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YOUTH IN LATIN AMERICA AS A FIELD FOR
SOCIAL RESEARCH

presented by

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Advocacy of a sustained effort to learn the truth about Latin America - an indispensable prerequisite for any attempt to translate policy into action - has a touch of the academic about it which is not always welcomed. Accordingly, although undeniable progress has been made in recent years in the slow and sometimes arduous task of acquiring such knowledge, formidable obstacles have also been encountered. Of these, I would single out two only. The first derives from the sense of "operative" urgency felt by those who are zealous for immediate action in a rapidly changing world. The need to make decisions from day to day, before they can be endorsed by properly substantiated investigation of the circumstances, is excuse and justification enough in itself. But it is one thing to make a virtue of necessity, and quite another to let this understandable deference to practical considerations become dogmatic worship of the fetich of efficacy, which is thus inadvertently transformed into its own most dreaded bugbear - a Platonic "idea". Conversely, the second obstacle is constituted by the sin of excess, in the shape of shortsighted imitation of the subjects, methods and techniques of research current in other parts of the world. In the realm of social science, under the pressure of anxiety to keep up to date, studies are undertaken on the basis of the most elaborate techniques in vogue, regardless not only of the fact that many of these are inseparable from the social structures to which they are applicable and for which they were devised, but also of the difficulty, if not the sheer impossibility, of using them properly, for want of the indispensable human and financial resources. The trouble is that such fruitless efforts are a waste of energies which could be turned to good account for more modest research, at a level much more appropriate to the national societies of Latin America. The fear of lagging behind in the pursuit of "field studies" - with all the heavy and costly battery of resources they demand -, combined with undue depreciation of "armchair" research, has deprived us of certain essential basic monographs which would not be very difficult to procure. For example, the pre-eminence of agriculture in the Latin American economy warrants the desire to possess the largest possible number of well-prepared surveys of the various local and technical types and characteristics of

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farming, including the patterns of the agricultural enterprise as an effective social unit. But it is generally overlooked that, despite certain lacunae, a number of useful studies already exist, and are only waiting for someone to take the necessary pains to rescue them from their state of disgregation and present them in a systematized and manageable form. This would be a fairly easy and by no means costly piece of research, but, because it is theoretical, no one comes forward to suggest or finance it.

The problem just described becomes patent, not to say acute, when the subject under consideration is that of the younger age groups in Latin America. In this connexion, the latest scientific fashion offers a few small models, in which so many well-constructed hypotheses are assembled that nobody can see the wood for the trees. But it is essential to know the whole extent of the terrain before beginning to break new ground. Diffidence or inertia perhaps explain the preference for following someone else's lead. Such reliance on others, however, is decidedly risky. Although the outsider's points of view are often of decisive importance in giving the inside observer a detached impression of aspects of the situation that have eluded him simply because he is so used to them so much for granted, the picture built up by the witness pure and simple, however accurate, carries undertones of his own existential attitudes, and may even be pieced out with fragments of possibly very different objective conditions. Accordingly, without under-estimating the value of foreign research, we must complement it and enrich it with our own, since the latter, whatever its defects, enjoys the unique advantage of drawing its sustenance from the deep-rooted identification with the relevant problems natural to those who are actually caught up in them.

On more than one occasion I have had to state my views on certain questions just when I was first beginning to grasp their significance. Now once again I find myself obliged to speak on a topic with which almost at this very moment I am coming to grips. Faithful to my destiny, and to the inquiring spirit of a generation that has always striven to find out what was going on -- without altogether succeeding --, I must

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confess here and now that with regard to the generations younger than my own, all that is going on as far as I am concerned is that I am floundering in a sea of conjecture. The few studies on certain aspects of youth problems in Latin America that have passed through my hands are unsatisfactory, to say the least. Let us at any rate bask in enlightened ignorance, knowing that we know nothing, with any degree of accuracy, of what is going on not only among the younger generation, but even among those intermediate generations that are nearer to us.

Accordingly, the following pages offer no substantive comment on the youth of Latin America, much less any pretence of originality. The circumstances in which they are being written permit of no more than has been sought on other occasions in different fields: a minimum of clarity in the systematization of basic questions relating to a subject on which we ought to know rather more than we really do at present. Consequently, all that has been attempted is to outline certain possible pieces of research. The opportunity of carrying them out is tendered to the younger generations, for whom the vital path of discovery may diverge at many points from the outworn tracks their elders wished to explore. The suggestions made are put forward at a favourable juncture, when the vigorous impetus given by UNICEF, in its unflagging efforts to expand the scope of its much-appreciated services, opens up the possibility of conducting such research.

The first part of the document discusses the importance of maintaining accurate records of all transactions. It emphasizes that every entry, no matter how small, should be recorded to ensure the integrity of the financial statements. This includes not only sales and purchases but also expenses and income.

The second part of the document provides a detailed breakdown of the accounting cycle. It outlines the ten steps involved in the process, from identifying the accounting entity to preparing financial statements. Each step is explained in detail, with examples provided to illustrate the concepts.

The third part of the document discusses the various types of accounts used in accounting. It categorizes accounts into assets, liabilities, equity, revenue, and expense accounts. It also explains the normal balances for each type of account and how they are used to calculate the net income or loss for a period.

The fourth part of the document discusses the importance of adjusting entries. It explains how these entries are used to ensure that the financial statements reflect the true financial position of the company at the end of the period. Examples of adjusting entries are provided to illustrate the process.

The fifth part of the document discusses the preparation of financial statements. It outlines the steps involved in preparing the balance sheet, income statement, and statement of owner's equity. It also discusses the importance of providing a clear and concise explanation of the financial results.

The sixth part of the document discusses the importance of internal controls. It explains how these controls are used to prevent and detect errors and fraud. Examples of internal controls are provided to illustrate the concepts.

The seventh part of the document discusses the importance of ethics in accounting. It explains how accountants should maintain objectivity and integrity in their work. It also discusses the consequences of unethical behavior.

The eighth part of the document discusses the importance of communication in accounting. It explains how accountants should effectively communicate financial information to management and other stakeholders.

The ninth part of the document discusses the importance of technology in accounting. It explains how software and other tools can be used to improve the efficiency and accuracy of accounting processes.

The tenth part of the document discusses the importance of continuous learning in accounting. It explains how accountants should stay up-to-date on the latest developments in the field.

I

Sooner or later, even without the incentive afforded by UNICEF's generous effort, the pressure of existing interest would have driven us to tackle the subject of young people in Latin America, and therefore of youth in general. So there is no need of a prophet to bring glad tidings of the attention that will be devoted to this topic in the years to come.

What is the reason for the current interest in youth? It may be suspected to stem from two roots. One of these is our own first-hand observation of contemporary youth, whose behaviour patterns in the "present", with their varying degrees of eccentricity, are arousing general concern. This concern may be nothing more than justifiable intellectual curiosity as to the significance of such behaviour patterns, or, again, it may hinge upon the goodwill of the adult who, for practical or educational motives or for reasons of social policy, wishes to assist, if not to shape, the growth process of the younger generations. But alongside this same interest in interpreting the behaviour of youth here and now, there is a no less striking eagerness to forecast the "future" which the present enfolds and conceals, even though the investigator may not live to see it. In any event, everyone accepts at its face value the trite prediction that the aspect assumed by the society and the history of tomorrow will be largely contingent upon young people's reactions today vis-à-vis the favourable or unfavourable living condition that they have found among us.

In the flood of literature on contemporary youth that has deluged us during the last few years, each and all of the questions that have always arisen in connexion with this phase of life are still at issue. Undeniably, however, the prevailing trend of recent publications is toward the sociological approach, which is definitely the standpoint of most interest for us here.

The careful scrutiny to which youth has been subjected of late would clearly seem to be prompted by a conspicuous feature of our time, namely, the outbreaks of exhibitionist behaviour on the part of young people that have occurred simultaneously in a number of countries and cultures. It was natural that the spotlight of publicity should have been turned mainly on these picturesque phenomena, that a good many aspirants to authorship of a sociological best-seller should have focused their attention on the most provocative aspect of contemporary youth. The more serious flaw represented by juvenile delinquency, especially where such an outcrop was hardly to be expected, likewise warrants the sustained interest displayed by specialists and by more or less spontaneously perturbed public opinion. Probably, however, undue importance has been attached to these eccentric or unhealthy phenomena, and often from not altogether reputable motives.

In a word, many of the studies on youth published in recent years have had their origin in the irregular behaviour of the English "teddy boys" or of their opposite numbers in other countries (zazous, halbstarcken, stilyagi, gamberros, vitteloni, etc.), invariably known by names which semantically are nearly as wild as the behaviour they denote. In the upshot, however, even though the starting-point was constituted by these picturesque, dubious or actually delinquent manifestations, their analysis was bound to lead to recognition of their relative uniformity in all parts of the world and, consequently, to the statement of the problem at a deeper and more basic level. Hence the responsible literature produced today is concerned not so much with problem youth as with the youth problem. This play on words springs from the real facts rather than from an intellectual whim of the writer. Reference to the youth problem lays stress, incidentally with considerable injustice, on the difficulties attendant upon a particular time of life as compared with possible analogies in other age groups. This means that youth is regarded as inherently susceptible to greater problems or as constituting a problem in its turn within a specific social structure, while the problem-laden adult does not envisage himself as a social problem. Yet both these are obvious characteristics of old age. It is, or ought to be, common knowledge that nowadays, in modern societies, old age represents

/a problem

a problem area perhaps much more serious than that constituted by youth.^{1/} In any event, whether the word "problem" troubles us or not, it simply raises once again the time-honoured question of the significance of youth in our societies and its awareness of its role.

Accordingly, the theoretical approach to the subject, valid for any given circumstance, envisages youth as a social group with its own special pattern. It is not surprising, therefore, that a large proportion of the pertinent contemporary literature is taken up by this topic, viewed, of course, from the standpoint of modern - which is tantamount to saying industrial - societies. When youth is examined from this angle, a number of difficulties arise, over which a preliminary glance must be cast. The first is that of ascertaining the composition of this demographic agglomerate called youth. Apparently - and this is the only point on which no major difference of opinion exists - its upper and lower limits are at present being extended everywhere, and are usually taken to be 14 and 25 years of age. It is no easy matter, on the other hand, to reach agreement on the type of unit that youth represents. Is it a mere statistical aggregate? A social group? A permanent dimension of the structure of life? In any case, in the broader field of history it figures as a united whole, and in that context, whether the term "generation" is used or not, the peculiar importance of youth is still more sharply underlined.

The most important fact emerging from the copious literature existing on the subject is, as stated before, the relatively uniform situation of young people in industrial societies. Accordingly, the decisive moment in the structure of these societies is when young people are poised between two

^{1/} Perhaps even more than in science, corroboratory evidence of this curious bias is to be found in the modern novel. Suffice it to recall the innumerable case studies of youth comprised between Dostoevski's A Raw Youth and the Vent'anni of Corrado Alvaro. Few writers, on the other hand, have analysed old age in such depth, and still fewer as ruthlessly as Italo Svevo.

/very different

very different social horizons: the closed and protected family unit and the open prospect - at once threatening and enigmatic - of society as a whole. In this respect, the essential problem facing the industrial societies today is to determine how and with what result one type of social relationship gives way to another. It is not strange, therefore, that the problem should seem to be reduced to the alternative of adaptation or insubordination; nor that the basic theoretical positions presented should centre on the fundamental opposition involved between the two alternatives. A first hypothesis advances a hitherto unwonted interpretation: acceleration of the above-mentioned transition and its result, i.e., the existence of a young generation of young people adapted to the structure of industrial societies by virtue of their realistic and compliant attitude, which enables them to accept the requirements of that type of social structure. According to this interpretation, a levelling of generations takes place which is tantamount to the general social levelling of classes or sexes. By contrast, a second interpretation accentuates the gap separating the two social stages of youth and adulthood, and envisages a "youthful culture" as the bridge between the two. The constitution of contemporary groups with specific similarities in behaviour would mean - on the basis of this hypothesis - that the "socialization process" was taking place to its fullest extent through these groups. It therefore stresses the possibilities of non-adaptability entailed in the deficient development of "personality" in an environment predominated by the younger age groups and their own particular culture. A third hypothesis, while not denying young people's singular adaptation to industrial societies, does not attempt to conceal the painful frustration involved in that broad "adaptation" process. Its advocates agree that the compliant absorption of young people in the social structure by no means signifies the elimination of its essential contradictions, which are experienced with a more or less poignant sense of frustration. Apart from others of a more general nature, the position carrying most weight in the interpretation of the tensions affecting the younger age groups is that arising between the need to adapt themselves to a society exerting secondary and technological control, and the aspirations and incentives to make it compatible with the independence of personality.

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In a theoretical discussion of the question, there would be well-founded doubts regarding the existence of that supposed youthful culture and the assumption of socialization by age groups. The existence, even on the plane of purely empirical analysis, of the youthful culture or sub-culture which was the predominant concept in the analysis of industrial societies at one stage of social anthropology - extending to its terminology - is problematical. And it is equally doubtful that this independent culture may be found even where it still constitutes the pedagogic ideal of the older generations.

Another highly problematical point is that young people should always be classified as a social "group" as the result of an exaggeratedly systematic approach adopted to certain sociological categories. The existence of such widely differing points of view could make for an extremely lively discussion of the subject, but it would obscure the fundamental premises on which all study of youth should be based and which - since they stem from the actual structure of life itself - must come before the scientific, sociological, psychological or pedagogical manifestations of those views.

However, the need to face the similarity of present-day youth in the industrialized countries and to explain the phenomena of its behaviour - extravagant or delictual - as manifest in those and in the less economically developed countries, warrants the effort to formulate as general a hypothesis as possible, that would be capable of interpreting seemingly very different phenomena at the root. This hypothesis maintains that the independence of the younger age groups is merely the result of divergencies between the various social and cultural sectors at a given time, particularly between the family and other sectors. The nature of the presumed independence of the younger age groups will, in turn, depend on the nature of those divergencies. Thus the hypothesis ranges without difficulty from the industrialized to the less developed countries in the study of this theme. Indeed, it is implicit in the following outline of the significance of the younger age groups and of the varying weight they carry not only in the "socialization process" but also in political and social activities in general: (1) The younger age groups as an instrument of socialization. This concept, in general, assumes society's acceptance of those groups as control /mechanisms, and

mechanisms, and a minimum of harmony between the various social sectors;
(2) The younger age groups as centres of rebellion and, therefore, as supporters of political movements or more or less violent activities. This presupposes the widest divergency between social sectors and a critical sharpening of the classical conflict between generations. This case is of particular interest because it usually affects the developing countries, especially those in the initial stages of growth; (3) The younger age groups as supporters of passing fads. Such a situation is, of course, based on the existence of frustrations in the cultural environment and even of tensions deriving from specific market conditions. This seems to be the predominating situation, in varying shades - which include delictual manifestations -, in the more industrialized countries. To sum up, the hypothesis formulated above is founded on recognition of the fact that the phenomenon of youth cannot be properly understood without taking into account the whole social structure, and on the suspicion that the variations in youthful behaviour, according to their nature and extent, provide excellent indicators of a greater or lesser degree of social integration.^{2/}

The preceding remarks specifically represent the link in the chain of thought that connects up the so-called modern societies with the developing countries, in so far as the situation of their young people is concerned. While the innumerable studies on youth in modern societies, despite the manifest similarity of their broader concepts, differ on controversial points of detail, the switch-over to the developing parts of the world flings open the gates to the domain of foggy generalizations, where pre-eminence is given to those portmanteau words whose constant use benumbs, to some extent, our consciousness of their real meaning. To the list of terms with no clearly-defined content - development, under-development, modernity, secularization, urbanization, transition, and the rest - "youth" has now been added. Hence

^{2/} See J.E. Ellemers, "Allgemeine Ursachen der Ausdrucksformen moderner Jugend", in L.v. Friedeburg (ed.) Jugend in der modernen Gesellschaft (Köln-Berlin: Kiepenheuer, 1965).

it is not uncommon to find the topic of youth in under-developed societies touched upon here and there. In such writings, as might be expected, the general tendency is to assign these age groups, without further qualification, a decisive role in development activities. In relation to that vague catchword, "mobilization" for development, youth figures as one of the mainsprings of the movement. It is supposed to be interested in the accessibility of increased wealth, the extension of upward social mobility, the opening-up of broader educational horizons, and so forth - in a word, to be actuated by the whole series of dynamic motivations (let the tautology pass) underlying both the initiation and the maintenance of development. Special attention is devoted to the participation of youth in the subversive, nationalistic or populist movements typical of certain countries passing through phases of economic and political transition, and particular emphasis is laid on the factor constituted by the "conflict of the generations", which at the same time is an expression of the new impulses in question. As in addition these impulses, more often than not, are generated by external influences, they bear out the commonest hypotheses of the theory of "transculturation", a process to which youth seems relatively sensitive or receptive. All these general propositions, however well-meaning, and whatever their content of truth, are too vague to withstand specific analysis. For example, young people's participation in development efforts is just as likely to take the form of mere emotional outbursts - which, once blown over, lead to nothing - as to consist in genuine and vital commitment, involving responsible apprenticeship to the kinds of objective activities on which any given country's real growth will depend. A point has thus been reached at which it is no longer possible to generalize about under-developed or developing countries, visualizing them as all tarred with the same brush, and placing under-development in Buenos Aires or Santiago on the same historical level as under-development among the Bantu tribes. This blanket type of concern for the developing regions has unquestionably served a useful purpose in the past, but serious consideration shows that the time has come to discard it. Similarly, a good many of the classifications inherited from earlier days must be dismissed in favour of new concepts cut to the measure of new facts.

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All this implies that the lack of precision denounced here has its roots in the wide range of variants of under-development, which in their turn depend upon differing cultural and historical levels. Consequently, apart from the "assumption" that in principle youth has a more favourable attitude to change the older generations - which, however, needs testing in respect of degree and specific kind - it can only be postulated, as a very broad hypothesis, that the conflict of generations in the developing countries will vary according to its origin, that is, according to whether it stems from cultural tensions or from market rigidities and frictions. In the same context, and more specifically, it may be predicted that frustrations caused by market situations will come increasingly to the fore as the developing countries enter upon the more advanced phases of growth. So significant a case as that of Japan, an unquestionably "modern" economy, suffices to show how powerfully the tensions of youth may still be affected by conflicts deriving from cultural continuity. In short, the different forms of juvenile maladjustment, as previously suggested, may be taken as indicators of the different degrees of social cohesion, a requisite of supreme importance for all those who are concerned on account of economic under-development.

The situation of young people in Latin America offers striking confirmation of all that has just been said. Although for certain purposes a set of general questions might be outlined that would be valid for Latin America as a whole, it is quite impossible to speak of Latin American youth in the aggregate, as the empirical research being or about to be undertaken would immediately show. Obviously, the situation of young people in Argentina can bear no resemblance whatever to that of youth in Haiti, and the same applies, mutatis mutandis, to other comparisons, within a relatively wide range of diversification. Consequently, concern for youth in Latin America must be confined to particular nations, or at most to those which are relatively homogeneous according to the existing typologies, fluid and mutable as they are. Indubitably, certain questions studied and points discussed in relation to industrial societies are applicable without modification to some of the Latin American countries; but others, in contrast, whose industrialization process is still far from completion,

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present an entirely different picture where their young people are concerned. The study of youth in Latin America affords visible and moving testimony of something equally relevant to other problems: the absolute necessity of leaving behind truisms and embarking wholeheartedly upon the quest for truth - a truth whose special contexture implies that it cannot be fitted in to classifications inherited from the past, or taken over just as they stand from other and more advanced - or, worse still, yet more backward - environments.

II

In the light of the more general framework of theoretical questions relating to young people, as outlined above, it should also be remembered that this is a phase which lends itself particularly to modern empirical research. It is by no means strange that the research techniques worked out in recent years should have wide possibilities for application in line with the special interests of the scholar. They range from the most refined quantitative techniques to psychological analyses aimed at depth and singularity. Hence, a mere glance at current publications on the subject is enough to realize that all these possibilities of research are already being seriously implemented in countries with adequate institutional instruments at their disposal. It is only to be expected, therefore, that these quests for knowledge should be dictated by interests that are not always easy to reconcile. Logically, the young generation represents the field of greatest concern for the teacher. Psychologists, for their part, have methodically tried - even before and after the boom in psycho-analysis - to understand the psychic symptoms peculiar to the age. That is why the widely known works of Spranger^{3/} and Erikson^{4/} have continued to be classics on the subject. As stated before, the latest contribution to this widely diversified empirical research comes from the sociologists. They are interested, above all, in gaining an insight into the problems affecting the unit as represented by youth vis-à-vis time and society, from the standpoint of the social

^{3/} E. Spranger, Psychologie der Jugendalters (Leipzig, 1924).

^{4/} E.H. Erikson, Childhood and society (New York, 1950).

conditions, both general and specific, surrounding their growth. It follows that the difficulties obstructing mutual understanding between both the above-mentioned disciplines and their representatives cannot but arise once again and assume serious proportions in the study of young people. The common polemical subject is the development of personality under the conditions prevailing at the present time. Thus, the principal objective of this empirical research is to analyse in detail how personality is developed or, in technical terms, to discover how the "socialization process" is carried out in each particular case. How is socialization actually proceeding in present-day societies in relation to the greater or lesser knowledge that existed of pre-industrial societies which were less complex in structure? The loss of socializing power that was formerly in the hands of the family and the community of origin and destination in the face of the demands of society as a whole, makes it necessary to find out what other mechanisms are efficaciously replacing them today or may do so in the future. This explains the stress laid on the supposedly independent socialization process in specific age groups and the doubt as to whether they can contribute sufficiently to fulfilling the ideal image of personality inherited from the past. It is also understandable that there should be a growing concern for studying all the effects of the socializing instruments available to present-day society, in conjunction and inevitably in harmony with the traditional mechanisms - large-scale communication media, public and private organization of young people's activities, etc. - that are assumed to be better known. In these circumstances, the problem that immediately emerges is the harmony or dissonance that might exist in this whole set of socializing instruments, since if any dissonance could be proved to exist between them - which is not always the case - it would be easy to understand the distortions in the socialization of the youth of today and the predominance of their negative effects on the development of personality. The most important of all these subjects which merits careful consideration is the young generation's need, during this period of transition, to have an environment - or campus - that is essentially their own, within which they can give free rein to the whole potential of their growth. It is

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understood that this environment or "educational campus" for young people could exist only in so far as it is shielded in some degree from all contact with the problems and demands of the general milieu of adult society. A vital, isolated and closed-in space of this nature, designed to protect the spontaneous development of young people in preparation for adulthood, did exist for a sector of the young generation - with all its emotional and intellectual implications - at one time in the history of the western world; but many people are doubtful that it could subsist in the existing industrialized societies. The whole set of problems concerning the university today is merely a specific reflection of this major question in which the teacher's outlook naturally conflicts with the sociologist's viewpoint. In the face of the teacher's by no means contemptible argument in defence of an "educational campus" for the young people, the sociological diagnosis not only maintains its impracticability at the present time, but also implies distrust of its value, even for the development of personality, given the functional and technological requirements of existing society.

Empirical research in the Latin American countries cannot but include the subjects alluded to above. Thus, it is recognized that one of the most important aims is to discover how the de facto socialization of young people takes place in each country, what instruments are available and what is the impact of structural duality on the lack of continuity of the various "educational campuses" and on the faster or slower adaptation of young people to the demands of over-all society.

In view of the fact that the Latin American countries are at varying stages of economic development, it must be admitted that the greatest concern of the moment is for sociological research, without prejudice to any other kind of research. Here, too, as in other related questions, it is advisable to forestall the effects of any possible misunderstanding. Sociological research is pursued because of a desire for knowledge, in this case concerning the real structural and functional aspects of the situation as it affects young Latin Americans,

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and there is no reason why it should be conducted along the same lines as that dictated by the practical concerns of social policy, spurred on from a given adult viewpoint to the care, protection and "moulding" of young people. Whatever emphasis is placed on this point is far from superfluous. Although theoretical research evidently lacks any "operational" significance, it represents the assumption that ensures maximum efficiency in the practical action that follows. It has an "infrastructural" value whose steady long-term yield warrants the greater intellectual and financial investment.

Within the context of sociological concerns - any misunderstanding between the quest for knowledge and the desire for immediate action having already been explained - the scope of the research on young people is clearly divided into two fields in which the distinct concern for knowledge has at its disposal the no less clearly separated methodological complex of instruments, at least at the theoretical level. It is sought to ascertain, on the one hand, the "objective" conditions under which young people live and, on the other, their actual "subjective" reactions, or, as it is called today, the image of youth. Hence the wide scope of this province of research. Today it is of equal concern to both the advanced and the very backward societies. Some countries possess a virtually complete coverage - although not always of the same scientific value - of the different questions included in the lebensraum for the young which an attempt is made to review below. It must be recognized, however, that the Latin American countries only in part - and in certain sectors - possess the bases for an empirical scientific analysis at the international level.

The different fields of research delineated by the division of scientific work are so universally recognized as to have become a sine qua non. The following are the four major fields: (1) the family; (2) education, in its broad sense; (3) the field of work in general; and (4) leisure hours, or the use made of free time. To these four, it has become necessary in the last few years to add one or two others that are a direct offshoot of the structure of industrial society, as, for example, juvenile consumption, which is of exceptional socio-economic importance.

In so far the family is concerned, it is necessary to know about its evolution and structure, the respective roles of the father and mother, its attitude to society as a whole, i.e. open or closed, the process of transition whereby the child becomes independent and the repercussions of a broken or scattered family. Even more important is the part played by the family within the field of education in the different social sectors, because of its lasting influence on the vital motive forces of development.

The field in which research has made the greatest strides in Latin America is that of education, and data have been accumulating rapidly in the last few years. But even though it is a particularly suitable area for interdisciplinary co-operation no broad theoretical concept, analogous, for instance, to the theory stated earlier in this paper on the socialization process and its modes of expression, has yet been developed in it. Nor have studies been made of the school systems that flourish in the type of society towards which the region's course of development is carrying it. In short, a balance-sheet drawn up at this moment might present a fairly complete picture of the "objective conditions" of the educational field, but would be decidedly unsatisfactory in its analysis of the vast gamut of "subjective" aspects, ranging from the aptitudes and images of teachers and pupils - levels of aspiration, awareness of tensions and conflicts, etc. - to the differences in performance displayed by the various educational levels and sectors.

There is not a shadow of doubt that the working conditions and opportunities of the younger generation are a singularly important subject of study for purposes of development. This fact has been clearly underlined by the ILO's activities in recent years and by the increasing absorption of economists with the occupational structure. The planning of human resources is perhaps the most novel and promising note that has been struck lately, but a well-organized scheme of co-operation between teachers and sociologists, economists and psychologists is still plainly lacking. However important it may be to know about present and future demand trends, it should not be forgotten that it is no less important to be clearly aware of the opportunities and skills that are actually available. Should the two sides fail to balance on another, the industrialized countries would undoubtedly be faced by a serious problem,

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but the menace is far greater for the countries that are still developing their industry. It is now an accepted fact that the cornerstone of the employment structure and its mode of operation is, for young people, the choice of their future trade or profession and the necessary training for it. This is also a focal point of interest for the specialists referred to before, and offers the biggest challenge to the creative powers of the teacher. Consciousness of under-development need to shackle the imagination in this field, which should visualize the future without regard for the pressure exerted on it by the traditional sequence of historical development pursued elsewhere. The choice of occupation and the underlying motives for that choice constitute a subject that calls for prompt exploration in every aspect of the choice itself made and its translation into practical terms. What do we really know about the thoughts and aspirations of young people in the working world of today or about their outlook on life? Have we any idea of their experiences in fields or workshops, lecture rooms or offices?

Studies on the use made by young people of their leisure hours in Latin America today should be carried out in the context of a particular country and, more especially, its major towns. The experience of other countries does not easily lend itself as a model for an alien culture, since it is necessarily coloured by local conditions, its results may be contradictory and its tone not unfrequently smacks of superficiality or moral prejudice.^{5/} But, whatever the difficulties, an attempt must be made to come to grips with the subject in one way or another, since the cinema, television, the radio, illustrated periodicals and comic strips are now, whether we like it or not, a decisive factor in the motive forces underlying the process of socialization. These are tools with unlimited possibilities, and the fact that the wealthier nations have failed to use them properly does not exempt Latin America from devoting its energy and imagination to yield the greatest possible benefits. It should be added here that

5/ It is seldom that such a critical exposé is made as that by Hilde T. Himmelweit, Television and the child (London, 1958).

unless social policy measures of the kind envisaged are founded on strictly empirical studies, they are liable to sink to the level of the lowest of cultural cant.

Research should also be undertaken on the particular forms assumed by juvenile sociability, which are thought to have changed a great deal in the last few decades. This programme - from which other kinds of studies such as those dealing with juvenile maladjustments and delinquency have been omitted - would be incomplete without a reference to the serious problems that beset young people leading a "normal" life and spring from their position vis-à-vis the great social forces of the times - the State, religion, science and art - and the beliefs and emotions of the older generations.

The best thing of course, would be to have a strictly accurate description of the way in which the young people in the different sectors - industrial, agricultural and professional - view themselves and their future. From the standpoint of development it is particularly important for the countries that are bent on moving ahead to be adequately informed about the attitudes of the future labour force and intermediate cadres. At any given moment, however, it is undoubtedly the students who represent the bulk of the reserves from which the leaders of tomorrow will be drawn. In other words, the student body is the potential nucleus of the country's élite, this term being used in the strictly neutral sense which it bears in present-day sociological analysis. Consequently, the patterns of behaviour displayed by students are of interest not merely in their more ebullient manifestations which are the aspects that primarily concern certain writers who, in studying developing countries, tend to pay a disproportionate amount of attention to youthful political movements, particularly when they are in the nature of a protest or are frankly revolutionary in tone. With or without such manifestations of discontent and rebellion, the point of departure must be the basic fact that the future of a country is irrevocably determined by the vision which its young people have of their own life and possibilities, a vision which inevitably embodies the image
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of a society. In the context of the interaction of the different generations at any given moment in history, young people, as an essential part of their existence and not for any special reason, have to cope with the conditions in which their life begins; and these conditions of course include what adults think and expect of them. The mere fact of birth always entails entry into a world that is already old, even if it is the product of the latest revolution. This necessity of facing up to their environment, decisive factor though it is in the degree of change involved in socio-historical processes, does not invariably or inevitably result in protest or rebellion on the part of the young. And although the image of the future has not yet fully taken shape at the student stage, it already has something to offer those who can interpret it objectively. Consequently, the very countries whose socio-economic systems seem today to have attained a measure of stability - of whatever type - are displaying marked interest in bringing to light, problematic as they may be, the images of the future that lie just below the surface consciousness of those who will one day form their leading cadres. No wonder, therefore, that the "industrialized societies" have carried out relatively numerous samples surveys among students, the results of which are widely read and discussed by the general public. A reminder may here be given of the surprising similarity of the younger generations' mental attitudes to life in the more advanced countries referred to. As was previously pointed out, this uniformity is manifested in a general readiness to accept the existing structures, whatever they may be, which does not, however, go so far as to silence all criticism and stifle all rebellious outbursts. The common findings of international research thus indicate the existence of an "uncommitted" generation, hardly interested, within the complex structural framework established by technology, in any kind of radical change. Some deplore this attitude as an expression of political apathy and of indifference towards the future, but others regard it as springing inevitably from an incorruptible realism in face of the conditions of a society too complex to be understood as a whole. Vis-à-vis the world that adults have created, the dominant reaction of the young seems to be not so much repudiation as an initial doubt of their capacity to deal

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with it - a doubt which may perhaps be shared by a good many of the adults themselves. A suspicion may be entertained a priori that the faculty of adaptation or resignation to a world that offers them no choice does not represent the whole of the truth where the young people of countries at less advanced stages of growth and development are concerned; but it is no more than a suspicion. Only real factual evidence could eliminate the possibility of its being grounded not on what young people think, but on what adults believe they ought to think. In other words, some of the older intellectuals may postulate missions for youth that it does not accept as authentically its own. Hence, nothing but the most exact and strictly-conducted empirical research on students in the countries not yet industrialized, or still in process of industrialization, can offer an accurate reply to the query implicitly formulated above.

To revert to the methodological approach, it should be recalled that empirical research on student images is technically easier to carry out than surveys among other sectors of the juvenile population. This is not only because for the academic research worker the student is the guinea-pig nearest to hand, but because the sample used is relatively small as a rule, and the construction of the questionnaire, not to mention the interviewing technique, afford opportunities of probing attitudes or inclinations which demand a minimum of logical consistency and articulateness on the part of the subject. In view of these advantages, such surveys should be undertaken as soon as possible in relation to the students of Latin America - i.e., those attending universities or receiving other types of higher education -, always provided that they are carried out in strict conformity with the established rules and principles of international research. If the same method were applied, research on the social images paramount among the student body of four or five of the region's best universities would not only enable valuable comparisons to be made, but would provide bases for possible generalizations applicable to Latin America as a whole in so far as it is indubitably a cultural unit.

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Among the many student surveys carried out in recent years, there is perhaps no better model to be found than the research conducted at Frankfurt University under the direction of J. Habermas and his collaborators.^{6/} It is conspicuous for the strict precision of its carefully-elaborated conceptual machinery, a prerequisite for pinning down something so commonplace so ill-defined or so evanescent as the "political consciousness" of students. Research of this type can only be carried out after careful prior analysis of the specific political structure that constitutes its frame of reference. Hence the distinguishing features of the real structure in question will determine the patterns that the outline of the study is bound to follow. By way of example, and - why deny it? - as food for thought, the composition and findings of the above-mentioned survey are worth a moment's further pause. Given the democratic political structure of the Federal Republic of Germany, the interest of the study lay in discovering the future participation capacity of the most enlightened sectors of the country's youth. In order to determine the political "habit", it was necessary to go farther, and relate it to the deepest-lying stratum of the prevailing "social images". Only after ascertaining these "images", the political "habit" and the manifest "political trends", could conjectures be hazarded as to the "democratic potential" embodied in this set of mental attitudes. The findings may perhaps be valid for other Western democracies, and even - mutatis mutandis and with due regard for the structural differences at the start - for the socialist countries. They suggest that the widespread acceptance of the social and political structure of today does not imply the elimination of a latent tension between maintenance of a "social democracy" and support of a "totalitarian democracy". Obviously, the future of either alternative depends upon objective conditions, but in no lesser degree on unforeseeable contingencies. It is a fact that the compliant attitude

6/ J. Habermas, L. von Friedeburg, Chr. Oehler and F. Weltz, Student und Politik, Hermann Luchterhand, Neuwied-am-Rhein: Berlin, 1961.

to the existing formal democracy is not directly conducive to increased social participation, nor does it nullify the latent propensity to accept with equal compliance the operation of a totalitarian democracy, that is, of a political structure in which participation is reduced to plebiscitary approval of major directives.

A responsible survey carried out on the lines suggested among students in the Latin American countries, with the aim of uncovering the deeper strata of their various social images and their different political habits, would be of supreme interest at the present juncture of Latin America's history. Adventitious affiliations, transient aspirations, are of no importance. In relation to young people living in the same world as those referred to above, and inescapably subject to its structural conditions, what matters is to find out whether in Latin America too there are any signs of the tension indicated. Compliance and non-compliance are, in the last analysis, words with hold-space. In the compliance imposed by the structural development trend, to which nobody raises any objection, there is nevertheless room for the tension created by a dichotomy such as that described. And this un masks the superficiality of those who contend that in every under-developed country youth has a natural leaning towards change and reform. What kind of change? What sort of reform?

III

Among an excellent group of studies on young people, one on Japanese youth ^{7/} did well to recall how far the whole history of past developments in the situation of young people affect present events, although not always consciously or explicitly. The subjects of research outlined above, which are pre-eminent thanks to the ascendancy of methodology in present-day empirical research, is somewhat static if not exaggeratedly functional. In this respect, they overlook the essentially "unfunctional" character of youth, which enables history to pursue its course. Leaving aside for the present the dread metaphysics, this character is implicit in the state of transition which sociologists and psychologists ascribe to youth. This proposition makes it necessary to state exactly where this transition takes place and what is its nature. However important the course of an individual's growth in passing from adolescence to adulthood, the deepest significance attaching to the transitional character of youth is its collective nature. It is, in the final analysis, the transition of a specific "generational unit". The insistence on presenting the confrontation between generations as a "conflict" reduces the subject to the permanent tension assumed to exist - this is not always the case - between parents and children or to unilaterally underlining specific situations of cultural antagonism, as the result of accelerated change at given times in the course of history. From that standpoint, the psycho-analytical interpretation maintains that what is happening today in the more intensely modernized societies is actually a rupture between the young "present" and the whole of the "past", i.e., a tradition symbolized by the father image. Therefore, the disappearance of tradition reflects the fading of the father image and explains the term "civilization without paternity" in current usage. That interpretation, rich in theoretical inducements - which are of

7/ R.J. Lifton, Youth and history: Individual change in postwar Japan (Cambridge, Mass.: Daedalus, 1962), published in E.H. Erikson (ed.), The challenge of youth (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., 1965).

particular interest to the Latin American at the present time of crisis in his paternalist culture - is superimposed as a scientific theory on the fact on which it is founded and which, consequently, it fails to explain. Whether or not the paternal image is painfully and ruthlessly rejected - an existential analysis would show that loving fidelity is more lasting than any rupture -, fidelity and rejection are possible only in the inevitable confrontation imposed by the structure of living. The father-son dialogue - whether conflicting or loving - is the interpersonal form of the broader dialogue which at once unites and separates the different age groups living together at a given moment in the long course of history. For a young person to enter into it because of the date on which he was born is to find himself in a world made by his elders, but for which he bears no responsibility. The new generation may accept or reject it, but not before a confrontation with the older generations, which are the architects of a reality that the young have stumbled upon without seeking it. The changes - either superficial or sweeping - that they will introduce in it will be the result of that vitally necessary confrontation, which, however, need not be on an emotional plane.

Accordingly, the concept of generation rears its head anew in the latest publications on the subject of youth, at times in the form of striking allusions, and at others deliberately demonstrating its theoretical value and its essential links with the past process. The most famous book on youth written in recent times ^{8/} - a classic in spite of, or precisely because of, the controversy to which it has given rise - based its original and unorthodox outlook on the interrelationship between generations, i.e., on the course or texture of three fundamental generations: that of the "youth movement" (Jugendbewegung), the political generation of the twenties and the sceptical post-war generation which is the object of the author's research. Whether or not the interrelationship is entirely correct is beside the point since it is not proposed to examine this sociologist's work here, or to go into the prolixity of the

8/ Helmut Schelsky, Die Skeptische Generation. Eine Soziologie der deutschen Jugend (Düsseldorf-Köln: Eugen Diederichs, 1957).

German Jugendkunde, which only now has its oppressive parallel in the United States' copious literature on the subject. Suffice it to review it briefly as a significant example of the re-emergence of the generation theory, through the medium now of sociological research on youth. This primarily empirical approach is consistent with a dual concern: that inspired by the fears and hopes in respect of the socio-cultural perpetuation of a specific body politic - the permanent object of all pedagogical policy -, and that underlying the desire to forecast the immediate future - the more remote future is left in the lap of the gods - through the vital talent believed to exist in the younger generation. However, those existential desires pass too quickly over the fundamental pretensions of the theory: to be accepted as a method of historical and social investigation.

This is not the time to pass in rapid review a number of fairly well-known facts. The base of the theory is a philosophy of life, but to understand it and to extract something of its essence, it will suffice to state the one fact that throughout the history of man's social life, different generations of different ages have lived side by side. This co-existence of non-contemporaries is the fundamental mainspring of historical dynamism, since each generation inevitably has a different outlook on life, and the misunderstanding between the generations springs purely and simply from the confrontation of their divergent points of view.

Theoretically, the next step would be to weld the generations together internally. In the perspective of history, young people are of the same marginal importance as old people, since the mayor role is played by the generation holding the reins of power and those preparing to seize them in their turn. It is youth, or the preparatory phase, however, in which the greatest potentialities lie, since all things are possible to it. Simmel has said that to young people the process of living takes precedence over its content, whereas the reverse is true of old age. Ortega hoped that the theory of the generations would provide the rigorously exact method that history has lacked in the past to interpret phenomena and even to build up its own particular structure.

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The hope of establishing this methodology may, however, very well be over-optimistic in view of the difficulty of applying the theory. The first obstacle is the problem of imputation, which is the key to every manifestation of the sociology of knowledge. The concept of the generation is apt to lead to hypostatization, as is the class concept in the theory of ideologies. But this would not be an insoluble problem if the temptation to regard a generation as a sustaining body were avoided - as Ortega avoids it - and, in the language of Mannheim, were looked upon instead as a unified field of "common experiences". But the fact that these experiences are the fruit of objective situations and external events ranging from the universal to the purely personal, gives rise to another problem, since these time elements may appear to exercise a more basic and decisive influence than purely generational factors. In any case, the different kinds of elements inevitably intermingle and destroy the exactitude of the methodology. The third and most difficult problem of all is how to place in time or determine the chronological sequence of the successive generations. Ortega's suggestion that the so-called "decisive generation" should be taken as the point of departure is bound up with his view of the great transformations that have taken place in the world and leads to a geistesgeschichtliche orientation. In short, the problem of how to measure a generation in time is not made any less difficult by sociological acceptance of the theory of the generations as something quite detached from the shifting succession of modes and ideas.

The inevitably arbitrary nature of the particular moment in time chosen by sociologists has inspired a number of controversial works, each written in the firm conviction that the generation whose claims it upholds is the only one with a fateful role to play in life.

Should Ortega's proposal come to naught or prove impossible to pursue any further, the heuristic value of the theory of the generations will be unimpaired in spite of all the difficulties it involves. Even if precision is renounced in favour of premises that are merely plausible or moderately acceptable, this theory will still be an inexhaustible fount of ideas for the social historian and sociologist in his interpretation of events. No study of young people with any claim to overstep the narrow

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bounds of functionalism and capture and record the true historical dimensions of life can afford to ignore this theory. As with any technique and method, its heuristic value depends on the person bold enough to apply it. As we have already seen, this theory can help to illuminate the interpretation of over-all events, but cannot and should not be held responsible for the confusion of thought that may result from its misuse.

Given that any attempt to set the starting-point of a generation is liable to be arbitrary, it might well be best to abide by the methods of empiric research which almost automatically fix the cut-off dates for the contemporary generations, despite the risks involved in the so-called chronological interpretation of the term. As the degree of arbitrariness involved in this approach is no greater than in other cases, it is worth while risking and is indeed an inevitable concomitant if the point of departure chosen is simply the present moment. Empiric research on youth is concerned with the last generation, in other words, the young people who were born since 1940 and are now between 15 and 25 years of age. Moving yet farther back, we would eventually reach the first generation still alive today, those in their sixties who were born around 1903. The date of birth of the dominant generation from the forties onwards - of forty years of age - would have been about 1920. What are the events on the national, American or international scene that may be considered as catalysts in the precipitation of common experience, and hence indicative of the dates to be established.

An enquiry on such an ambitious scale would thus become an interpretation of Latin American history as seen through the eyes of the generations alive today. The social history of Latin America in the twentieth century still remains to be written. Might it not be written as the history of those generations?

Whether or not it is approached in this spirit, the validity of an empiric survey of the last generation will be unimpaired. Empiric techniques constitute the only form of methodology that is wholly applicable for this purpose. But in dealing with preceding generations, other techniques would have to be used. Repeated studies could, in fact, only

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be undertaken for the later generations. But, even though history were interpreted by traditional methods in the proposed study, it would not be impracticable, in view of the short periods of time covered, to deal with certain aspects by some of the methods of contemporary social science, such as content analysis, statistical correlation, and so forth.

This type of investigation, which is tentatively suggested by a member of what has just been termed the "first generation", cannot be undertaken without the concerted participation of the younger generations. There is good reason to suppose that this provocative and disinterested idea is not likely to fall on stony ground.

