and law enforcement when they were viewed separately. The topic of patriotism did not yield a significant relationship.

Hypothesis II predicted a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions. A statistically significant relationship was

discovered, but its importance was not great. As an independent variable, age accounted for only seven per cent of the variation in the opinions expressed. On the topics of race and law enforcement, the proportion of variation explained by age was six per cent. On the topic of patriotism the proportion of variation explained by age was only three per cent. The correlation coefficients noted ranged from a high of .26 on the combined topics to a low of .17 on the topic of patriotism.

Hypothesis III suggested that people who express conservative opinions are older than those who express non-conservative opinions. The test of this major hypothesis revealed no significant difference between the mean age of those who expressed conservative opinions and the mean age of those who expressed non-conservative opinions. On the topics of race and law enforcement those who expressed conservative opinions were found to be older, but the age differential was only seven years. The topic of patriotism yielded no significant difference in the mean ages of the two groups. If older persons express opinions which are considerably more conservative than the opinions of younger persons, a retrospective test would reveal that persons who express conservative opinions are significantly older than those who express non-conservative opinions. Since this test did not result in such a finding, the conclusion must be that the opinions of the older members of the sample were not considerably more conservative than those of the younger members.

The last three hypotheses suggested a comparison of age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions with three other variables. These variables are education, the geographic region of the country in which the respondent spent her childhood, and the size of the community in which she spent her childhood.

The test of Hypothesis IV involved a determination of the relative import of age and education. The results of this comparison were unambiguous. With respect to conservative opinions on the combined topics, education accounted for twice the proportion of variation age accounted for. A negative correlation of $-.37$ between education and conservative opinions was noted. On the topics of race, law enforcement, and patriotism the results were comparable, i.e., the level of formal education was clearly more important than age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions.

The test of Hypothesis V disclosed no evidence that the geographic region of one's childhood is related to conservative opinions within the sample surveyed. Only on the specific topic of race was something approaching a relationship noted. Respondents who spent their childhood in the South expressed more conservative opinions on this topic than did the other group. However, this may be explained in terms of the topic itself, rather than in terms of a general conservative or non-conservative tendency.

An unanticipated finding resulted from the test of Hypothesis VI. The opinions of respondents who grew up in urban areas were both more conservative and more non-conservative than their non-urban

counterparts. Conversely, the non-urban respondents were more likely to score in the moderate category.

This pattern was also noted with respect to the sub-hypotheses. It would appear that the individuals who spent their childhood in an urban area hold stronger convictions, one way or the other, than do the members of the non-urban group. The data presented exhibited a relationship between childhood community size and opinions, but they did not evidence a relationship with conservative opinions.

Conclusions

With respect to the data collected and the sample surveyed, the following general statements are presented:

1. Older persons expressed more conservative opinions than did younger persons, but not to a great extent.
2. There is a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions, but the degree of correlation is not high.
3. The relationship between age and conservative opinions is quantitative, not qualitative. In other words, a polarization of opinions on the basis of age does not exist.
4. Education is much more important than age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions.
5. Age is more important than the region of one's childhood or the community size of one's childhood as an independent variable related to conservative opinions.

A fair question at this juncture would be, "What is the significance of this study?" It has been said, with deriding overtones, that sociology is the scientific analysis of the obvious. But how much of the "obvious" is grounded in fact? The major accomplishment of this

thesis is the application of the scientific method to a problem which, in the main, has been the object of supposition. It would appear that the "generation gap" is not as "obvious" as many journalists believe. Secondly, this thesis is a demonstration of the reciprocal relationship between theory and research of which Merton (1967) speaks. The long standing theory about age and conservatism provided the insight for this research project, and the results of this project add to the body of knowledge supporting the theory.

Of course this study was not without its difficulties. As was explained earlier, the population studied was not ideal for a conservative, moderate, non-conservative breakdown. Issues which were judged to be highly controversial on the national level did not produce the hoped for distribution. By way of compensation, the unexpected distribution provided unanticipated information as well as suggestions for further research.

Another shortcoming revealed in the findings was the weakness of four scale items (see items 8, 15, 18, and 21 in Appendix A) in their ability to dichotomize opinion. Two of these items originated with this study, and two came from Adorno, et al., (1950). This difficulty could have been avoided if more thorough testing of the scale had been undertaken.

Suggestions for Further Research

A number of interesting suggestions for further research have arisen from this study. Most of these are related to the type of

population surveyed. In view of this study one might ask if faculty wives are less conservative (or more liberal) than women of comparable status and education. If they are, some of the possible explanations would be of interest to students of the family. Perhaps, men in the academic community marry women with viewpoints similar to their own. Perhaps, most men do. A further possibility is that women tend to adopt the viewpoints of their husbands. These and other possibilities are certainly worthy of future study.

Another suggestion for further research arises out of the data found in Table XXVIII. With respect to self definition, the sample is normally distributed. Nearly fifty per cent of the respondents consider themselves moderate; about twenty-four per cent consider themselves liberal; and slightly over twenty-four per cent consider themselves conservative. Of the three remaining respondents, one labeled herself very liberal, and two labeled themselves very conservative.

In contrast to the evenly distributed self definitions, the scale scores are consistently skewed towards the non-conservative category. Two possible explanations present themselves: (1) the scale is invalid, or (2) one's politico-social self definition is relative to his immediate community, rather than the society at large. In view of the negative relationship between education and conservative opinions, the high educational level of the respondents, and the very nature of a university community, the first explanation is doubtful. The second explanation presents itself as a hypothesis for further research.

TABLE XXVIII
SELF DEFINITION OF RESPONDENTS

Self Definition	Number	Per Cent
Very Liberal	1	.84
Liberal	28	23.72
Moderate	58	49.15
Conservative	29	24.57
Very Conservative	2	1.69
Total	118	99.97

A third suggestion for additional research may be gleaned from the discovery of the relationship between education and conservative opinions. This finding is especially significant considering the high overall level of educational attainment exhibited by the sample surveyed. Almost ninety per cent of the respondents have attended college. A study of a population which includes both poorly educated persons as well as highly educated persons might reveal an even greater relationship between education and conservative opinions.

The final suggestion for research is more directly concerned with the major findings of this thesis and what should follow. These findings were achieved using a specialized sample which, by its very nature, had a large number of built in controls. Variables such as sex, social class, education, husband's occupation, race, childhood region, and childhood community size were ruled out as intervening variables. Under these circumstances age was found to be related to conservative opinions, but in no great measure. In view of this finding and the circumstances under which it was attained, a researcher who finds differing value orientations between age groups would do well to investigate variables other than age.

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APPENDIX A

Interview Schedule*

BLACKSBURG HOUSEHOLD SURVEY

Introduction:

Hello, I am _____ from Virginia Tech conducting a household survey, and I would appreciate a few minutes of your time. (Clarify information in letter if necessary.)

First, how long have you lived in the (Blacksburg) area?

_____ years _____ months

Where did you live before you moved to this area?

_____ city _____ state

In which state did you spend the greatest part of your childhood?

_____ state

Was this in a: rural area _____
small town _____
city _____

What was the last year in school: (a) you completed (b) your husband completed:

	<u>You</u>	<u>Your Husband</u>
Grade school only	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Some high school	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Finished high school	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Some college	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
Finished college	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Some graduate school	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
Masters degree	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
Ph. D. degree	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
Professional degree	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
Don't know	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

*The items included herein are part of a larger survey.

What was the education of your:

	<u>Mother</u>	<u>Father</u>
Grade school only	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>
Some high school	<u>2</u>	<u>2</u>
Finished high school	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>
Some college	<u>4</u>	<u>4</u>
Finished college	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>
Some graduate school	<u>6</u>	<u>6</u>
Masters degree	<u>7</u>	<u>7</u>
Ph. D. degree	<u>8</u>	<u>8</u>
Professional degree	<u>9</u>	<u>9</u>
Don't know	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>

What was your father's occupation when you were a child?

Do you have a religious affiliation?

Denomination

READ: The following questions are designed to find out how you feel about important issues of the day. Please tell us what you really believe and not what you think we want to hear. There are no right or wrong answers. What you answer will be used only for social research and will in no way be identified with you personally. There are five possible responses to each statement. Tell us if you strongly agree, agree, are undecided, disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements. (Hand respondent card I)

1. The older generation of Negroes is more desirable than the present generation.

strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	strongly disagree
SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

2. It is best that Negroes live with their own kind.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

3. Negro and white children should be educated in the same school.

SA	A	U	D	SD
1	2	3	4	5

4. Negroes are no different essentially from other people.

SA	A	U	D	SD
1	2	3	4	5

5. Racial intermarriage is biologically undesirable.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

6. I believe that Negroes have been too pushy lately.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

7. All races of men have the same faculties and general ability to learn: they differ in no important degree.

SA	A	U	D	SD
1	2	3	4	5

8. No good has come from the Negro civil disorders of the past few years.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

9. Recent decisions by the Supreme Court have hand-cuffed the police and have hampered the cause of justice.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

10. One of the best ways to reduce crime is to increase the penalties for criminal offenses.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

11. Capital punishment serves no useful purpose and should be abolished.

SA	A	U	D	SD
1	2	3	4	5

12. Criminals are really no different than anybody else. Their background and environment have made them behave like they do.

SA	A	U	D	SD
1	2	3	4	5

13. Nowadays the courts seem more concerned about the welfare of the criminal than they are about the welfare of the law-abiding citizen.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

14. During the 1968 Democratic National Convention the Chicago Police behaved as well as could be expected considering the circumstances.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

15. Stories of graft and corruption in police departments are usually lies meant to discredit law enforcement officials.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

16. Some people are just "born criminals."

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

17. The main threat to basic American institutions during this century has come from the infiltration of foreign ideas, doctrines, and agitators.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

18. America is getting so far from the true American way of life that force may be necessary to restore it.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

19. Patriotism and loyalty are the first and most important requirements of a good citizen.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

20. The cultural exchange program with Russia is a threat to our national security.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

21. Present treatment of conscientious objectors, draft evaders, and enemy aliens is too lenient. If a person won't fight for his country, he deserves a lot worse than a few years in prison.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

22. There is no acceptable excuse, religious or otherwise, for refusing to salute the flag during the National Anthem.

SA	A	U	D	SD
5	4	3	2	1

With regard to issues of the day I consider myself:

very liberal	liberal	moderate	conservative	very conservative
1	2	3	4	5

Finally, just a few questions for classification purposes:

In what year were: You born? _____
Your husband? _____

How many years have you been married? _____

Thank you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX B

The test of the original scale resulted in the omission of the following items from the final interview schedule:

The majority of eminent Negroes stand out because, being Negroes, what they accomplish seems more remarkable.

SA A U D SD

Colored people should strive for social equality.

SA A U D SD

Colored people are equal to white people in potential ability but have lacked opportunity.

SA A U D SD

Criminals look different than other people.

SA A U D SD

The police are really the peoples best friend.

SA A U D SD

The penalty for possession of narcotics should be increased so people will not be tempted to try them.

SA A U D SD

I believe the courts are too lenient.

SA A U D SD

Law and order is the most important aspect of any society.

SA A U D SD

There are some activities so flagrantly un-American that, when responsible officials won't take the proper steps, the concerned citizen should take action.

SA A U D SD

A powerful military establishment is the best way to preserve our freedom.

SA A U D SD

APPENDIX C

UNITED STATES REGIONS AS DEFINED IN THIS THESIS*

East	South	Middle West	West
Connecticut	Alabama	Illinois	Alaska
Maine	Arkansas	Indiana	Arizona
Massachusetts	Delaware	Iowa	California
New Hampshire	District of Columbia	Kansas	Colorado
New Jersey	Florida	Michigan	Hawaii
New York	Georgia	Minnesota	Idaho
Pennsylvania	Kentucky	Missouri	Montana
Rhode Island	Louisiana	Nebraska	Nevada
Vermont	Maryland	North Dakota	New Mexico
	Mississippi	Ohio	Oregon
	North Carolina	South Dakota	Utah
	Oklahoma	Wisconsin	Washington
	South Carolina		Wyoming
	Tennessee		
	Texas		
	Virginia		
	West Virginia		

* Stouffer (1963:110)

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE AND CONSERVATIVE OPINIONS

Francis D. Glamser

Abstract

Throughout the recorded pages of sociological literature it has generally been contended that older people are more conservative than younger people. The major focal point of this thesis is an application of this generalization to a specified, temporal situation via an empirical investigation of the relationship between age and conservative opinions on contemporary issues. In this manner an empirical demonstration of the theoretical relationship between age and conservatism was accomplished. Additionally, an analysis of the relative importance of age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions was achieved.

Interviews were administered to a random sample of wives of Virginia Polytechnic Institute faculty members. Data consisted of scores on a Likert-type scale of conservative opinions centering on issues relative to race, law enforcement, and patriotism.

With respect to the instrument employed and the sample surveyed, five general findings were noted. First, older persons expressed more conservative opinions than did younger persons, but not to a great extent. Second, there is a positive correlation between age and conservative opinions, but the degree of correlation is not high. Third, the relationship between age and conservative opinions is quantitative, not qualitative. In other words, a polarization of opinions on the basis

of age does not exist. Fourth, education is much more important than age as an independent variable related to conservative opinions, although the direction is one of negative correlation. Finally, age is more important than the region or community size of one's childhood as an independent variable related to conservative opinions.