

A STUDY OF THE VALUE-STRUCTURE APPROACH
AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE CONDITION
OF THE AGED IN THE UNITED STATES

by

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B. S., Kansas State College
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1950

A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Economics and Sociology

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

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SEEKING AN APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF SOCIAL PROBLEMS

Introduction

Within the field of sociology four approaches to the study of social problems have traditionally been used. These may be called the "social-problems approach," the "social disorganization approach," the "cultural-lag approach," and the "community approach." There is some overlapping in the above approaches, but they are sufficiently different to warrant independent consideration.

These four traditional approaches have the advantage of being familiar to most sociologists, and have been used by them to good purpose. In the science of sociology, however, as in all sciences, new methods are continually being developed to extend the scope of knowledge, and to develop new concepts and theories which become the working tools of the scientist. It is particularly important that in the field of sociology these new theoretical concepts should be developed and tested. Sociology is a relatively young science, and as such has not had the benefits of many years of testing and experimentation that other sciences have had. It is a new science and a different science in that the variables with which it deals are more difficult to control than in the physical sciences. The nineteenth century notion that the social sciences were backward, and that this backward state could only be remedied by the application of the methods of the physical sciences to them, is certainly no longer tenable. The peculiar

essence of modern social science lies in establishing descriptive formulae of a comprehensive kind. These descriptive formulae would be hypothetical generalizations covering a considerable number of phenomena having certain qualities or properties in common. These general descriptive formulae or theoretical frameworks must, of course, correspond to the observed phenomena covered by them.

These new methods could not be developed if the groundwork had not already been laid. Due respect and due consideration of all methods must be given. A new method should not be used just because it is a new method, but should obviously measure up to the criteria which are a measuring-stick for any method used in the social sciences. Any new method for studying social problems should meet the following criteria: (1) it should be socially relevant, (2) it should provide the conceptual framework by which all social problems can be analyzed, and (3) it must enable the sociologist to perform the role of an analyst rather than that of a therapist.

Purpose. The purpose of this study is to apply a new conceptual scheme or theoretical framework, the value-structure approach, to the analysis of a specific social problem, that of the aged in the culture in the United States. This problem is perennial. The method is new and valuable as a tool toward the greater understanding of this or any other social problem. The method, the value-structure approach, which will be described later in this paper, meets the above-mentioned criteria of a sociological

method that provides a common orientation for the treatment of diverse social problems as sociological phenomena.

Traditional Approaches to the Study of Social Problems. Before this new method is described, it seems proper that a consideration of the four traditional approaches should be given. Following is a brief description of each of them with a review of some of their advantages and disadvantages in relation to their use as conceptual tools to treat diverse social problems as sociological phenomena.

The Social-Problems Approach. The social-problems approach is the most commonly used of the traditional approaches. It has made, however, no genuine attempt to extract the common elements in social problems, and to describe the process as productive of these elements. The result is a decided lack of integration in the analysis and treatment of problems. This approach has followed two distinct patterns of development. First, it is used as a survey of many problems, and, secondly, it is used as an exhaustive study of one problem. The chief asset of the first method of applying the social problems approach is that it tends to illustrate the fact that many social problems exist. Its weakness lies in that it fails to establish any relationship between the separate problems.

For example, the first method of applying the social-problems approach shows that problems A, B, and C exist. It does not show that problem A may be a result of B, or of both B and C, nor does it describe the processes which may have created one or all of them.

The second method of applying the social problems approach is that in which an investigator becomes acquainted with all factors relevant to one particular problem. For the social case worker specializing in the treatment of a problem, this study (especially the more intensive type) is invaluable because the immediate need of the social worker is a knowledge of the problem itself and not the elaboration of a theory of the relation of problems to larger cultural processes. Examples of how important this type of study can be are the well-known investigations carried out by Nels Anderson¹ and by Paul Cressey.² In using the second method, one fails to recognize a multiplicity of problems and their relationships to one another, or anything of the processes that cause problems.

To refer to the aforementioned example, the second method of applying the social-problems approach would illustrate in detail problem A, but would have a penchant to ignore problems B and C.

By using the social-problems approach problem A may be discovered, and even all of the problems of A, but it would fail to illustrate that A may be a cause or a resultant of problems B and C or a cause or resultant of other social processes. The social-problems approach does not integrate problems and show their relationships to the total social process. It does not provide a

¹ Nels Anderson. The Hobo; the Sociology of the Homeless Man. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1923).

² Paul G. Cressey. The Taxi-Dance Hall; A Sociological Study in Commercialized Recreation and City Life. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1932).

common base from which the sociologist may study all social problems from a common conceptual framework. The reason this is so is because of the way in which a problem is defined. In using this approach, a social problem is defined as a condition which deviates from or violates a norm. The norm, then, is not defined, or, if it is, it is usually defined by the investigator of the person who wishes to be an author of a book on social problems. The danger lies in the fact that the norm which a person sets up may not be one which society has established but rather the construct of an individual whose own values a particular situation may be in opposition to. Most investigators using the social-problems approach are guilty of assuming that a social problem exists without finding out whether it violates society's norms, or if it just violates one of their own beliefs.

Thus, to briefly summarize the social-problems approach, it is found: (1) that it assists the sociologist in discovering that there are many problems, (2) that it is a useful method for social case workers, (3) that it isolates problems and does not properly show their relationship to social processes, and (4) that it is not useful in the sense of bringing about adequate understanding of social problems because of its failure to develop a systematic conceptual system.

The Social-Disorganization Approach. The social-disorganization approach professes to be different from the social-problems approach. Presumably, it is supposed to overcome the atomism and lack of integration that is displayed by the social-problems approach. The persons responsible for suggesting the use of this

approach felt that one should look at problems as symptoms of more basic social dislocations arising in a process called "social disorganization."³

The real strength of this approach lies in its objectives, to explore basic social problems from the standpoint of the social processes which bring them about, thereby overcoming the atomism and lack of integration of the "social-problems" approach. The approach, however, has not lived up to its original intentions, and those who employ it frequently revert to a review of isolated social problems independent from the processes which bring them about, or the cultural context in which they are found. "Social-disorganization" has come to characterize a process in which the rules of behavior of a group are increasingly less binding on the individual, but it has not described the processes which have allowed those rules to be less binding.

The Cultural-Lag Approach. Briefly stated, the cultural-lag hypothesis as advanced by William F. Ogburn⁴ and others, assumes that various parts of culture are changing at different rates; some parts, because of invention or discovery, changing more rapidly than others. Because culture is interrelated, a change in one part necessitates changes in other parts. The delay of the elements that change slowly, usually non-material elements, in making adjustment to those that change more rapidly, usually

³ Mabel A. Elliott, Francis E. Merrill. Social Disorganization. (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1941).

⁴ William F. Ogburn. Social Changes with Respect to Culture and Original Nature. (New York: Viking Press, Inc., 1922), Part IV.

material elements in culture, is cultural lag. It is this condition of cultural lag which sooner or later ensues in maladjustments and social problems.

In this approach we see the first real attack on the problem process, for it is an examination of the process to which problems are incidental. This interpretation does call attention to the dynamic nature of modern society, for it not only focuses on the idea of change but also on resistance to change. This approach conveys an idea which is central to the understanding of problems: if change takes place, the values formerly held by the society can not remain intact if problems are to be avoided.

Although in their original statements Ogburn and his associates alluded to "resistance to change," they actually spent most of their time in the consideration of "change." This unbalance of emphasis has left the impression that the lag theorists believed "change" was an independent variable, that it ran its own course regardless of institutional values. The following criticism by Lewis Mumford makes the above statement more clear:

For another thing, this interpretation (the lag hypothesis) regards the machine as an independent variable, and it holds the direction and rate of change assumed by the machine as a norm, to which all other aspects of human life must conform. In truth interactions between organisms and their environment take place in both directions, and it is just as correct to view the machinery of warfare as retarded in relation to the morality of Confucius as to take the opposite direction.⁵

⁵ Abbett P. Herman. An Approach to Social Problems. (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1949), p. 32, citing Mumford, Lewis, Technics and Civilization. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1934), 317.

One of the limitations to the cultural-lag approach is to be found in the connotation which the word "lag" has. It may not convey the idea that the lagger and the pace-setter are often basically related and that both are expressions of the same cultural process.

Another limitation of this approach would be in connection with the application of it to a particular culture. That is, if social problems arise because of certain elements, usually non-material elements, lagging behind other elements, usually material elements, the solution would be to find a rational plan that would enable the cultural elements to be equalized. If the plan were to be effective, all persons in the culture would have to follow it. This implies that people always act rationally, which does not relate to fact. People defend many of their actions and beliefs by rationalizing, but that is not the same as being rational.

The most basic limitation of the use of the cultural-lag approach, however, was tied to the concept of culture. All the different aspects of culture have been demonstrated by cultural anthropologists to be functionally inter-related at any given time. If this functional point of view is accepted, then the usefulness of the cultural-lag hypothesis would be doubtful, and one would have to conclude that the cultural-lag approach was inadequate as a method which could provide a systematic conceptual system for the analysis of all social problems.

The Community Approach. The community approach is exemplified in the two investigations carried on by the Lynds in Muncie,

Indiana.^{6, 7} A justification for calling this an approach to the study of social problems was given by them in their statement of the purpose of their investigation. It was pointed out that perhaps one of the reasons social problems were difficult to analyze was that so often there was just a piece-meal attack on them. They hoped to overcome this by studying the life of the people in a large social unit (such as a city) which would have many interwoven trends of behaviour. There was no doubt that the community did provide a good framework for viewing the problems not as separate phenomena but as part of a larger social context. It also uncovered the subjective cultural values of the community which have so much bearing on the development and seriousness of social problems.

The community approach is naturally limited to observations within the confines of the community, and it must be recognized that the agents of change are not confined to any particular area. The chief limitation to this approach is that it does not provide the conceptual tools by which problems can be studied.

In consideration of the problems presented by the discussion of the above approaches, the question might be raised: Is it possible for sociology to work out a common orientation for the treatment of diverse social problems as sociological phenomena, or are social problems going to remain a field that is a catch-all

⁶Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd. Middletown. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1929).

⁷Robert S. Lynd and Helen M. Lynd. Middletown in Transition. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1937).

for problems that seem to have little or no relation to each other, and a field which has no common theoretical framework from which those problems can be viewed?

The answer is that it is possible for sociology to work out a common orientation for the treatment of diverse social problems as sociological phenomena. The value-structure approach which will now be defined and described provides a frame of reference in which any social problem can be analyzed by various sociologists who would reach the same conclusions regarding it.

The Value-Structure Approach

It must be remembered that there are two distinct fields in sociology. One is the field where the social worker seeks solutions to distinct and particular problems; the other is the field where the social researcher seeks information to be used by the social worker in his attempt to solve social problems. This latter field is where the value-structure approach is used, for it is a conceptual tool for the examination of the data which constitute social problems.

This frame of reference, the value-structure approach, was formulated by the late Professor Richard Fuller of the University of Michigan, who admitted intellectual dependency specifically upon Lawrence K. Frank and the late Willard Waller.¹

Definition of the Value-Structure Approach. The value-structure

¹ Richard C. Fuller, "The Problem of Teaching Social Problems," American Journal of Sociology, XLIV, (1939), 419-425.

ture approach may be defined as that approach which would consider a social situation a problem when in a particular social situation a condition exists in which there is real or imagined deviation from some social norm cherished by a considerable number of people.²

What are the implications of this definition? First, it is pointed out that social problems are relative to the cultural group in which they are found, a cultural group being defined as a group of persons who follow a particular way of life. What would be considered a problem in our culture might not be considered as such by persons in another culture. For example, infanticide in

² In this connection the relevance of Robert K. Merton's work on structure may be seen. See Robert K. Merton, "Social Structure and Anomie," Sociological Analysis. Logan Wilson and William L. Kolb, editors. (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1949), 771-780. Merton suggests that certain phases of social structure generate the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitutes a "normal" (in the sense of being culturally oriented) response. He points out that the structure of culture consisting of culturally defined goals, purposes, and interests, on the one hand, and the moral or institutional regulation of procedure for attaining those ends, on the other hand, may or may not be integrated. Anti-social behavior could be "called forth" by certain conventional values of a culture and by the class structure involving differential access to the approved opportunities for legitimate, prestige-bearing pursuit of the cultural goals. A lack of coordination between the two elements would lead to anomie or social problems.

Richard Fuller and Richard Myers, in the presentation of the paper, "The Natural History of Social Problems" (Richard Fuller and Richard Myers, "The Natural History of Social Problems," American Sociological Review, VI (1941), 320-329.) point out that the "norms" of organization which give the community a working routine tend to produce a conflict of cultural values which create and sustain conditions defined as social problems. In consideration of this point, the term "structure" is defined in this paper as the theoretical framework of the value-structure approach which is made up of values.

the United States is considered to be one of the most dastardly of crimes, yet it is socially approved by the Eskimos, being directly related to their extreme struggle for survival and an extremely meagre food supply. Infanticide is a function of their total cultural setting. Using the value-structure approach, a cultural anthropological viewpoint is being used in considering problems, for it is only in relation to the values that a particular cultural group places on actions and things that make certain actions social problems. It must be made clear that in using the value-structure approach, individual problems such as a roof of one's home needing fixing, etc., are not included. The problems this approach considers are those so deemed by the group, not the individual.

Secondly, the concept of social "norms" and deviations from these "norms" is recognized. The fact that there are deviations from "norms" is not the important thing, but rather it is the extent to which these deviations are approved or condemned by the group. The sociologist attempts to explain social problems as emergents of the cultural organization of the community, as complements of the approved values of the society, not as pathological and abnormal departures from what is assumed to be proper and normal. It should be pointed out that this is in contrast to the traditional approaches which were discussed, for they either did not define the "norms" which they used or the "norms" were defined according to the values of particular individuals. In using the value-structure approach, "norms" are defined by group consensus, i. e., a situation would not be recognized as a problem unless a

group of persons felt it to be a problem. For example, a scientist might consider the pouring of raw sewage into a river by group A to be a problem since it was harmful to group B, but unless group B felt it to be a problem, group A would continue their actions and neither group would consider a problem to be in existence.

Sociologists and psychologists point out that extreme mobility is psychologically harmful to individuals and weakens the stability of the group, but unless a considerable number of persons felt it to be a problem, it would not be recognized as such by the group, and there would be no attempt to change the situation.

Values of particular groups of people must be considered before any problem can be related to any particular group or culture. Social problems arise in a society because ends, objectives, or values which are fostered by various groups run at cross-purposes. If group B felt that the pouring of raw sewage into the river was detrimental to their health, then they would make an attempt to coerce group A into changing their methods of sewage disposal. If group A did not want to go to the extra cost of providing a sewage disposal plant, then a condition would be created by two groups whose values run at cross-purposes, and a social problem could be said to be in existence.

Thirdly, there is no denial of the many causes of problem conditions; rather, there is emphasis on the idea that the social condition becomes a problem condition coincident with the emergence of value clashes concerning it.

Values have an extra-rational nature. That is, the validity

of a value often cannot be proved because there is no way to prove the worth of values or show that some of them are actually harmful. People regard their own values not only as if they were completely rational, but also as if they constituted social absolutes. This can be demonstrated in terms of the material and non-material traits of cultures. For example, it is relatively easy to be objective and discover whether a material trait of one culture is superior to another material trait of another culture, i. e., a gun of the United States being superior over a spear of an African tribe, but even though the superiority of the gun over the spear could be demonstrated to an African tribesman, it would not mean that he would abandon the spear, a material trait, of his own culture to adopt the gun, a material trait, of another culture. Non-material traits of cultures cannot be demonstrated and, hence, would be adopted even less readily than material traits. The conclusion is that it is the values that cultural groups have that cause them to act in certain ways.

Rationalism must be used in the analysis of values. First, there should be identification of values as phenomena, as constructs. The idea of value should be identified as a more or less distinct phase of any society. Secondly, values should be considered as cultural or man-made elements. Thirdly, values can be objectively evaluated by the sociologist. Any value should and can be studied objectively to determine the manner in which it either causes or sustains a social problem.

Characteristics of the Value-Structure Approach. To show how the value-structure approach may be applied, the following charac-

teristics of the value-structure approach will be stated and discussed: First, the natural history of a social problem will be discussed. It is believed that social problems exhibit a temporal course of development in which different phases or stages may be distinguished. Each stage anticipates its successor in time, and each succeeding stage contains new elements which mark it off from its predecessor. A social problem thus conceived as always being in a dynamic state passes through the natural history stages of awareness, policy-determination, and reform. Secondly, the various types of problems will be discussed. It is believed that social problems fall into one of these three classifications: physical, ameliorative, and moral. Thirdly, the objective and subjective aspects of social problems will be discussed. The objective condition is a verifiable situation which can be checked as to existence and magnitude by impartial and trained observers. The subjective condition is the awareness of certain individuals that the condition is a threat to certain cherished values. The objective condition is necessary but not in itself sufficient to constitute a social problem, for social problems are what people think they are. Fourthly, the dual role of values will be discussed. Cultural values play an important causal role in the objective condition which is defined as a problem because people cherish certain beliefs and maintain certain social institutions which give rise to those conditions. Cultural values obstruct solutions to conditions defined as social problems because people are unwilling to endorse solutions which require abandonment of their cherished beliefs and institutions. Social problems arise

and are sustained because people do not have the same cherished values and objectives.

The Natural History of a Social Problem. The definition of a social problem which we noted above, i. e., a situation which is regarded by a considerable number of people as being undesirable, makes clear that there is a common element in social problems. This definition of a social problem took into consideration what people think about things, the values they have. In using this definition it can be said that values actually cause social problems. If values cause social problems, then values would be the common basic element to all social problems. Because of this common basic element in all social problems, it seems possible that there might be a common order of development for social problems. This concept, the natural history of a social problem, may be used as a conceptual tool by the sociologist to examine situations which constitute social problems.

The stages of development of a social problem may be designated as the stages of awareness, policy-determination, and reform.

In the first developmental stage of a social problem, that of awareness, a particular cultural group feels something ought to be done about a particular social condition. The genesis of every social problem lies in this awakening of people in a given locality to a realization that certain cherished values are threatened by conditions which have become acute. As yet, these people have not crystallized their definition sufficiently to suggest or debate exact measures for amelioration or eradication of the undesirable condition. Instead, there is unorganized concern, with pro-

test expressed in general terms.

In the second developmental stage, policy-determination, cultural groups are asking "what ought to be done." This stage might be evidenced by groups gathering to discuss actual policies of reform. There is debate over policies involved in alternative solutions. People who propose solutions soon find that these solutions are not acceptable to others. Specific programs occupy the focus of attention. The multi-sided protests become organized and channelized. Formal (organized) groups and informal groups become concerned over establishing a policy that would ameliorate the condition that has threatened certain of their values. They also become concerned over the formal and informal groups opposing their policy. At this stage the pressure-groups are very influential in that they are organized groups. Even though they may be small, numerically speaking, they can exert a large influence on decisions of policy because of their organization and backing.

In the third stage of development of a social problem, the stage of reform, administrative units are engaged in putting formulated policy into action. General policies have been debated and defined by the general public, by special interest groups, and by experts. The emphasis is now on "this and that are being done." This is the institutionalized phase of the social problem in that established policies are being carried out by publicly authorized policy-enforcing agencies. Reform, of course, could also be private in character.

An example of the growth of a social problem following the

above stages of development might clarify the points.

Pressure groups have played and are playing an important part in the political arena of the United States. Following the Civil War, people in the United States became acutely aware of activities of pressure groups. Increasing numbers of articles were written about the pressure-groups. People began to discuss the activities of the pressure groups and their influence on legislators. Large numbers of people began to feel that some of their democratic values were being threatened by pressure groups. The question was discussed in class rooms. Books were written to inform the people about the activities of the pressure groups, the influence they had on legislators, and how much money was spent by them to maintain lobbies in the capital cities. This could be determined the first stage of a problem, that of awareness.

In the next developmental stage of a social problem, policy determination, many persons discussed what should be done to regulate the pressure groups in order that their democratic values might not be infringed on. They wrote letters to their congressmen. The congressmen discussed what type of bill would most effectively regulate the pressure groups. Gradually a policy became evident.

In the third stage of development of a social problem, the stage of reform, we see that the legislators had decided what should be done and had passed a law to that effect. Now it was up to the administrators to see that the law was carried out.

Types of Problems from the Value-Structure Point of View.

Conditions that give rise to social problems are of three possible types, determined by the degree to which values enter into the causation and prevention of the condition which is defined as a social problem. There is the type of condition known as the "physical" problem, since the condition that gives rise to the problem is physical in nature. This type of problem has no social causation. It is something that occurs outside of human control. To make this more clear, such a condition would be caused by floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, etc. If a flood should cause a large area of populated land to be inundated, then a condition would ensue that would give rise to a social problem because many people would regard the situation as being undesirable. It then could be said that a social problem existed. The developmental stages of the natural history of a social problem could then be seen. Values do not have a causal effect in bringing a "physical" problem into existence, but they enter in when the amelioration to the unsatisfactory condition is being discussed. Conflicting values of groups would be evident when the groups affected by the flood would be trying to decide on an effective policy to follow.

Secondly, there is the type of problem which may be called ameliorative. This type of a problem arises when a social situation comes to the attention of a relatively large number of people and is regarded by a majority of them as being undesirable. There is disagreement among these persons, however, as to what should be done to alter or change the situation. An example of this

would be the social condition of crime. Large groups of people in the United States regard crime as being something that violates their interests. They are agreed as to the undesirability of the situation, but can reach no agreement among themselves as to what should be done to change the situation. The social problem has passed the awareness stage of development and is in the policy determination stage. Solutions to ameliorative problems are difficult to reach because values of the group come into conflict and cause disagreement between groups regarding what should be done to change these situations which have been defined as undesirable.

Thirdly, there is the type of problem known as a moral problem. This problem is characterized by the fact that the undesirability of the situation is not even agreed on. An example of this would be divorce. Some groups regard divorce as being a detriment to the stability of the group and as being immoral. Other groups regard divorce as being natural, humane, and moral. Since there is no agreement about the undesirability of this particular social situation, the possibility of reforming or changing that social situation would be largely eliminated.

Social Problems Have Their Objective and Subjective Aspects. To study a condition which is regarded by a considerable number of people as being undesirable, the objective aspects of the problem should be noted. The principal function of social research is, after all, to objectively demonstrate whether or not a given condition exists and to what degree it exists. The objective condition is a verifiable situation which can be checked as to ex-

istence and magnitude (proportions) by impartial and trained observers. If systematic patterns of behavior were observed, prediction and control would be possible.

The subjective aspect of a social problem refers to the awareness of certain individuals that a certain condition is a threat to certain cherished values. The objective condition is necessary but not in itself sufficient to constitute a social problem. Although the objective condition may be the same in two different localities, it may be a social problem in only one of these areas. The subjective aspect of a social problem refers to all the ways values enter in and either cause social problems, prevent their solution, or both. It always must be remembered that social problems are what people think they are. Certain conditions would not be problems even if a scientist using some base could show these certain conditions to be problems from a scientific viewpoint. It also must be remembered and considered that a social situation would not affect all of the people in the same way. Modern society is such that it is difficult for any person to see and appreciate many of the problems and points of view of men and women above and below him or her in the pyramid of social classes and jobs. This is a function of the heterogeneity of the culture of the United States. What is needed is to find out to what the condition is undesirable and by whose values. There are certain main factors which underlie value diversity. One of these is the different vested interests involved. Another factor causing value diversity would be the many values different persons hold even about one thing, or the factor of cultural pluralism of

values. In the consideration of the subjective aspect of a problem, the dual role that values perform should be noted.

Values Perform a Dual Role in Any Social Problem. First, values often are a cause of the conditions which are regarded as being undesirable. The values which a cultural group places on certain things or actions might actually give rise to conditions which that group would regard as being undesirable, and thus create a social problem.

For example, in the culture of the United States, the group places a high value on monogamous marriage. Those persons who do not follow this practice receive censure and social disapproval. Those children born out of such a condition are called illegitimate and are usually regarded with disapproval. Yet in these societies where descent is traced through the mother, the problem of illegitimacy, as the culture of the United States defines it, is non-existent. The high value placed by the cultural group of the United States on monogamous marriage actually gives rise to the problem of illegitimacy in the United States.

Secondly, values often prevent people from agreeing on solutions to problems. This is because most persons are unwilling to forsake those values which are causal factors in the problem.

For example, because our cultural group is unwilling to change their values in relation to monogamous marriage, the problem of illegitimacy will continue. Values, then, both cause problems and prevent their solution.

The values of a group must be studied before a real attempt to get at the heart of a social problem can be made. The question

then may be asked: How can social problems be solved? Since a social problem arises when a considerable number of individuals refuse to accept a particular value that another group advocates, the solution to the problem thus created could be had either by (1) a modification or alteration of the value by the one group or (2) a conversion of the group which objects to the value.

The characteristics of the value-structure approach as developed by Richard C. Fuller have been presented. It has been demonstrated that there are common elements, values, in the development of social problems. These common elements have provided the basis for a theoretical framework by which the sociologist can view any social problem, thus enabling him to become an analyst instead of a therapist, and to approach all social problems from the same conceptual frame of reference.

The value-structure approach is extremely useful then because: first, it allows the sociologist to be an interpreter of values rather than an advocate of values; secondly, it provides a realistic tool to study values in regard to interest groups, classes, and other group points of view; and, thirdly, it emphasizes that problems emerge as results of changes in the value structure, and not from biological or economic changes which has been inferred from the cultural-lag approach and the social disorganization approach.

The value-structure approach will now be applied to the condition of the aged in the United States.

THE APPLICATION OF THE VALUE-STRUCTURE APPROACH
TO THE CONDITION OF THE AGED IN THE UNITED STATES

The Problem

The purpose of this study is to show how the value-structure approach may be used as a tool by the sociologist to analyze the specific social problem of the aged. This application will follow step by step the development of the value-structure approach that has been presented.

The Type of Problem. When the three possible types of social problems - the physical, the ameliorative, and the moral - were considered in relation to the aged, it was found that the condition of the aged conformed to the definition of an ameliorative problem. The characteristics of an ameliorative problem were as follows: first, there was a general consensus of opinion among many groups of people that a particular social situation was undesirable; secondly, the solution to the problem would be difficult to reach because of the conflicting values of the groups with regard to a particular situation.

The reasons for classifying the condition of the aged as an ameliorative problem is because there is widespread recognition that the aged constitute a condition which is regarded by a considerable number of people as being undesirable, and because there are conflicting group values concerning what should be done to ameliorate the condition.

There are many groups of people in the United States who have agreed that the condition of the aged is a problem. For example,

on March 19 and 20, 1951, the University of Florida called a meeting that was to be called the Southern Conference on Gerontology. The purpose of the Conference was to call attention to the problems of the aged and to determine and define these aspects of the problem that needed further study.¹

Another example of the fact that the condition of the aged is regarded as an undesirable situation by many groups of people was the extension of the National Social Security Act in 1950. This extension provided aid for persons in some occupations that had not been covered by the act in 1935 when it was first passed. This extension of the Social Security Act has also provided evidence to show that the solution to the problem of the aged has not yet been found. For instance, many people wish to see all persons in the United States covered by the act, but this was not incorporated into the 1950 law. This has meant that there were persons not satisfied with the new extension of the law. These persons will work for other changes or additions to the law.

The second characteristic of an ameliorative problem that was mentioned above was also seen to be a part of the condition of the aged. This would mean that groups hold conflicting values about what to do to solve the problem of the aged. This was demonstrated by the conflicting values portrayed by interviewees. The question was asked of each of twenty interviewees if they were aware of the increasing numbers of old people. Each one of the

¹ Problems of America's Aging Population. University of Florida Committee on Gerontology. (Gainesville, Florida: University of Florida Press, March, 1951), 3.

interviewees said that they were aware of the increasing size of this group. However, when the interviewees were asked the question of whom did they think the responsibility should be on to take care of this increasing group of people, the answers were diversified. Six of them (case numbers 1, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13) felt that the federal government should assume the responsibility for taking care of this old-age group. Six others (case numbers 2, 7, 14, 16, 17, and 18) felt that they did not know on whom the responsibility should be. Two of the interviewees (case numbers 3 and 4) felt that it was the responsibility of the individual to provide for his old age. Two others (case numbers 5 and 8) felt that the families of old people should take care of them. Four of the interviewees (case numbers 6, 15, 19, and 20) felt that it was the responsibility of the various states to provide for the old people within their boundaries.

Concerning the condition of the aged, the following characteristics which have caused it to be considered an ameliorative problem have been demonstrated: first, there was a general consensus among many groups of people that the aged constituted a problem; secondly, the condition of the aged was regarded as undesirable by many groups of people; and, thirdly, the conflicting values which groups held with regard to the condition of the aged will make remedial action difficult.

The Natural History of the Problem. The concept of the natural history of social problems may be applied to the problem of the aged in the United States. The basis of the natural history concept was values. Values, by the definition of a social problem

as used by the value-structure approach, were seen to be the common characteristic of all social problems. Values have caused problems and have prevented solutions to problems. This common basic characteristic implied that there was a common order of development for social problems. The stages of development of a social problem have been discussed. They were the stages of awareness, policy determination, and reform.

It seems important to note that values are not static, but are constantly changing; therefore any solution to a problem advocated by one group might not be considered an effective or the "right" policy by another group. It would seem, then, that the natural history developmental stages of a situation regarded by a considerable number of people as being undesirable could develop stage by stage even to the reform stage, only to have the process repeated when another group had decided the policy advocated before had not been the "right" one.

The natural history stages of the ameliorative problem of the aged will now be developed.

The Awareness Stage. With a lot of justification, the question might be asked: When were people not aware of the problems of the aged? This question can be answered by recognizing that at all times some persons have been aware of the problems of the aged. The purpose in this study was to show when considerable numbers of people become aware of the problem and attempted to do something about it.

Because of the youthfulness of the country and the agrarian nature of the early economy of the United States, the old-age

group was not considered a problem by large groups of people until just a few decades ago.

Rural sociologists have pointed out that much of rural association is on a family rather than on an individual basis, that rural society does not cater to specialized age groups as does urban society, primarily because the rural family contains children of varying ages and people meet as families rather than as individuals in associational life.² Rural gatherings tend to take into account the interests of a wide age range rather than of some particular group. The aged in such a situation often were given a highly respected position and exercised a certain amount of control over the rest of the family. In the rural community three great values have predominated in the past: work, land, and family.

These values are found today, but the growth of commercialized agriculture and the trend toward urbanization have altered the situation. In 1790, about 95 per cent of the population was rural and 5 per cent urban. The 1920 census was the first to show a larger proportion of urban than of rural people. The depression of the 1930's caused a temporary break in the trend, but again in the early 1940's there was again a marked growth of cities.³ There seems to be a relationship between the recogni-

² Bruce Melvin. "Age and Sex Distribution in Relation to Rural Behavior," Publications of the American Sociological Study, XXIII, (1929), 90-100.

³ Paul H. Landis, Population Problems. (New York: American Book Company, 1943), 346.

tion of a problem associated with the old-age group and the change in the American economy from agrarianism to industrialism. It was not until the 1920's and the 1930's that groups began attempting to work out large-scale policies to care for the aged.

For instance, it was in the early 1930's that the Townsend Plan, which would provide \$200 a month for all persons over 60 years of age by imposing a two per cent transaction tax, gained so many adherents.⁴ It was also in 1935 that the Democratic Administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt passed the Social Security Act.

The Policy-Determination Stage. The policy-determination stage was marked by various groups asking what ought to be done in relation to a particular situation they felt to be a problem. This stage was marked by groups gathering to discuss actual policies of reform and attempting to put policies into effect.

The first evidence of a group doing this was in 1908-1909. The Massachusetts Commission on Old Age Pensions, Annuities and Insurance made a study of dependency in Massachusetts.⁵

The first policy made into law was in Arizona in 1914. This law, which abolished almshouses and established old age and mothers' pensions, was later declared unconstitutional. A law passed

⁴ Old-Age Pension Plans and Organizations. Hearings before the Select Committee Investigating Old-Age Pension Organizations. House of Representatives, Seventy-Fourth Congress, Second Session, U. S. Congress. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1936), 278.

⁵ Lee Welling Squier. Old Age Dependency in the United States. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1912), 5.

by Alaska in 1915 new ranks today as the eldest policy dealing with old people in the United States. The year 1923 showed the real beginning of large and scattered groups attempting to do something about the problem of the aged. At that time a proposed amendment to the Constitution of Ohio, which would have authorized old age pensions in that state, was rejected by a referendum vote of two to one. Montana, Nevada, and Pennsylvania enacted old age pension laws that same year, but they were all repealed by 1925. In 1925 old age pension bills were introduced in 12 state legislatures, but in only one state, Wisconsin, did the bill become a law. These early policies that were advocated by large groups of people were all drafted along what is known as the "Standard bill." This bill was prepared at the instance of the American Association for Labor in cooperation with the fraternal Order of Eagles. Under this policy a citizen, seventy years of age or over, who had resided continually for fifteen years within the state and did not possess property of a value in excess of \$3000 would be entitled to a pension which would not exceed \$1.00 a day.⁶

Although twenty-eight states had passed legislation similar to the "Standard bill" by 1935, the pensions paid by many were considered inadequate, and some states were defaulting payments entirely. Several attempts were made in Congress to provide a federal system of pensions, but no plan was reported out of committee. The previously mentioned Townsend Plan was one of those.

These early acts demonstrate the ameliorative condition of

⁶ The Support of the Aged: A Review of Conditions and Proposals. National Industrial Conference Board, Inc. (New York: National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., 1931), 46.

the problem of the aged. Many groups of people were interested in seeing that something was done about the problem of the aged, but the type of policy that all persons would feel was adequate was difficult to find.

For example, when the National Industrial Conference Board sent a questionnaire to large groups of businessmen in 1931, it found that a large percentage of these businessmen felt that the burden of support for the old people should be on individual families.⁷ It was at this same time that the Townsend Plan was gaining adherence by other large groups of people.

The policy-determination stage of the problem of the aged developed gradually. This was demonstrated by a survey made by the National Industrial Conference Board in 1925 which disclosed 245 formal pension plans covering 2,815,612 employees; and by another survey made in 1931 which disclosed 420 formal pension plans covering a total of 3,752,759 employees.⁸

In 1935 there was a large group which believed that the aged did constitute a problem and should be provided for. This group formulated a policy which was passed by the Congress of the United States. The law was known as the Social Security Act. Under this policy the federal government established a fund to provide annuities as a right to certain people when they had reached the age of sixty-five years. The necessary funds were obtained by taxing employers on their payrolls and workers on their wages and salaries.

⁷ Op. Cit., page 61.

⁸ Industrial Pensions in the United States. National Industrial Conference Board, Inc. (New York: National Industrial Conference Board, Inc., 1931), 28.

ies. The federal government encouraged the states to provide more adequate assistance in the form of old age pensions for needy people to whom its annuity plan did not apply and to annuitants who could still prove they were in need.⁹ This policy provided two distinct methods of handling the problem of the aged. One method was to give cash annuities (called Old-Age Benefits) as a right to all aged workers who had contributed to their cost. The other method was to provide for cash pensions (called Old-Age Assistance) to old people over sixty-five years of age if they were in need.

The Reform Stage. The policy decided on above was handed over to administrators which, in this particular case, was a Social Security Board. How this program was carried out is aptly seen in Fig. 1 which shows the increased number of recipients of Social Security Aid from 1940 to 1949, and in Fig. 2 which shows the increased millions of dollars that were spent on the old age Social Security program from 1940 to 1949.

Since the problem of the aged was an ameliorative problem, the reform stage of the natural history can only be considered in terms of certain specific policies that have been adopted. There has been no conclusive policy adopted because of the conflicting values of groups in relation to the problem of the aged.

The preceding development of the natural history of the problem of the aged in the United States might be misleading if the

⁹ Evelyn M. Burns. Toward Social Security. (New York: Whittlesey House, 1936), 9.

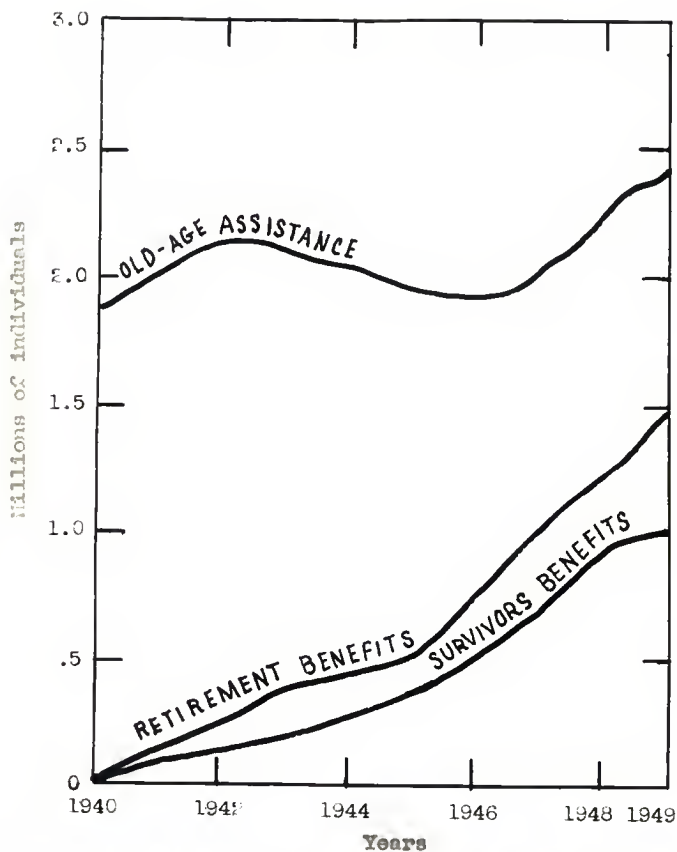


Fig. 1. Millions of individuals receiving payment from the Old Age and Survivors Insurance and Old Age Assistance: 1940 to 1949.

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1949. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 212.

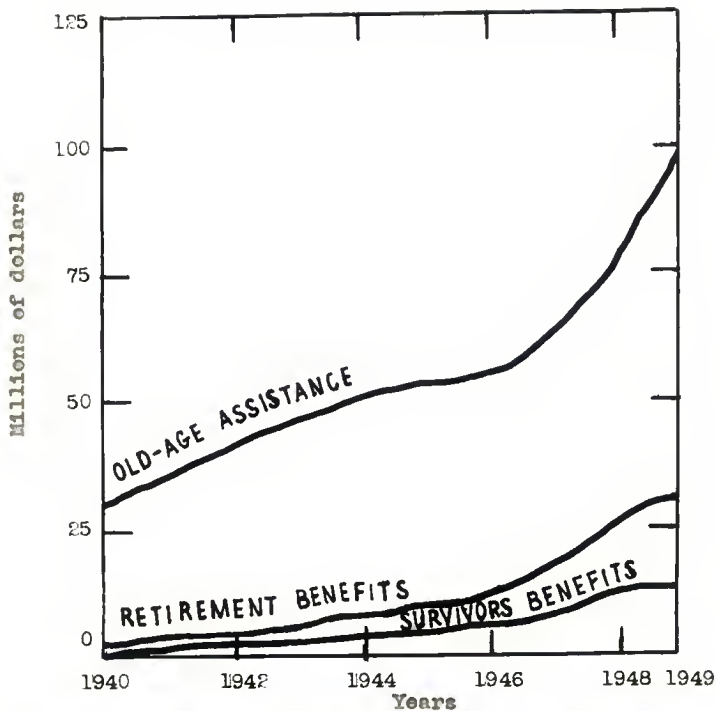


Fig. 2. Social Security payments by millions of dollars to the Old Age and Survivors Insurance and Old Age Assistance Programs: 1940 to 1949.

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1949. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 212.

importance of values in causing problems and preventing solutions to problems were not remembered. To say that a solution to the problem of the aged has been found because one policy in respect to it has been given to administrators would be a mistake. It was pointed out at the beginning of the discussion of the natural history developmental stages that values were not static. Therefore, the values held by the group that was responsible for making the Social Security law a policy in dealing with the problem of the aged may be in conflict with values of other groups. Another group with a different set of values may feel that the Social Security program was only the beginning of a "real" policy to deal with the problem of the aged. This latter group will then try to point out that what needs to be done is to make many people aware of the things not yet accomplished which makes the old-age group continue to be a problem according to their particular values.

For instance, in four western states, Arizona, California, Oregon, and Washington, "Townsend Clubbers" felt the federal Social Security program did not give adequate aid to the aged. Therefore, in 1944, they proposed amendments to their state constitutions which would provide 60 dollars monthly to all persons over 60 years of age.¹⁰ These amendments were not adopted, but they do demonstrate how a policy advocated by one group may not be considered the "right" policy by another group.

¹⁰ Abbett P. Herman. An Approach to Social Problems. (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1949), 225.

Another example of the conflict of values between groups would be in relation to the Social Security Act of 1935 and the extension of that act in 1950. Some groups felt that the 1935 act had not remedied the condition of the aged sufficiently so that it no longer constituted a problem. The aged according to their values still constituted a condition that was highly undesirable. Consequently, that group worked for an extension of the 1935 Social Security Act.

This extension of the Social Security Act was not a satisfactory action to other groups, however. These groups advocated the idea that the Social Security Act was no more adequate or socially relevant than the old idea of almshouses. This group pointed out that adherence to the hard and fast rule that people should retire when they reached the age of sixty-five would result in frustration, as many persons at that age have an ardent desire to remain in their jobs and are mentally and physically able to do so.

This group pointed out that, while the suggestion of allowing capable old persons to remain active in their jobs would not completely do away with the necessity of maintaining the type of financial assistance now provided, the cost of these programs would be reduced. This group advocated the idea that aging is a continual process and should not be divided into the distinct phases of youth, middle-age, and old-age. The acceptance of the idea that aging is a continual process would mean that each person would be judged according to his physical and mental capabilities. A person would not automatically be condemned to a life of inaction because he had reached a particular age.

This group suggested that the aged can, want to, and should work. They proposed that instead of designing benefits for the aged, jobs be maintained for them. The needs of old people according to this group are medical care, interesting activities, suitable housing, opportunities to belong to some social group, and adequate financial assistance. A policy incorporating these ideas will be strived for by this group.

Because the problem of the aged was seen to be an ameliorative problem, a solution satisfactory to all groups will be difficult to reach. This was not believed to be a necessarily bad situation because as long as values of groups conflict in relation to the problem of the aged, there will be attempts to change the condition.

In this part of the study the problem of the aged was classified as an ameliorative problem, and the developmental stages of the natural history of the problem of the aged were discussed.

The old age problem can be shown objectively, and this aspect of the problem will now be discussed.

The Objective Aspects of the Problem of the Aged in the United States

This part of the study will be devoted to showing the old age problem objectively. The objective aspect of the old age problem refers to a verifiable situation which may be checked as to its magnitude by impartial and trained observers.

In discussing the objective aspects of the problem of the aged, evidence will be presented to indicate the extent to which

the problem exists.

What Constitutes Old Age? The question might be asked: What constitutes old age? This question is a very difficult one to answer objectively. Many industries and the National Social Security Act define 65 as being that age when it is advisable for persons to retire. There are, however, criteria for age other than just the number of years a person has lived.

E. J. Stieglitz, a geriatrician, has suggested the following physical criteria of old age:¹

1. Gradual tissue desiccation.
2. Gradual retardation of cell division, capacity of cell growth, and tissue repair.
3. Gradual retardation in the rate of tissue oxidation.
4. Cellular atrophy, degeneration, increased cell pigmentation, and fatty infiltration.
5. Gradual decrease in tissue elasticity.
6. Decreased strength of skeletal muscles.
7. Progressive degeneration and atrophy of the nervous system, impaired vision, hearing, attention, memory, and mental endurance.

G. V. Hamilton has suggested the following psychological criteria of age:²

1. Worry, especially over health and economic security.

¹ E. J. Stieglitz (M.D.). Geriatric Medicine. (Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1943), 9.

² Ruth S. Caven et. al. Personal Adjustment in Old Age. (Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc., 1949), 4-6.

2. Feeling of inadequacy, leading to feelings of insecurity, anxiety, or guilt.

3. Feeling unwanted, isolated, lonely.

4. Attitudes of suspicion.

5. Narrowing of interests, leading to introspection, and increased interest in bodily sensations and physical pleasures.

6. Less of interest in activity and an increased interest in quiescence.

7. Reduction of sexual activity but sometimes an increased sexual interest, especially in the male, and regression to earlier levels of sex expression.

8. Conservatism.

9. Inability to adjust to changed conditions.

10. Overtalkativeness, especially of events of the past.

In the book Personal Adjustment in Old Age, certain sociological criteria of old age were mentioned:³

1. Relinquishment of social relationships typical of adulthood.

- a. Retirement from full-time employment.
- b. Withdrawal from community leadership.
- c. Destruction of marital relationships through death of a spouse.
- d. Loss of an independent household.
- e. Reduction and contraction of interest and activities.
- f. Loss of interest in distant goals and plans.

2. Acceptance of social relationships typical of old age, for example, old persons often confine membership to groups constituted chiefly of other old persons.

³ Loc. cit.

By studying the above criteria of old age it can be seen that an arbitrary decision as to what shall constitute old age does not necessarily fit the facts. Life is not made up of a series of sharply defined and easily distinguished periods, but is rather a continuous progression, a broad curve in which the peak of mental and physical vigor is approached by easy and indistinguishable stages, and, in the absence of complicating factors the retrogression also is not distinguished by definite landmarks. Youth, middle age, old age, and senility are well-established periods in life, but the exact point at which one period blends into the succeeding period defies determination. Furthermore, there is wide variations between individuals in the matter of life development. Heredity, environment, character of work, habits, and experiences all play their part. At sixty years of age one man is at the peak of his abilities, while another is far down on the decline. Old age actually is a condition rather than an age period. In order that we may work more easily with existing material, however, the common definition of old age will be used, namely, sixty-five years and over.

The Increase in Proportion of Old People. From a sociological standpoint, age is significant primarily in that it determines to a large extent the role the individual will play in a given social group during any specific time within a culture. It is significant then, in pointing out the objective aspects of the problem of the aged, that the proportion of those aged 65 years or over to the total population in the United States is steadily increas-

ing. In 1860, 1 out of 37 persons in the United States was over 65 years. In 1945, 1 out of 14 persons was over 65 years, and population experts predict that in 1980, 1 out of 7 will be over 65 years.⁴ This change in the age composition of the population can be grasped more readily by viewing Table 1.

Table 1. Predicted changes in age composition, 1930 and 1980.

Age composition:	Total continental U. S. population: 1930	U. S. population: 1980 (predicted)	Percentage increase or decrease over 1930
	122,775,046	158,335,000	
0-4	12,143,000	10,305,000	-15
5-19	56,192,000	31,134,000	-14
20-44	47,059,000	54,247,000	+15
45-64	21,431,000	41,091,000	+92
65+	6,639,000	22,180,000	+234

Source: Our National Resources. National Resources Committee. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1942), 2.

The rate of growth of a population of a particular nation plays a very important part in the age trends of that particular nation. If a nation has a population that is increasing at a decreasing rate, the population of that nation would gradually become older. Since 1900, the rate of growth of population in the United States has been doing just that, increasing at a decreasing

⁴ George Lawton, Stewart Maxwell. "When You Grow Older," Public Affairs Pamphlet No. 131. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1947), 23.

rate. This is another way of saying we have, or are going to have, larger numbers of old people.

The Declining Birth Rate. It is important to consider the factors that have brought about this condition in the United States. One vital factor is the declining birth rate. This is illustrated in Table 2, which shows the net reproduction rate and the gross reproduction rate in the United States for selected periods since 1905, by color. A net reproduction rate of 1,000 means that each generation would just replace itself, if birth and death rates of a specified period were to continue indefinitely, in the absence of immigration. A rate above 1,000 implies a potentially gaining population, and a rate below 1,000, a potentially declining population. A gross reproduction rate of 1,000 means that if all women born at the beginning of a generation were to live through their reproductive period and continue birth rates existing at the time of their birth, they would barely reproduce themselves, assuming no migration from outside the area. Where gross reproduction rate is less than 1,000, no improvement in mortality alone would prevent a potential decline in population.

Generally, the birth rate in the United States is steadily decreasing. It is true that, because of the condition surrounding World War II, there was a somewhat unusual number of births at that time, but it is believed that this increased number of births is but a minor fluctuation in the curve that is in the long-run showing a decreasing birth rate. Fig. 3 shows this trend in the United States from 1915 to 1947.

Table 2. Gross and net reproduction rates, by color: 1905 to 1910, 1930 to 1935, 1935 to 1940, and 1942 to 1947.

Color	Net reproduction rate			Gross reproduction rate				
	1905-10:	1930-35:	1935-40:	1942-47:	1905-10:	1930-35:	1935-40:	1942-47
All classes	1,336	984	978	1,292	1,793	1,108	1,101	1,402
White	1,339	972	957	1,269	1,740	1,080	1,063	1,365
Nonwhite	1,329	1,074	1,137	1,459	2,240	1,336	1,413	1,713

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1950. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), 26.

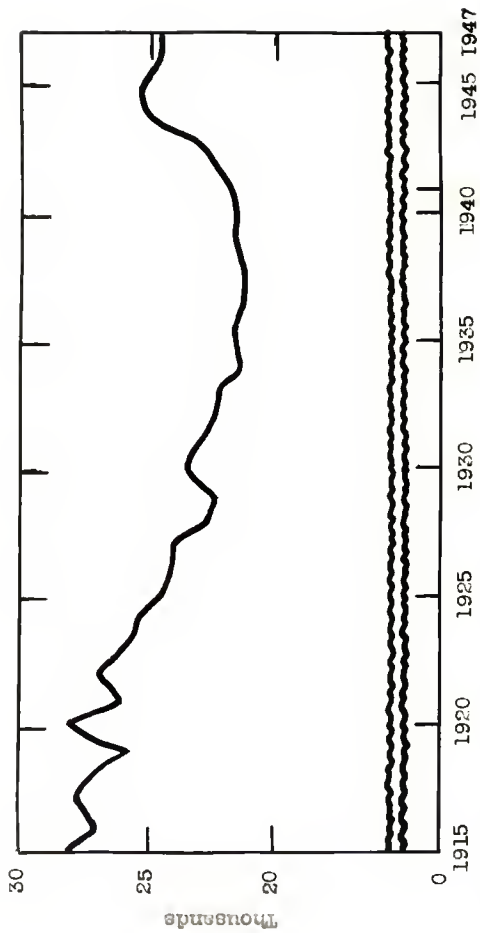


Fig. 3. The birth rate per 1,000 population in the United States: 1915 to 1947*.

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1950. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), 62.

The Effect of a Changing Immigration Policy on the Age Composition of the Population. Another important factor that is involved in the declining growth of the population, and which also has had an important bearing on the growing number of old people in the United States, is the change that has occurred in the immigration policy. The laws governing immigration in the 1800's and early 1900's were not strict about who could or could not come into the United States. It was about 1912 that strict immigration laws were put into effect. This had many effects: first of all, it had the effect of cutting off a large number of people who would have come into the United States and who, since they were probably in their early prime, would have had children here; secondly, it deprived the 20 to 44 years age group of fresh recruits; thirdly, those large groups of immigrants who came into the United States when the laws were less severe are now swelling the old-age group. Fig. 4 presents graphically the decline of immigration in the United States from 1925 to 1948.

Fig. 4 shows that an increasing number of immigrants came into the United States in 1947 and 1948. This fluctuation was a result of the Displaced Persons Bill of the National Congress which allowed large groups of immigrants to come into the United States. This fluctuation is believed to be of only temporary nature, however.

Increasing Life Expectancy in the United States. In addition to the effects of the birth rate and the immigration policies of the United States in bringing about an older population, medical discoveries have enabled doctors to reduce the infant death rate

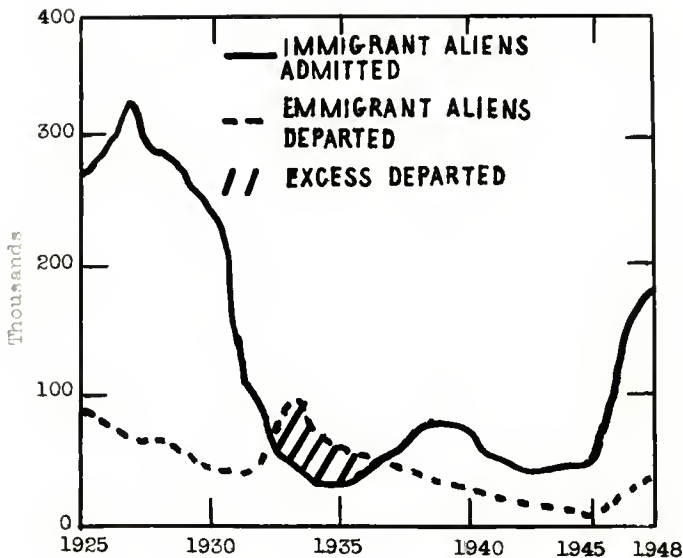


Fig. 4. Immigrant aliens admitted and emigrant aliens departed by thousands: 1925 to 1948.

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1949. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 94.

and to reduce the deaths caused by degenerative diseases characteristic of older people, and thereby give a longer life expectancy to people in the United States. Table 3 shows the increased life expectancy by sex and color for persons in the United States from 1900 to 1944.

Table 3. Life expectancy for white and non-white males and females in the United States, 1900 and 1944.

	Years	
	1900	1944
White males	48.23	63.55
White females	51.08	68.95
Non-white males	32.54	55.30
Non-white females	35.04	58.99

Source: "Old Age." Fortune, XXXIV, No. 6. (December, 1946), 125.

The Declining Death Rate. The death rate in the United States has been steadily declining. Fig. 5 shows this trend from 1915 to 1947. It may also be demonstrated by showing the consistent increase in the median age of the total population in the United States during the past 130 years, during which the median age of the population has steadily increased from 16.7 years in 1820 to 29.0 years in 1940.

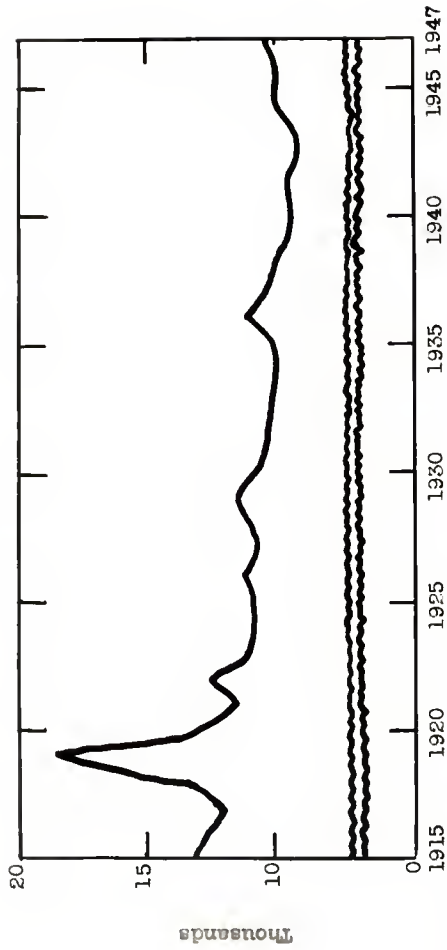


Fig. 5. The death rate per 1,000 population in the United States: 1915 to 1947.
 Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1950. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1950), 62.

Table 4. Increase of the median age of the population of the United States: 1790 to 1940.

Year	Residence		Median - all ages
	Urban	Rural	
1790	201,655	3,727,559	*
1800	322,371	4,988,112	*
1810	525,459	6,714,422	*
1820	693,255	8,945,198	16.7
1830	1,122,247	11,738,773	17.2
1840	1,845,055	15,224,398	17.8
1850	3,543,716	19,648,160	18.9
1870	9,902,361	28,656,010	20.2
1890	22,106,265	40,841,499	22.0
1910	41,998,932	49,973,334	24.1
1930	68,954,823	53,820,223	26.5
1940	74,423,702	57,245,513	29.0

*Not known.

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1949.
(Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 7.

It is believed that the median age will continue to increase. Table 5, which is stated in thousands, shows forecasts based on evidence of actual population changes through July 1, 1947, and assume median mortality, and a one and one-half million net immigration between 1947 and 1960, and a somewhat higher fertility. These forecasts show that the median age of the population will increase from 29.0 in 1940 to approximately 31.6 in 1960.

Table 5. Forecasts for future population and for the increase in the median age: 1940 to 1960 (in thousands).

Age group	Forecasts									
	1940	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1960		
Median age	29.0	29.8	29.9	30.0	30.2	30.4	30.7	31.6		
0-5	10,542	15,623	15,729	14,610	13,656	12,844	12,155	11,000		
5-9	10,685	13,926	14,202	15,366	15,805	16,167	16,356	12,741		
10-14	11,746	11,344	11,631	12,106	12,879	13,424	13,313	16,341		
15-19	12,334	10,671	10,642	10,688	10,897	11,172	11,354	13,920		
20-24	11,558	11,753	11,569	11,334	11,067	10,833	10,242	11,427		
25-29	11,097	12,213	12,220	12,169	12,067	11,926	11,763	10,771		
30-34	10,242	11,414	11,575	11,765	11,948	12,076	12,135	11,705		
35-39	9,545	10,874	10,960	11,020	11,075	11,153	11,267	11,995		
40-44	8,783	9,967	10,112	10,269	10,423	10,557	10,663	11,072		
45-49	8,255	9,144	9,256	9,359	9,462	9,575	9,702	10,411		
50-54	7,257	8,175	8,273	8,389	8,515	8,638	8,754	9,331		
55-59	5,868	7,354	7,417	7,463	7,508	7,564	7,638	8,216		
60-64	4,760	6,117	6,245	6,360	6,463	6,548	6,621	6,900		
65-69	3,748	4,536	4,668	4,815	4,962	5,100	5,222	5,669		
70-74	2,561	3,207	3,259	3,316	3,383	3,462	3,556	4,095		
75 plus	2,655	3,571	3,640	3,707	3,774	3,839	3,905	4,300		
Total	131,669	149,886	151,399	152,737	153,883	154,878	155,145	159,877		

Source: Statistical Abstract of the United States: 1949. (Washington, D. C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), 9.

It is clear that, if the median age of the population of the United States is increasing, the number of old people is also increasing in proportion to the rest of the population. Fig. 6 demonstrates this by showing the numbers of population in the various age groups. For instance, there were approximately 2 million persons, 65 years of age and over in 1900, which constituted 2.6 per cent of the approximate total 75 million population. In 1980, of the estimated total 153 million population, it is believed that approximately 21 million will be 65 years of age or over, which would be 13.7 per cent of the total population.

It has been shown that there is a large number of old people in the population of the United States, and that the proportion of the old age group will become larger in comparison to the rest of the population.

The Dependent Group. If this increasing number of old people is to be regarded as a problem, it must be shown objectively. To say that because one age group is increasing in size does not necessarily mean that a problem exists. It can be shown, however, that this old age group is dependent on others, that it does not perform certain functions that it once did, that its place in society is uncertain, and that a large number of people regard the situation as being undesirable; consequently, it can be said that the old age group constitutes a problem.

Table 6 demonstrates the dependence of the old age group on the rest of the population for their income.

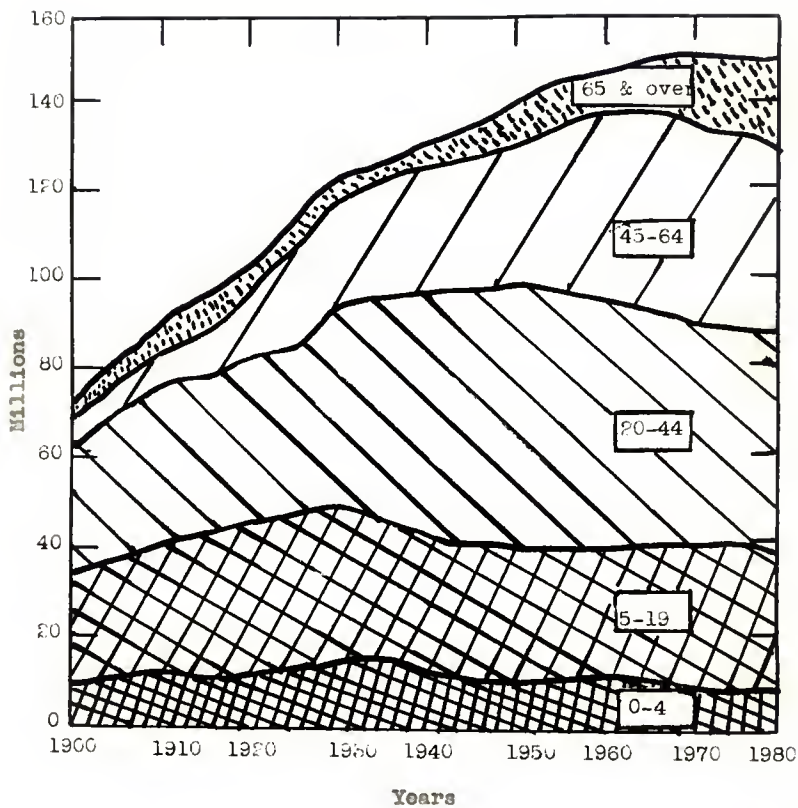


Fig. 6. Numbers of the population in various age groups, 1900 to 1980.

Source: Paul H. Landis. Population Problems. (New York: American Book Company, 1943), 280.

Table 6. Sources of income for persons sixty-five years of age and over in the United States, 1945.

Source of income	Total number of persons	Percentage of total population over 65
Private and public assistance	3,930,000	39
Old age and other governmental aid (Av. monthly benefit, \$31.82)	2,070,000	
Friends, relatives, churches	1,650,000	
Institutional care	210,000	
Earnings from employment	3,410,000	34
Wages and salaries	2,000,000	
Earnings from self-employment	1,400,000	
Unemployment compensation, sickness insurance	10,000	
Income from pensions	1,800,000	18
Old age & survivors insurance (average monthly benefit, \$24.19)	500,000	
Other governmental pensions	610,000	
Private pensions	690,000	
Income from investments	920,000	9

Source: "Old Age." Fortune, XXXIV, No. 6. (December, 1946), 247.

Table 7 shows the occupational status of persons 65 years of age and over according to sex in the United States. This table shows that only 24 per cent of the total 9,019,300 population of persons, 65 years of age and over, is employed; 35 per cent of that group were unable to work; and 2.3 per cent were in institutions.

Table 7. Occupational status of persons sixty-five years of age and over, by sex, in the United States, 1945.

	: Total : population	: Percentage of : total population
65 years and over employed	2,160,700	24
Male	1,881,700	21
Female	279,000	3
65 years and over engaged in own housework	2,504,900	28
Male	45,000	1
Female	2,459,900	27
65 years and over unable to work	3,136,100	35
Male	1,732,900	19
Female	1,403,200	16
65 years and over in in- stitutions	210,300	2.3
Male	110,100	1.2
Female	100,200	1.1
65 years and over, other retired, seasonal workers, etc.	801,400	8
Male	575,100	6
Female	226,300	2
65 years and over in school	4,400	*
Male	1,800	*
Female	2,600	*
65 years and over unreported	201,500	2.7
65 years and over	9,019,300	100
Male	4,406,100	48
Female	4,613,200	52

* Less than 1 per cent.

Source: "Old Age." Fortune, XXXIV, No. 6 (December, 1946), 248-250.

Legislation for the Aged. Another factor which demonstrates that a problem exists is the increasing amount of legislation being passed for old people's benefit. The most outstanding recognition and help was that given to them by the passage of the National Social Security Act in 1935. This act was a part of the philosophy of the dominant political party at that time. The important thing to note, however, is that the first large step was taken whereby the federal government held itself partly responsible for those who could or did not provide for their old age. This act has been accepted, and was enlarged to cover more people in 1950.

Another example of this factor can be seen in a newspaper article that was in the Kansas City Star, February 15, 1951.¹ Governor Edward F. Arn asked both houses of the Kansas Legislature to provide for a legislature council study of the institutional problems of the aged. He mentioned that since 1900--a period in which the population of the nation has doubled--the number of persons over 65 years old has quadrupled. He pointed out that those cold facts posed economic, social, and medical problems of increasing magnitude.

Advertising to Appeal to the Aged. One other factor which demonstrates that a problem exists should be mentioned. The fact that many persons are aware of the increasing numbers of elderly people is reflected in certain trends in advertising. The grey

¹ Kansas City Star, February 15, 1951, p. 8.

or white-haired woman is shown how she can be made lovely and younger-looking.

In a review of the objective aspects of the problem of the aged that have been presented, it is seen that the old age problem constitutes a verifiable situation. The effects of a decreasing birth rate, a decreasing death rate, and a decreasing number of immigrants on the problem of the aged were demonstrated. The larger proportion of the population included in the age group, 65 years and over, was shown by Tables 4 and 5 showing the increase in the median age of the population, and by Fig. 6 that showed graphically the increased number of old people. The fact that this age group was dependent to a large extent on others for its income, and that a large percentage of the group was either unable to work or was unemployed, was also shown.

It has been shown that the problem of the aged exists objectively, but the important thing to find out is whether or not it exists subjectively; i. e., is there a value conflict concerning it among groups of people in the United States? The subjective aspects of the problem of the aged will now be presented.

The Subjective Aspects of the Problem of the Aged in the United States

This portion of the study will be devoted to the subjective aspect of the value-structure approach as it applies to the problem of the aged in the culture of the United States.

The subjective aspect of the problem of the aged refers to the expressed conflicting values that people hold with regard to

the aged in the culture of the United States, for unless the condition of the aged was defined as a social problem by the people involved, it would not be a problem, even though it was considered as such by social scientists. The effect that values have had on the natural history of the problem of the aged was considered in the part of this study dealing with that particular phase of the value-structure approach. The subjective aspect of a problem includes a consideration of the dual role that values perform in causing a condition to be considered a problem. The values that have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem and the values that have prevented the solution to that problem will be discussed.

The group of people chosen to demonstrate this portion of the study were those persons 65 years of age and over in the city of Manhattan, Kansas. Since the purpose of this study was to present the value-structure approach and to show how it could be applied to a particular problem, the attempt to make a statistical study of the aged was felt not to be necessary. That the group should be chosen by random sampling methods, however, was felt to be important in order that the values presented by these older people would be representative of the community of Manhattan and, therefore, unbiased. This was felt to be particularly important since values vary between groups according to socio-economic levels, amount of education, standards of living, type of occupation, etc. For example, the term "retirement" has a middle-and-upper-income group tone; old men in the lower economic groups are generally considered old much earlier in life and do not "retire,"

but are "laid off" or "fired." At any rate, when the man in the lower-income group has had his employment terminated, he often loses his independent household, which is just as often not the case for the man from the upper-income group who "retires."

Values that Have Caused the Condition of the Aged to be Considered a Problem. Values of people are not static but ever-changing. There are usually some values that seem to predominate in a group, however. A discussion of these values that have seemed to predominate in the thoughts of the peoples of the United States, and which have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem, will now be presented.

Emphasis on Youth. A constant thread may be seen running through the culture pattern of the United States; this is the emphasis that has been placed on youth. For example, advertisers are constantly asking the middle-aged or older woman to buy hormone cream so that her skin will again look young. It was seen that, in the philosophy of the United States, there was little education that would teach the young such facts as these: that they would get old; that they should begin then to develop some interest they could maintain in their older years; and that their function in society would change when they grew older.

This emphasis on youth in the United States has had the effect of making people paint an ugly picture of old age. It has made younger people unwilling to learn how to live with old people, and unwilling to recognize the fact that old age and wisdom often go together.

This emphasis on youth has had many effects. One of the

main results was that the older person had no place or proper function to fulfill. He had often been forced to retire and was made dependent on possible savings he might have accumulated, or on Social Security payments, etc. This has had the result of many productive hours being wasted, for many persons who are retired are still capable and desirous of work. It has also had the result of the growth of the feelings of insecurity, and of isolation on the part of the older person.

These factors mentioned above were clearly shown by the interviews that were taken. All of the interviewees liked young people but felt that the young people felt that they did not have time for older people and that, sometimes, there was actual disrespect shown to them by the young people.

The factor of loss of function in society by these older people was also clearly shown. Many of the interviewees said their biggest problem was to keep occupied. Case number 20, a woman, said she wished for death because there was nothing for her to do.

The value that is placed on youth in this country has had the effect, then, of forcing old people out of their former functions in society and has created in them a feeling of insecurity and isolation.

Emphasis on a High Standard of Living and on Smaller Families. The United States has often been regarded as the land of opportunity. An off-shoot of this, although it would not necessarily have had to follow, was the value that people have placed on the material things of society. It had become important to people

that they had a "college" education, new cars, nice homes, etc. In order to realize these things it seemed that the size of the family should be restricted to the conjugal family unit rather than the consanguineous type (extended family) consisting of other relatives. This has meant that old people no longer have homes with their children, for they often are regarded as obstacles to adult ambitions, to social changes, and to the desires of younger people to live more fully "their own lives."

The young people do not want to be hindered in their attempt to attain a high standard of living by having to take on the responsibility of caring for their parents.

The wide use of labor-saving devices in the home has meant that an old person would not have many functions that he or she could perform if living with children. This would have the tendency to make the old people feel that they were a responsibility because of their economic dependence on their children. Formerly independent in their actions, they would have to take positions subordinate to adult children.

Because of the emphasis on a high standard of living many people do not have a feeling of respect for old people. This is because many old people's earning power has stopped, and they are no longer able to maintain certain standards which the younger people feel to be important. This has often resulted in a feeling of inferiority on the part of the old people.

The emphasis on a high standard of living has directly resulted in smaller families. This emphasis on smaller families means that there will be fewer children, which means that the

proportion of old people to the rest of the population will continue to increase. If values continue to conflict over possible solutions to the problem of the aged in the present manner, this fact will mean that the problem of the aged will grow to larger proportions.

The results of this value, as demonstrated by interviews, show that the old people feel that, if they stay with their children, they are a burden on them. If they are not staying with their children, they feel insecure because they have lost their old authority with their children or they have a feeling of isolation. Case number 2, a widow, was living with her daughter and son-in-law. When the interviewer was in the room talking with the elderly lady, the daughter had gone to another part of the house. The elderly lady, when answering questions, would look about fearfully to see that her daughter was not there, and then answer the questions in whispers. It was easy to see in all of the old people who had children that their children were the only things that they considered to be of much importance, however.

This emphasis on a high standard of living has meant that old people did not want to keep their children from attaining it. It has meant, also, that the younger people did not want to have the responsibility of caring for their parents. This necessitated an outside agency providing for the old people.

Emphasis on Efficiency. The emphasis on efficiency in the culture of the United States was another factor that caused the old people to lose their function in society. Unless the old people could do work as fast and as thoroughly as younger people

the young people felt they should be forced to stop working to allow younger persons to have their jobs.

It was found that in certain industries there was no discrimination in regards to age; but those industries were industries that did not employ large numbers of people. Such industries as harness factories, livery stables, and piano and organ factories often had 55 per cent of their workers over 45 years of age. In the automobile factories, rubber factories, petroleum industries, and the radio broadcasting industry, however, less than 50 per cent of the workers were 45 years of age and over.¹

An example of this was seen in case number 13, an elderly gentleman, who had had to retire at the age of 65 years even though he was mentally and physically able to retain his job. He had not been employed at the right place to receive Social Security annuities. At the time of the interview he was working as a janitor. He said that it was the only type of a job he could find. He did not seem to care for the job, but wished to be able to care for himself.

Many man-hours have been wasted in the United States as a result of this value on efficiency. The value of having every person do what they could would be more economical, but that value has not been raised to the same level of importance as the value of efficiency.

Emphasis on Sanitary and Medical Developments. The value

¹ Abbott P. Herman. An Approach to Social Problems. (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1949), 227.

that has been placed on health in the United States is evidenced by the increasing life-span. Infant mortality rates have decreased and life expectancy increased to 70 years. The infectious and communicable diseases no longer are a great fear. This has caused a large number of old people to be in the population. The diseases that strike the older person, however, have received much less attention than the infectious diseases of youth. Degenerative diseases such as heart disease, cancer, and nephritis are major enemies of the old person. It was not until 1909 that a New York physician, Dr. I. Nascher, described old-age disease as a special branch of medical science, calling it geriatrics, as a parallel to pediatrics, the science of children's diseases.¹ Dr. Henry S. Simms of Colorado said at a meeting of physicians in 1940 that the principal reason for neglect of aging and vascular diseases was not so much the difficulty of their solution but the difficulty in obtaining financial support.² This emphasis in health problems is directly tied together with the value on youth. This is clearly seen in that it has been the health problems of the young that have received the most attention and financial support. This lack of attention for the physical problems of the aged has also been shown for the mental diseases of old people. While between 18 and 19 per cent of all cases committed to mental hospitals in the United States have been diagnosed as senile psychosis, a serious mental derangement

¹ Martin Gumpert (M. D.). You Are Younger than You Think. (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), 134.

² Ibid, p. 1.

due to old age, only about two-thirds of 1 per cent of the space in 10 leading text books of psychiatry was devoted to the entire subject of the cause, pathology, and treatment of all kinds of senile mental disease in 1943.³

The effects which have derived from the emphasis placed on sanitary and medical developments have been as follows: first, the population of the United States is able to live longer; secondly, there has been neglect of the health of people after they become old. This shows the effect of a value because different age levels contain no social or moral or physical values in themselves.

All of those persons which were interviewed ranked health as being their major or next to major problem. This did not mean that they were unable to pay medical bills, but that their health was limiting them in their activities.

Emphasis on Urbanization. The growth of industries pulled many people into areas which became densely settled. The value on a high standard of living made many people feel that, if they could go to the cities, they could gain it there. This moving of many families from rural areas to urban areas has been very instrumental in causing the condition of the aged to be considered a problem. Many of the persons interviewed said, when asked if they considered the problems of old people to be different today than when they were young, that they did because, when they were

³ Samuel W. Hartwell. "Mental Diseases of the Aged." New Goals for Old Age. George Lawton, editor. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 131.

young, people lived on farms. The interviewees said that their parents had lived on the farm, and, when they grew old, they stayed on the farm and were taken care of by their children. They felt the problems were different today in that, if a person did not save for his old age, he would be left without anything to live on and would have no place to stay.

Emphasis on Social Welfare. The value that some people have placed on social welfare has been a factor in causing the condition of the aged to be considered a problem. Social welfare has meant to those people society's well-being. They felt that if there were a large group of people who were in a poor condition, then the government had the responsibility of taking care of that group. Old people constituted one of those groups of people who in their estimation needed help. This value has brought attention to the condition of the old people. Some of the interviewees demonstrated the importance of this value. Case number 10, an elderly man, said that he felt that the government, through taxes, should provide for old people. Case number 16, an elderly woman, said that she felt that those who had money should give part of it to the government so the government could provide for those who did not have the means of taking care of themselves.

Possible Solutions to the Above Conditions. After a consideration of the values that have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem, the question might be asked: What are the possible ways in which the condition of the aged could be altered so as not to represent a problem in the minds of people?

Increase the Number of Old People's Homes. Increasing the

number of old people's homes might be a partial solution to the problem of altering the condition of the aged. This policy might provide food and lodging for the old people, but it would not enable the old people to have a feeling of independence, nor would it give the old person a respected function in society. The interviewees (case numbers 6, 18, 19, and 20) who lived in a home for the aged felt that they were being well taken care of, but they either wished for their own home or they missed being associated with their family. The biggest problems for those in the home for the aged, outside of health, was the problem of keeping occupied and the lack of social contacts. To increase the number of old people's homes was not felt to be a completely satisfactory policy in dealing with the aged because the homes provided very little mental stimulation for persons living there. This would mean that those persons living there would age faster than otherwise.

Increase Social Security Payments and Coverage. By providing more old people with Social Security and enlarging monthly payments of Social Security are other possible ways in which the condition of the aged could be altered so as not to constitute so great a problem in the minds of people.

The first Social Security legislation passed in 1935 was probably the first real step taken in meeting the needs of the aged. This solution provided a way in which the aged could remain in their own homes while being provided with some security. By expanding the coverage of the act to cover all groups of people who were interested and by increasing the payments so as to

provide the person with an adequate living scale, the condition of the aged could be so altered so as possibly not to remain a problem.

Provide National Health Insurance. One of the most important problems to the interviewees was their health. If some type of health insurance could be provided whereby their health problems could be taken care of, another important aspect of the condition of the aged could be altered so that it would not be the major problem of the aged. Dr. Martin Gumpert¹ feels that there is a false connection between old age and disease. He explains that most older people's diseases are chronic disease, and most chronic diseases are recognized only in an advanced state. If a health policy could enable people to have their health checked, then the condition of the aged as far as health problems are concerned could be alleviated.

Provide Work for Old People. There has been no place in the economic scheme for old people in the United States. Yet, if jobs were provided for old people according to their capabilities, many aspects of the condition of the aged that have made people feel it to be a problem would be non-existent. The old people would have a function in society, would be able to be financially and emotionally secure, would have a feeling of importance, and would be contributing to society. An example of how this could be worked out was provided by the General Motors Company. In

¹ Martin Gumpert (M. D.). You Are Younger Than You Think. (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), 20.

1934 they instituted in their Detroit, Michigan, Dodge factory an "old man's" division. In this division 99 workers with an average of 66 years (some were over 80) were employed. This division had work that was in keeping with the capabilities of the older workers.¹

After noting that there were possible ways in which the condition of the aged could be altered, the question has arisen: Why have not these solutions been put into effect? The answer to that question lies in the conflict of values which characterize the problem.

Values that have Prevented the Solution of the Problem of the Aged. Just as there are values that have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem, there are values that have prevented the solution of that problem. A discussion of those values follows.

Emphasis on Individualism. The United States has long been considered "the land of opportunity." To go back to all of the forces, however, that have been instrumental in causing the value of individualism to be regarded so highly by the people of the United States would not necessarily relate to the purpose of this study. The value that has been placed on individualism has had a great effect in preventing a solution to the problem of the aged. This value was seen in remarks of the interviewees. Case number 15, an elderly lady, who was living in a single room without running water or sink said that she "thanked God that she was not

¹ Ibid., p. 119.

dependent on the government" but was able "to take care of herself." Case number 3, an elderly woman, said she felt it was the responsibility of the individual "to see to it that he or she was taken care of." Case number 7, a man of 74 years, said he felt that only in extreme instances should the government or any outside agency provide any aid to individuals.

Because many people value individualism they do not want any governmental interference with the lives of individuals. To those people who placed a high value on individualism, Social Security payments seemed a form of charity.

Emphasis on a High Standard of Living. A value closely allied with individualism is the value placed on having a high standard of living. Persons who valued a high standard of living felt that the more governmental interference there was, the higher taxes they would have to pay. This was regarded as being undesirable by them in that they wanted most of their income to help them attain those things which they felt were necessary to have a high standard of living. To drain any of their income off in the form of taxes to provide for others was a complete anathema to them. Because of this value, those persons were unwilling to support any policy which would provide aid to the aged.

Emphasis on Efficiency. The value that has been placed on efficiency in the United States is another important factor preventing the problem of the aged from being ameliorated. Persons in managerial positions have felt that to employ older people was not the best way to gain maximum production at the least cost. Those persons have said that higher costs were involved with the

employment of older workers and that smaller returns were gained from their work. The reasons given for their position were: first, there would be higher costs of compensation insurance; secondly, the private pension plans would be weakened; and, thirdly, rates for group insurance would be increased if older workers were employed.¹ This value has caused management to adopt a policy of not hiring older workers, which has had the effect of forcing older people to retire because it has prevented the widespread adoption of the policy of hiring older workers in accordance with their capabilities. The value that has been placed on efficiency has probably done more than any other value to cause older people to lose their function in society. Persons in their younger days have been interested in efficiency, and many have not provided themselves with hobbies or interests that they could carry on with in their old age. This was demonstrated by an interviewee who was an elderly man of 74 years (case number 18). He had broken his hip two years ago and the bone had not mended. The main thing he hoped to do "was to get back to work." At the present time his main problem was that of keeping occupied because he was not interested in reading and did not have any hobby to pursue.

Emphasis on Smaller Families. The value on smaller families was seen to be a cause in the creation of the problem of the aged, but it is also a value that has been important in preventing the

¹ Otto Pollock, "Discrimination Against Older Workers in Industry." American Journal of Sociology, L, No. 2 (September, 1944), 103.

solution of that problem. This value means that, since smaller families are desired, old people often cannot be provided for by their families. Children of the aged are often operating on wages or salaries which do not permit them to support their parents in separate establishments and are living in urban residences which will not accommodate the addition of one or more persons. With smaller-sized families, there are fewer children to share the burden of dependent parents. Even when parents are taken into their children's homes, difficulties often occur both on the side of the supporting family and on the part of the old people as well.

This value also has meant that the population of the United States will become older, thus creating even more of the condition that is considered a problem.

When the value on smaller families and the value on individualism are tied together, the problem of the aged seems almost incapable of solution, for the situation that has arisen is that there are more old people, there are smaller families, and there is the belief that the individual should provide for himself.

Cultural Contradictions. In a consideration of the values that have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem and the values that have prevented the solution to the problem, certain cultural contradictions can be seen. These may be within one group as well as between groups.

In the United States the philosophy of individualism has been maintained for a long time. This doctrine is based on the assumption that the individual and not society is the paramount

consideration or end. It maintains that individual initiative, action, and interests should be independent of governmental or social control. There are many results of this belief in individualism by large groups of people, but we shall confine our interest to showing how this doctrine has affected old people.

In many cultures the old-age group is venerated, respected, given places to live, and jobs suited to their capabilities. This is particularly true of those cultures where farming is the predominant type of industry. The old age group usually are able to exert a large amount of social control on their family and kinship group.

This situation was true of the United States when agriculture was the principal industry. When the nation began to industrialize on a large scale and large groups of people moved to cities, however, the situation changed. The philosophy of individualism became dominant. People raised their levels of popular aspiration. They had fewer children, moved to cities not only for jobs but to be near the center of the "arts." Because of the values this philosophy of individualism emphasized, old people lost many of their previous functions, and, because of the belief in individualism, there was no group which could provide for the group that had lost its functions. In this way the value of believing in this doctrine both caused the problem and prevented its solution.

There was a change in philosophy as advocated by the federal government in 1932. This philosophy advocated state interventionism, i. e., that it was the function of government to concern

itself with the economic as well as the political security of the individual. Groups who were in favor of this new philosophy felt that the day had passed when the individual could be expected to provide against all the hazards to his personal economic security. Under this doctrine certain groups were able to ameliorate some of the difficulties of the aged. There was, and is, a conflict of values between the groups who advocate the former philosophy, individualism, and the groups who advocate the latter philosophy, interventionism. This conflict has been important in causing the problem of the aged to remain unsolved.

The values that are placed on a high standard of living and on smaller families are other values that have both caused and prevented the solution to the problem. These cultural contradictions show that, in the last analysis, social problems arise and are sustained because people do not share the same common values and objectives.

The subjective aspects of the problem of the aged have been presented in this part of the study. The values that have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem, such as the values on youth, on individualism, on high standards of living and smaller families, on efficiency, on sanitary and medical developments, and on urbanization were discussed. Possible solutions to the problem of the aged were mentioned, including: first, the suggestion of increasing the number of old people's homes; secondly, the advisability of increasing Social Security payments and coverage; thirdly, the possibility of providing national health insurance; and fourthly, the suggestion of pro-

viding jobs for old people. The values that have prevented the adoption of those solutions, such as the values on individualism, on a high standard of living, on efficiency, and on smaller families, were discussed. Cultural contradictions that may be within one group as well as between groups were also discussed.

This discussion of the subjective aspects of the problem of the aged shows that people are becoming aware of the condition of the aged and that there are value conflicts between groups concerning it. According, then, to the definition of a social problem as provided by the value-structure approach, the aged definitely constitute a problem condition.

The summary and conclusions regarding the value-structure approach and the application of it to the problem of the aged follow.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary. The purpose of this study was to apply a new conceptual scheme or theoretical framework, the value-structure approach, to the analysis of a specific social problem, that of the aged in the culture of the United States.

In order to show the value of using this new approach, a brief discussion of four traditional approaches used in studying social problems was given. The advantages and disadvantages of the "social problems" approach, the "social-disorganization" approach, the "cultural-lag" approach, and the "community" approach were discussed. The reasons for believing that those approaches

were inadequate were as follows: (1) the social problems approach isolated problems and did not properly show their relationship to social processes, and it failed to develop a systematic conceptual system; (2) the social-disorganization approach had come to be the same as the social problems approach; (3) the cultural-lag approach failed to take into consideration the functionalism of culture; and (4) the community approach was limited to observations within the confines of a community.

The value-structure approach was believed to be the approach that would overcome some of the major disadvantages found in the four traditional approaches, since the value-structure approach provides a common orientation for the treatment of diverse social problems as sociological phenomena. This common orientation consisted of the common element of values that were found in all social problems. This common framework in which to consider social problems does not approach social problems atomistically, but rather seeks to determine the underlying process, the conflict of values, from which all social problems arise.

The value-structure approach defined a social problem as a condition in which there was real or imagined deviation from some social norm cherished by a considerable number of people. The implications of this definition were: (1) social problems were relative to the cultural groups in which they are found; (2) the concept of social "norms" and deviations from those "norms" was recognized; and (3) there was no denial of the many causes of problem conditions; rather, there was emphasis on the idea that the societal condition becomes a problem condition coincident

with the emergence of value clashes concerning it.

The characteristics of the value-structure approach as developed by Fuller, Frank, and Waller were: (1) social problems develop in the natural history stages of awareness, policy-determination, and reform; (2) problems could be typed as physical, ameliorative, or moral, depending upon the degree to which values enter into the causation and prevention of the condition which is defined as a problem; (3) social problems have their objective and subjective aspects; and (4) values cause social problems and prevent their solution.

The value-structure approach was then applied to the problem of the aged in the United States. The problem of the aged was classified as an ameliorative problem for the following reasons: first, there was a general consensus of opinion among many groups of people that the aged constituted a problem; secondly, the condition of the aged was regarded as undesirable by many groups of people; and, thirdly, the conflicting values which groups hold concerning the condition of the aged would make remedial action difficult.

The natural history stages of the problem of the aged were discussed next. The awareness stage of the problem of the aged was not considered to be fully developed until just a few decades ago. The main reason that the problem of the aged had developed only recently was because of the seeming relationship between the aged and agrarianism and industrialism. In the early 1930's many plans were being suggested to aid the aged, which was also an evidence of the awareness of the people in the United States con-

cerning the problem of the aged.

The policy-determination stage was considered in its developmental steps from the time the first commission was established to study the aged in 1908, to the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935.

The reform stage was marked by administrators putting the Social Security Act into effect, and it was pointed out that, while various aspects of the problem of the aged could be seen in either the awareness stage, the policy-determination stage, or the reform stage, the reform stage of the natural history of the problem of the aged could only be considered in terms of specific policies that had been adopted since the problem of the aged was an ameliorative problem. This meant that values of groups will continue to conflict and continue to change concerning the aged, and that a satisfactory solution to the problem of the aged will be difficult to find.

To show that the problem of the aged was a problem objectively was the next step in the application of the value-structure approach to the problem of the aged. It was pointed out that a birth rate increasing at a decreasing rate, a declining death rate, and a decreasing number of immigrants would have the effect of increasing the proportion of the aged in the population. Figure 6 showed the larger proportion of the population that can be expected to be included in the age group, 65 years and over. Tables 4 and 5 showed the increase in the median age of the population from 1790 to 1940 and the expected increase from 1940 to 1960.

It was shown that this increasing number of old people was dependent on society for much of their income. Other factors that were used to show that the aged constituted a problem were: (1) the increased amount of legislation that was being passed for their benefit; and (2) the increased advertising designed to appeal to the aged.

The subjective aspects of the problem of the aged were then discussed. The values that have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem, such as the values on youth, on individualism, on high standards of living, on efficiency, on sanitary and medical developments, and on urbanization, were discussed. Possible solutions to the problem of the aged were considered, including: first, the suggestion of increasing the number of old people's homes; secondly, the advisability of increasing Social Security payments and coverage; thirdly, the possibility of providing national health insurance; and, fourthly, the suggestion of providing jobs for old people. The values that have prevented the adoption of those solutions, such as the values on individualism, on a high standard of living, on efficiency, and on smaller families, were discussed. The cultural contradictions that value conflicts have brought about were also pointed out.

A group of persons 65 years of age and over in Manhattan, Kansas, were chosen by random sampling methods to demonstrate the subjective aspects of the value-structure approach to the problem of the aged. Interviews with individuals in the sample group demonstrated the wide range of values that people have con-

cerning the aged in the United States.

Conclusions Regarding the Approach. In reading materials concerning the aged, the question of whether there actually was a problem associated with the aged presented itself. That is, some authors such as Otto Pollack¹ and Alvin E. Hansen² presented their reasons for believing that the popular notion that there was a problem associated with the aged was largely a "bubble." Other authors such as Dr. Martin Gumpert³, Walter Adams and Leland Traaywick⁴ presented their reasons for believing that there was a problem associated with the aged.

How could these two diametrically opposed viewpoints both be "right"?

If the social problems approach were used in studying the condition of the aged, the sociologist would have adopted one of the group's values, and a problem either said to have been or not to have been in existence. If the cultural-lag approach had been used, the sociologist would have looked for the non-material trait of culture that was lagging behind the material traits that was causing the problem, but he would not have found the cause for

¹ Otto Pollack. "Discrimination Against Older Workers in Industry." American Journal of Sociology, L, No. 2 (September, 1944), 101.

² Alvin H. Hansen. Economic Policy and Full Employment. (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1947), 304.

³ Martin Gumpert (M. D.). You Are Younger than You Think. (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), 5.

⁴ Walter Adams and Leland Traywick. Readings in Economics. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1949), 302.

the difference of opinion as expressed by these two groups because the difference lay in values.

Was there an approach that would allow the sociologist to take value conflicts into consideration while studying social problems? The value-structure approach was investigated, and it was found that the value-structure approach enabled the sociologist to view cultural values and to determine whether or not a problem existed, to what extent it existed, and to determine what kind of a problem it was.

The four traditional approaches were also investigated, and, while it is believed they have served a good purpose in contributing to a better understanding of social problems, processes, etc., they have failed to meet all the demands that an adequate sociological method should meet. They did not, generally speaking, provide a common theoretical framework by which any sociologist could view all social problems. The four methods also failed to recognize the common elementary unit of values that are inherent in all social problems. More often than not, a social situation was defined as a problem only at the "whimsey" of a particular sociologist. It was not meant to imply that those sociologists were not painstaking in their definitions, but what was meant was that there was no common meeting-ground where more than one sociologist using one of those approaches could view the same social situation and come to the same conclusions regarding it.

This is in reference to the important principle of verification in science. An approach, to be useful, should possess

this quality of verifiability, i. e., once the method and techniques of the approach are known, any sociologist using them could come to the same conclusions regarding a particular condition as other sociologists.

The value-structure approach possesses this quality of verifiability because it allows the sociologist to be objective in studying subjective phenomena. What could be more natural than the consideration of values when groups of human beings are being considered? The value-structure approach gives cognizance to this relationship and provides the way in which this underlying process of values can be studied by the sociologist.

This approach allows the sociologist to view cultural "norms" as objective data ("norms" being defined by group consensus as those values, ends, and purposes cherished by the group). Social problems are caused when there is a failure between or within groups to reach consensus of opinion regarding a particular condition. This point shows that the value-structure approach is socially relevant, for it enables the sociologist to view values as social facts. Since values are a part of man's mental outlook, any approach, to be socially relevant, must take them into consideration. For the sociologist to overlook values while attempting to study society would be the same as for the chemist to overlook atoms while studying chemistry.

Since the value-structure approach recognized values as being the underlying process to which all other problems were incidental, all social problems can be studied with the use of it. If values are an inherent part of social problems, either in

causing them or preventing their solution, then to ignore them would mean a loss of objectivity by the sociologist. Thus, in studying the subjectiveness of values the sociologist is being objective by using the value-structure approach.

Conclusions Regarding the Condition of the Aged. The conclusions that may be drawn concerning the aged will now be presented.

First, the condition of the aged was found to be an ameliorative problem because of the following reasons: first, there was a general consensus among many groups of people that the aged constituted a problem; secondly, the condition of the aged was regarded as undesirable by many groups of people; and, thirdly, the conflicting values which groups hold with regard to the condition of the aged will make remedial action difficult. These conflicting values were demonstrated by interviewees as follows: (1) six felt that the federal government should assume the responsibility for taking care of the old-age group; (2) six others felt that they did not know whom the responsibility should be on; (3) two felt that it was the responsibility of the individual to provide for his old age; (4) two others felt that the families of old people should take care of them; and (5) four felt that it was the responsibility of the various states to provide for the old people within their boundaries.

Secondly, it was pointed out that, while aspects of the problem of the aged can be seen in all three natural history stages, awareness, policy-determination, reform, the reform stage could only be considered in terms of specific policies because of the

conflating values which groups hold with regard to the aged.

Thirdly, the objective aspects of the problem of the aged were pointed out, and it was seen that the problem of the aged was a verifiable situation for the following reasons: first, there is an increase in the proportion of old people to the rest of the population because: (1) the birth rate is increasing at a decreasing rate, which was shown by Fig. 3; (2) the number of immigrants into the United States has been steadily decreasing since 1912, which was shown by Fig. 4; (3) the life expectancy is increasing in the United States; (4) the death rate is steadily declining (Fig. 5), which means that the median age of the population of the United States will steadily increase (Table 4 showed an increase from 16.7 years in 1820 to 29.0 years in 1940. Table 5 showed an expected increase from 29.0 years in 1940 to 31.6 years in 1960). Secondly, 57 per cent of the old-age group was found to be dependent for its income from public and private assistance or governmental pensions, and only 24 per cent of the group was employed. Thirdly, there was an increasing amount of legislation being passed for the benefit of the aged. Fourthly, a large amount of advertising was seen to be designed to appeal to the aged.

Fourthly, the subjective aspects of values concerning the aged were demonstrated. The values that have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem, such as the values on youth, on individualism, on high standards of living and smaller families, on efficiency, on sanitary and medical developments, and on urbanization, were discussed. These values were demon-

strated by answers of interviewees. For example, it was pointed out that the emphasis on youth has had the effect of the old person not having a function in society. Case number 20, a woman, said she wished for death because there was nothing for her to do. Another example in demonstration of the emphasis on a high standard of living and smaller families was case number 2, a widow, living with her daughter and son-in-law, who showed that she felt that she was a burden on them and felt insecure.

Possible solutions to the problem of the aged were mentioned, including: first, the suggestion of increasing the number of old people's homes; secondly, the advisability of increasing Social Security payments and coverage; thirdly, the possibility of providing national health insurance; and, fourthly, the suggestion of providing jobs for old people. The values that have prevented the adoption of those solutions, such as the values on individualism, on a high standard of living, on efficiency, and on smaller families, were discussed. The interviewees demonstrated these values. The emphasis on individualism was demonstrated by case number 15, an elderly lady living in a single room without running water or sink, who said that she "thanked God that she was not dependent on the government" but was able to "take care of herself." Case number 3, an elderly woman, said she felt it was the responsibility of the individual "to see to it that he or she was taken care of."

Case number 18, an elderly man of 74 years, demonstrated the value on efficiency. He had broken his hip, and the only thing he wanted to do was "to get back to work" because he had never

taken the time to learn a hobby or to be interested in reading.

It was found that the condition of the aged constituted a problem condition because there was found to be a value conflict concerning it.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer desires to express her gratitude to Mr. Linwood Hodgdon for his invaluable assistance as major instructor for this thesis. His criticisms and recommendations, in addition to being of great worth, were deeply appreciated. The author also wishes to thank Dr. Randall Hill for directing her attention to various source materials, and Mr. George Montgomery for his encouragement at all times.

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APPENDIX

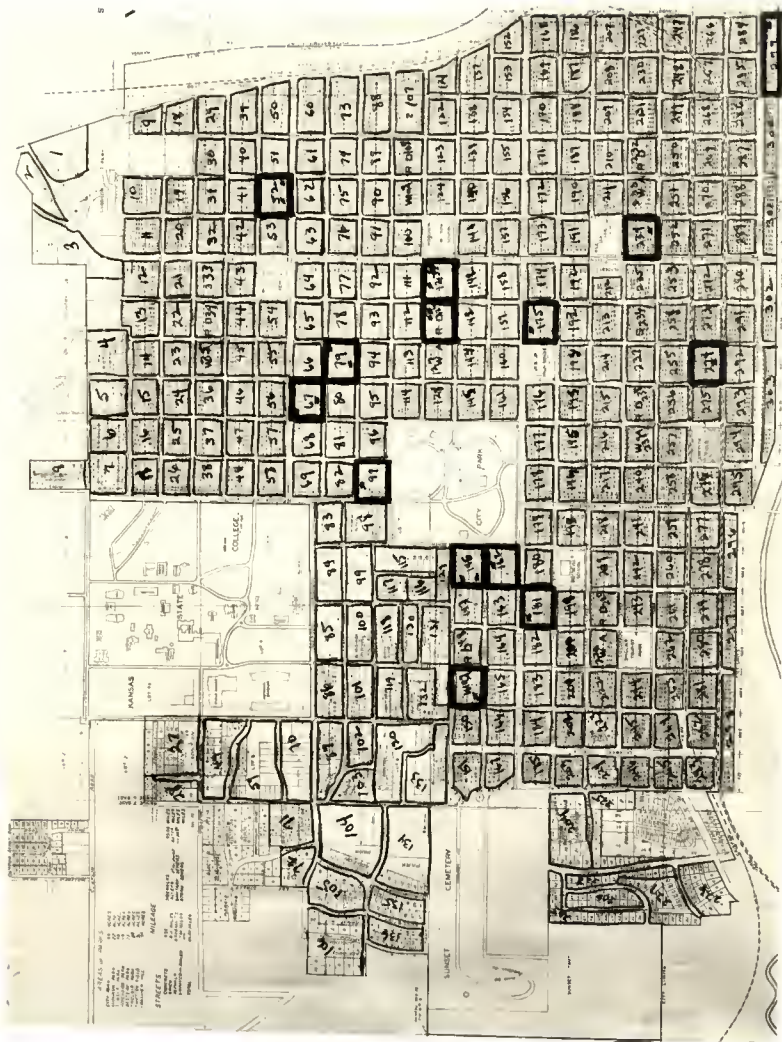


Fig. 7. Map of Manhattan, New York, showing where interviewees were chosen by blocks within the outlined sample blocks.

Interview Schedule

I am a student at Kansas State College. At present we are studying the problems of elderly people. In order to find out the true nature of the problems confronting elderly people, it is essential that the following facts be known; once these problems are determined, then a solution for them can be found. I will greatly appreciate your cooperation in answering some questions for me, and your answers will be kept in the strictest confidence.

- A. Residence _____
- B. Age _____
- C. Sex _____
- D. What was the last grade you completed in school? _____
- E. Housing:
1. Arrangement
 - a. Husband and wife _____
 - b. Do you live alone? _____
 - c. Do you live with relatives? _____
 - d. Do you live in a home for elderly people? _____
 - e. Other living arrangements _____
 2. Values in regard to housing arrangement
 - a. Is this arrangement completely satisfactory to you? Yes _____ No _____
 - b. What are the main advantages of your housing arrangement? _____
 - c. What are the main disadvantages of your housing arrangement? _____
 3. Financial aspects
 - a. Do you live in a private home? _____ Is it (a) owned by you? _____ (b) rented by you? _____ (c) are you buying it? _____
 - b. Is your housing satisfactory to you? _____
 - c. If you could have the type of housing you most wanted, what would it be? _____
- F. Financial Condition:
1. What is (or was) your occupation? _____
 - a. Are you regularly employed? _____
 - b. If you are now employed, is it self-employment _____, by others _____, by both _____
 - c. If you are retired, what was the cause?
 - (1) Physical:
 - (a) General lack of vitality (including anemia and weakness) _____
 - (b) Crippling ailments (including cardiac asthma) _____
 - (c) Nerves (palsy, neuritis, etc.) _____
 - (d) Injuries through accidents _____
 - (e) Poor sight _____
 - (f) Stroke _____

(2) Other than physical:

- (a) Laid off because of age _____
 (b) Lost heavily in business _____
 (c) *Preferred to work only part time _____
 (d) *Preferred not to work at all _____

*Retired voluntarily.

2. Source of present income:

- a. Social Security annuities _____
 b. Savings, insurance and inheritance _____
 c. Public assistance payments, old-age or blind pensions _____
 d. Rent and board received from home _____
 e. Veterans pensions _____
 f. Professional and business income _____
 g. Wife's labor _____
 h. Other relatives _____
 i. Other means _____

3. Income adequacy:

- a. Are your main financial needs being covered adequately? yes _____ no _____ remarks _____
 b. Do you feel financially secure under your present conditions? yes _____ no _____ remarks _____

G. Social Activities:

1. What do you do to spend most of your leisure time?
 (Rate activities in order of time you actually spend doing particular activities)
 a. Read _____
 b. Take part in religious activities _____
 c. Listen to the radio _____
 d. Visit with friends _____
 e. Work on a hobby _____
 f. Go to motion pictures _____
 g. Sew, crochet, knit _____
 h. Other _____
2. Are these enjoyable to you? _____
3. Is there anything else you would rather be doing?
 yes _____ no _____ If so, what is it? _____
 What prevents you from doing it? _____
4. For those retired:
 a. What was your biggest problem in making a change upon retiring?
 (1) Feel you have no serious problem _____
 (2) Health or physical disorders _____
 (3) Economic problems _____

- (4) Problem of keeping occupied _____
 (5) Problem posed by Administration in Washington, D. C. _____
 (6) Other _____
- b. Is there anything you have had to stop doing since retirement because of low income? yes _____
 no _____ don't know _____ other _____
- c. How happy are you now as compared to before retirement?
 (1) Much happier _____
 (2) Somewhat happier _____
 (3) About as happy _____
 (4) Somewhat less happy _____
 (5) Much less happy _____
- d. What are your main problems? (Rank in order of importance to you)
 (1) Physical - health _____
 (2) Adjusting to your present situation _____
 (3) Lack of social contacts _____
 (4) Inadequate housing _____
 (5) Unsatisfactory living arrangement _____
 (6) Lack of financial security _____
 (7) General feeling of insecurity _____
5. For those not retired:
 a. What are your main problems? (Rank in order of importance to you.)
 (1) Physical - health _____
 (2) Adjusting to your present situation _____
 (3) Lack of social contacts _____
 (4) Inadequate housing _____
 (5) Unsatisfactory living arrangement _____
 (6) Lack of financial security _____
 (7) General feeling of insecurity _____

H. Attitudes and Opinions:

1. If you could live your life over again, would you:
 a. Live it as you have _____
 b. Change it a little bit _____
 c. Change it very much _____
 d. Not relive it under any circumstance _____
2. Do you feel that you are acquiring more friends or fewer friends than you used to?
 a. More _____
 b. Same _____
 c. Fewer _____
 d. Don't know _____
3. Do you have any real plans for the future? yes _____
 no _____ remarks _____
4. In general, what are your attitudes toward young people?

5. In general, what do you feel the attitude of young people toward elderly people is? _____
6. Are you a member of a church? yes _____ no _____
 church preference _____
 Does religion play a more important part in your life now than it did when you were young?
 a. Much more _____
 b. Somewhat more _____
 c. The same _____
 d. Somewhat less _____
 e. No response _____
 f. Other _____

I. Health

1. Considering your age, are you free from physical handicaps? yes _____ no _____ partly _____
2. If you have a physical handicap, does it keep you from doing things you would like to be doing? yes _____ no _____ remarks _____
3. Are you able to meet your medical needs adequately? yes _____ no _____ partly _____

J. Social Security Laws

1. Do you think Social Security should be extended to cover more people? _____
2. Do you think the federal government should enlarge its Social Security laws to provide for more services?
 a. Health protection. yes _____ no _____ remarks _____
- b. Greater financial support. yes _____ no _____ remarks _____
- c. Any other thing _____

K. In 1960, one out of every 37 persons in the United States was over 65 years of age. In 1945, one out of 14 was over 65 years of age. It is expected that in 1980, one out of every 7 will be 65 years of age or over.

Are you aware of the increasing numbers of elderly people?
 yes _____ no _____ partly _____

1. If you are, then whom do you think the responsibility should be on? _____
2. If you are, then what do you think should be done to provide for them? _____
3. Do you think the problems of elderly people are different today than they were when you were young? _____

Subjective Evaluation:

A STUDY OF THE VALUE-STRUCTURE APPROACH
AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE CONDITION
OF THE AGED IN THE UNITED STATES

by

FLORENCE NADINE GREEN

B. S., Kansas State College
of Agriculture and Applied Science, 1950

AN ABSTRACT OF A THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Economics and Sociology

KANSAS STATE COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1951

The purpose of this study was to apply a new conceptual scheme or theoretical framework, the value-structure approach, to the analysis of a specific social problem, that of the aged in the culture of the United States. This problem was recognized as being perennial. The method was new and valuable as a tool toward the greater understanding of this or any other social problem.

In order to show the value of using this new approach a brief discussion of four traditional approaches used in studying social problems was given. The advantages and disadvantages of the "social problems" approach, the "social-disorganization" approach, the "cultural-lag" approach, and the "community" approach were discussed.

The reasons for believing that those approaches were inadequate were as follows: (1) the social problems approach isolated problems and did not properly show their relationship to social processes, and it failed to develop a systematic conceptual system; (2) the social-disorganization approach, although its objectives were to explore basic social problems from the standpoint of the social processes which bring them about, had come to be the same as the social problems approach; (3) the cultural-lag approach failed to take into consideration the functional relationship of cultural elements, assumed that people act rationally, and emphasized "change" rather than "resistance to change"; and (4) the community approach was limited to observations within the confines of a community, and it failed to develop

a conceptual scheme wherein all social problems could be viewed.

The value-structure approach was believed to be the approach that would overcome some of the major disadvantages found in the four traditional approaches, since the value-structure approach provides a common orientation for the treatment of diverse social problems as sociological phenomena. This common orientation consisted of the common element of values that are found in all social problems. This common framework in which to consider social problems does not approach social problems atomistically, but rather seeks to determine the underlying process, the conflict of values, from which all social problems arise.

The value-structure approach would consider a social situation a problem when in a given social situation a condition exists in which there is real or imagined deviation from some social norm cherished by a considerable number of people. The implications of this definition of the value-structure approach were: (1) social problems would be considered relative to the cultural group in which they were found; (2) the recognition of the concept of social "norms" and deviations from those "norms"; (3) there is no denial of the many causes of problem conditions; rather there is emphasis on the idea that societal conditions become problem conditions coincident with emergence of value clashes concerning them.

In the application of the value-structure approach values must be identified as phenomena. Values should be conceived as man-made elements, and objectively evaluated. Any value can be tested factually if it claims to have a cause and effect relation-

ship.

The procedure followed in the application of the value-structure approach to the condition of the aged in the United States was to develop the condition of the aged in terms of the characteristics of the value-structure approach.

First of all, the condition of the aged was classified as an ameliorative problem because of the following characteristics: first, there was a general consensus among many groups of people that the aged constituted a problem; secondly, the condition of the aged was regarded as undesirable by many groups of people; and, thirdly, the conflicting values which groups have concerning the condition of the aged will make remedial action difficult.

Secondly, the concept of the natural history of social problems was applied to the problem of the aged in the United States. The awareness stage of the problem of the aged was not considered to be fully developed until just a few decades ago. The main reason that the problem of the aged had developed only recently was because of the seeming relationship between the aged and agrarianism and industrialism. The policy-determination stage was considered in its developmental steps from the time the first commission was established to study the aged in 1908, to the passage of the Social Security Act in 1935. The reform stage was marked by administrators putting the Social Security Act into effect. It was pointed out that values are not static, therefore, any solution to a problem advocated by one group might not be considered an effective or the "right" policy by another group. It would seem, then, that the natural history developmental stages

of a situation regarded by a considerable number of people as being undesirable could develop stage by stage even to the reform stage, only to have the process repeated when another group had decided the policy advocated before had not been the "right" one. Since the problem of the aged was an ameliorative problem, the reform stage of the natural history can only be considered in terms of certain specific policies that have been adopted. There had been no conclusive policy adopted because of the conflicting values of groups in relation to the problem of the aged.

Thirdly, the objective aspects of the problem of the aged were shown. It was pointed out that from a sociological point of view age is significant in that it determines to a large extent the role an individual will play in a given social group during any specific time within a culture. It was significant to find, then, that the composition of the population of the United States was changing; that the proportion of those sixty-five years of age and over was growing larger. The main reasons for this change in the age composition of the United States were: first, there was found to be a birth rate that was increasing at a decreasing rate; secondly, there was found to be a death rate that was gradually declining, and, thirdly, the number of immigrants into the United States had been cut down sharply after 1912. It was shown also that this particular age group was dependent on others for much of its security, and that oftentimes persons in that particular age group were not performing the functions they once had performed.

Fourthly, it was pointed out that even though scientists

could show a problem to be in existence, unless large numbers of people thought that there was a problem, there would be no problem. A group of persons sixty-five years of age and over in Manhattan, Kansas, was chosen to demonstrate the conflict of values in relation to the problem of the aged. This group was chosen by random sampling methods in order that the values presented would be unbiased. This was felt to be particularly important since values vary between groups according to socio-economic levels, amount of education, standards of living, type of occupation, etc.

The values that have caused the condition of the aged to be considered a problem (such as the value placed on youth, on individualism, on high standards of living and smaller families, on efficiency, on sanitary and medical developments, and on urbanization) were discussed. These values were demonstrated by answers given by interviewees. For example, it was pointed out that the emphasis on youth has had the effect of the old person not having a function in society. Case number 20, a woman, said she wished for death because there was nothing for her to do. Another example which demonstrates the emphasis on a high standard of living and smaller families was case number 2, a widow, living with her daughter and son-in-law. She stated that she felt that she was a burden on them and felt insecure.

Possible solutions to the problem of the aged were mentioned, including: first, the suggestion of increasing the number of old people's homes; secondly, the advisability of increasing Social Security payments and coverage; thirdly, the possibility of providing national health insurance; and, fourthly, the suggestion

of providing jobs for old people. The values that have prevented the adoption of those solutions such as the values on individualism, on a high standard of living, on efficiency, and on smaller families, were discussed. These values were demonstrated by answers given by interviewees. The emphasis on individualism was demonstrated by case number 15, an elderly lady, living in a single room without running water or sink, who said that she "thanked God that she was not dependent on the government" but was able to "take care of herself." Case number 3, an elderly woman, said she felt it was the responsibility of the individual "to see to it that he or she was taken care of." Case number 18, an elderly man of seventy-four years, demonstrated the value on efficiency. He had broken his hip and the only thing he wanted to do was "to get back to work," because he had never taken the time to learn a hobby or to be interested in reading.

The conclusions of this study were discussed in relation to the value-structure approach and then to the problem of the aged.

The value-structure approach provided a common theoretical framework which enabled the sociologist to view cultural "norms" as objective data. It was socially relevant in that it dealt with society as it actually is. It also possessed the important quality of verifiability, i. e., any sociologist using it could view any particular condition and come to the same conclusions regarding the condition as other sociologists.

The value-structure approach demonstrated that the aged constituted a problem and that the solution to the problem would be difficult to find because of the conflicting values concerning it.