

Abstract

Staying and Leaving Home: The Impact of Close Encounters with the Fifties in Midwestern Families

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This paper examines some of the differences between those who stayed in Oak Valley after graduation from Midwest High School and made their adult lives there, and those who left as young adults. Comparing these two groups allows us both to note the generational “mark” of the fifties that binds all of this cohort together, regardless of their adult lives, as well as some important differences. The core of our account depends on our beginning analyses of 19 pairs of individuals, matched in terms of race, gender, and family’s social class in the 1950s. These pairs are, then, composed of individuals who started from the same social locations in several respects, but who differed in staying vs. leaving.