

## Wayne Osgood (2022)



*Jan 11, 2023: Delinquency, Daily Life, and the New Adolescence:  
The Rise and Fall of Teen Culture*

I was born in 1949 and grew up in San Diego, California. My father had a wholesale appliance business, and I spent my high school summers loading refrigerators and dishwashers onto trucks at the warehouse. That experience convinced me of the value of a college education, and I headed to UCLA—a good school that we could afford and that was just far enough away for a sense of freedom. Being good at math and science, I had planned to study engineering. But I cared a great deal about the social issues of the day, and I soon found the social sciences more appealing. After earning my B.A. in psychology in 1971, I headed to the University of Colorado in Boulder to do my graduate work social psychology in the shadow of the Rockies, receiving my M.A. in 1974 and my Ph.D in 1977.

I spent the next decade in research positions studying juvenile delinquency. At the Behavioral Research Institute in Boulder, I worked on an evaluation of programs that sought to reduce future delinquency by diverting arrested teens away from the juvenile justice system. In 1980, I married Jan Jacobs and we moved to Ann Arbor and the University of Michigan. There Jan did her graduate work in developmental psychology, and I was a researcher at the Institute for Social Research. My main job was directing a study of peer influence among youth in Michigan's institutions for juvenile offenders, and I also worked on Monitoring the Future, the continuing annual study of teenagers' attitudes and behavior. In 1986, we moved to Lincoln, Nebraska. I spent my first year there at Boys Town, leading a study of the effectiveness of their program, and then I moved to the University of Nebraska's Sociology Department to teach as well as do research.

In 1996, I joined Penn State's Department of Sociology and Criminology, from which I retired in 2017. I enjoyed being part of an excellent criminology program, and I loved mentoring our talented graduate students, many of whom have gone on to be leaders in our field. My research focused on delinquency and crime from adolescence through adulthood. I was always involved in evaluating programs to prevent or reduce delinquency, specializing in methodological and statistical matters. Much of my work concerned the contributions of peers to delinquency. One strain of this work was analyzing friendship networks over time to disentangle the intertwined processes of selecting friends and being influenced by them. The other strain focused on spending unstructured time with friends as a situational influence that encourages delinquency and other risky behavior, a theme I introduced in a 1996 article. Many studies have now established this robust relationship and shown that it helps explain some important phenomena like the sharp rise of delinquency through the teen years and then a gradual decline into adulthood, as well as the substantial decrease in delinquency that has occurred in almost all western countries in recent decades.

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