SOCIAL CHANGE AND TRANSITIONS TO ADULTHOOD IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE
John Model, Frank F. Furstenberg, Jr., and Theodore Hershberg

Rules can be found in every society governing the passage to adulthood. In some social systems, this transition is sharply demarcated, highly routinized, and carefully coordinated, while in others, it is far less easy to chart the course through which social members come of age. Sociologists and historians have shown little taste for studying patterns of transition, relegating these problems to anthropologists or social psychologists instead. Remarkably little work has been done on the scheduling of critical life events in our society, and on the existence of and changes in social timetables (Neugarten, 1968). How such scheduling is articulated with the requirements of other social institutions, though a subject of some speculation, has been generally neglected as a topic for empirical investigation (Elder, 1975).

Although this paper explicitly addresses only the problem of youth, we regard the transition to adulthood as an illustrative case of a more general set of problems concerning how institutional constraints bear on the construction of the life course. The present paper may be seen

as an exploratory study of some gross contrasts between youth "Then"--in the late nineteenth century--and "now" in 1970. At the same time, it proposes a series of analytic distinctions and a methodology. the implications of which will be discussed more fully further on.

I. Youth and Uncertainty
Discomfort, even turmoil, commonly characterize the period we have come to call youth. a stage of life during which major transitions of status are accomplished. These transitions, no doubt, are stressful in themselves, but our appreciation of the turmoil of youth typically rests on assumptions about the fit between the transition period and the society within which it occurs. It is widely held that this fit has changed substantially since industrialization. Most commentators have argued that the period of youth has been moved later in the life course (Musgrave, 1965; Keniston, 1972), extended (Flacks, 1971; Panel on Youth, 1974), removed for better or for worse from meaningful contact with the adult world (Coleman, 1961; Berger, 1971), and experienced as meandering and arbitrary. They contrast this to a vision of the past in which youth was a relatively brief period (lacking even a name) of substantial and near adult responsibility (Demos and Demos, 1969).

As is often the case, our historical image is the product of no research in particular, but is instead based on nostalgia and the need for a contrasting image to our concept of youth today. Happily, in recent years a genuine historiography has developed. Joseph Kett's (1971; 1973; 1974) description indicates that the experience of rural youth in the nineteenth century was surely different from what we see today. But it was anything but brief and consistently filled with adult-like responsibility.

Michael Katz' intensive study (1975) of family behavior in a mid-nineteenth century Canadian city also finds growing up then to have been a qualitatively different process from what it has become. His lucid exposition is the fullest treatment now available. "Most young people," Katz maintains, passed through "a semiautonomous state," having entered some adult statuses but not having completed the entire set of transitions. Katz finds, moreover, that the length of this period of life--or even its occurrence at all--was quite responsive to local economic conditions, becoming rarer among youths during time of economic stringency.

Kett's account indicates that even within narrower segments of the population, fixed and regular patterns of transition were not much in evidence, and points out several ways in which the life course of the pre-adult was far less predictable. Early life in nineteenth-century America might be said to be "disorderly,
to borrow Harold Wilensky's (1968) characterization of some types of work careers. Youth was not a clearly progressive and irreversible status sequence, but was variable and seemingly capricious.

Many commentators on contemporary youth would dispute the claim that the transition to adulthood has become more orderly and predictable during the twentieth century. Some writers contend that it has now become more difficult to grow up because passage to adulthood has become less and not more clearly charted. Protracted schooling, economic dependency upon the family, and the complex nature of career decisions are taken as signs that the timing in the transition to adulthood has become more prolonged and the sequence of movement less clearly prescribed. Alienation follows from the lack of clarity; weak institutionalization rather than its excess is seen as a defect of American society today.

 Needless to say, these varying interpretations are possible because we possess relatively little systematic information that bears directly upon the question of what kinds of changes have occurred in the organization of the life course. Indeed, we lack even a clear conceptual basis on which to conduct empirical inquiry, despite widespread agreement that the "latitude," "predictability," or "clarity" of the transition to adulthood may have varied over time.

Students of youth typically have stressed learning in their models of growing older. Gerontologists, by contrast, studying a population deemed progressively incompetent to perform their former tasks, have often seen growing older in terms of a reallocation of roles. Growing older, of course, empirically involves both learning and role allocation. at all ages. The gerontological perspective, however, should be appealing to those studying social change, since it suggests the inexorable but variable process of replacement, which the social demographer, Norman Ryder (1965; 1974) has identified as a main feature of "social metabolism." This bio-social process, Ryder argues, gives rise to a set of conventions for moving individuals in and out of social patterns.

The most enlightening statement of the nature of this problem, by Matilda Riley and her collaborators (1969; 1972), divides the social-metabolic process into two conceptually distinct though empirically overlapped processes: "allocation"-the role-assignment and exchange process as seen from the structural point of view, and "socialization"-the motivation and instruction of role occupants. The timing of any particular transition in our complex society is rarely a simple reflection of an age norm, but is rather the cumulative outcome of the allocational needs of the society (the whole set of roles available and their age-related definitions), the time required for adequate socialization for the performance of these roles, and individual volition. Social schedules, Riley and her collaborators argue, reduce dangerous conflicts and minimize incompetence. Age norms limit the field of contestants for desired positions to a manageable number of relatively well-prepared persons. Yet even if one accepts the premises, one need not necessarily endorse the assumption that this is desirable. ²

The present paper has three purposes: (1) We wish to turn this gerontological-demographic perspective to the question of youth. (2) We will do so especially by examining the distribution, timing, and sequencing of a series of transitions, thereby suggesting the juncture between the societal perspective of allocation and the individual perspective of the career. And (3) we intend to do these things while developing the points historically, indicating thereby some long-term shifts in the meaning of "youth" in American society.

When we speak of the transition to adulthood, we are already dealing with a somewhat artificial construct. It is an open question whether individuals in any given society hold a common notion of adulthood. We can be reasonably certain that at the present time there would be imperfect agreement among Americans about when and how

² That rigid schedules may be at the source of social-psychological problems is apparent from several of Bernice Neugarten's studies, which point to such consequences when individuals are forced to adhere to schedules they do not accept, or prove unable to conform to schedules they hold legitimate.
someone attains adult status in our society. One can, however, safely assume that both in the past and now, becoming an adult involves a series of changes in status which moves an individual from economic dependence upon parents or their surrogates to economic independence (or dependence upon a spouse), and from participation in the family of orientation to establishment of a family of procreation (or, far less commonly, to move out of the family of orientation into lifetime roles as spinster or bachelor). These events may not universally announce adulthood, but they certainly bear an overwhelming and apparent association with participation in the adult world. In our construction of the complex transition to adulthood, we shall center our attention on five particular transitions for which data are available: exit from school; entrance to the work-force; departure from the family of origin; marriage; and the establishment of a household.

II. Methods and Data

The purposes of this paper are exploratory, aiming to look at a large subject with a new perspective and fresh information. The data we press into service are admittedly crude, though, we think, not inadequate to the purposes to which they are put. The same might be said about the methods. Taken together, these cautions argue that only where findings are strong and mutually supporting can we speak with certainty. Though our arguments are ineradicably quantitative, they do not pretend to be precise or refined.

What little systematic information we possess on tempo and organization of the transition to adulthood has relied heavily on the methods devised by Paul Glick for depicting changes in the life cycle of Americans. Glick's life cycle approach presented a pioneering effort to describe the shifts which have taken place during the twentieth century in the spacing of critical family events such as marriage, childbirth, and family dissolution. Thus, for example, Glick was able to show that the domestic careers of women have become increasingly concentrated in the early portions of their lives, leaving a lengthy period of time within marriage after the last child has departed from the home (Glick and Parke, 1965; and see Wells, 1973, for a still longer historical sweep).

The application of the Glick method has brought some interesting findings to light, but it is a rough tool at best for characterizing the timing and arrangement of events over the life span. What Glick and his followers have done is to estimate mean ages at which certain events occur. These means taken in sequence are a convenient way of expressing years "of experience" in particular life cycle stages for the population taken as a whole. But if we wished to arrive at a typical life course by arranging these averages in chronological order, we would need to assume that all transitions take place at the mean age and that everyone undergoes all transitions. Moreover, if variance is high (or changing) the notion of average intervals is highly suspect. Based on

\[5\] For analogous inferences, well-established procedures are available, notably John Hajnal's (1953) method of estimating age at marriage directly from a single set of census data. Like Hajnal, we will make two assumptions: first, that the distribution of statuses by age has not been affected by rapid change; and, second, that in- and out-migration and mortality are not differential by the statuses we are considering. For purposes of simplicity (and since we are concerned with comparing distributions rather than determining absolute ages) we use a pair of techniques related to but distinct from Hajnal's "singulate mean age at marriage." To determine timing, we use a variant of Hajnal's "singulate median" age at marriage; and to get measures of the age-spread of the marriage transition, we use a crude "process of differencing" to estimate the number of marriages during each successive year of experience. Thus if 40 percent of 21-year olds are still single but only 30 percent of the 22-year olds, we can estimate that 10 percent of the population in question marries between 21 and 22 years of age.

\[3\] Peter Uhlenberg's alternative approach (1979, 1974) creates from demographic parameters a set of typical careers reflecting different experience, and estimates their prevalence in the population. Like the Glick approach, however, Uhlenberg's method makes nothing of the fact of variance in the timing of events.

\[4\] This paradox depends on the possibility that for many persons establishing households precedes marriage.
aggregate averages, the interval between entering marriage and setting up a household may be far smaller than when computed on the basis of individual experiences. Or, a significant minority may delay household formation substantially, while for the majority it occurs simultaneously with marriage.

Throughout our analysis, we employ a rather simple quantitative device, the intent and assumptions of which should be discussed here. Our treatment of transitions differs from the usual "age-at" basis (seen most typically in examinations of marriage), for our concern is not so much with central tendencies as with dispersion in timing. Accordingly, our technique calls for the analysis of the distribution of ages at which members of a population make a given transition. But our data are not from a registration of life-course events for individuals (such as a marriage register). What we have, instead, is an enumeration of statuses occupied by individuals, classified by their age and sex (from a census). Our problem is to infer from this count what set of age-specific events might have produced it. We can do this by assigning equal sizes to all equally-bounded age groups, and by assuming that only transitional events (which are irreversible) account for changes in distribution of statuses within succeeding age-groups, not death or migration.

A source of uncertainty in inferring timing from a momentary distribution of statuses by age is the fact that entry into many statuses does not preclude subsequent exit; many transitions are, to a degree, reversible. Our nomenclature prevents us from thinking a widowed or divorced person "unmarried,"

but one could never know from age-specific labor-force participation rates that for males the process of youthful attachment and senescent detachment from work often involves a shuttling in and out of the work force. Were we to examine this feature of status transitions, longitudinal data would be required to measure reversibility. In a real sense, however, reversibility is not relevant, for our concern is with binding transitions -what Howard Becker calls "commitment" (Becker, 1960). To marry is to incur obligations and relationships that are generally lasting. While a casual job may not impose permanent obligation, commitment to regular work (even if at casual labor) does, and such commitment undoubtedly occurs close to the time of entry to the labor force.

If we had uniform, smooth data on these statuses for single years of age for men and women separately for 1880 and 1970, we would have no computational problems with the data (given the above operational assumptions). But we do riot. Whereas we have all-United States data for 1970 from the published census, only sometimes available with single-year-of-age detail, our data for 1880 are fresh tabulations from a large, every Nth sample of Philadelphia whites from the Federal Population Manuscript Schedules.

Wherever possible, we also present calculations

We have been able to make the most thorough comparisons for marriage and work-force participation. In the former, Philadelphia's pattern of age by marital status essentially resembles that for Boston in 1945, Rhode Island in 1875, United States cities in 1890, and all United States in 1890. Philadelphia's age-pattern of work-force participation is similar to that for Massachusetts in 1885 and the United States in 1890. Finer analysis of the Massachusetts materials reveals that age at entrance to the work force did not vary widely there by urban/rural distinctions; while data from the United States census of 1910 shows minor differences in this regard. We feel entirely justified distinguishing "nineteenth century" patterns (which Philadelphia shared) from "contemporary" ones. We include supplementary nineteenth-century material in Table 1, but for subsequent presentation of data, we rely on Philadelphia in 1880. since only for Philadelphia are our data uniform and useful for examining individual-level relationships.

The data are drawn from a far larger base collected by the Philadelphia Social History Project. Directed by Theodore Hershberg, the PSHP focuses on the impact which urbanization, industrialization, and immigration had upon: social and family structure; the formation and transformation of neighborhoods; the organization. mechanization, and journey to-work; the development of an intra-urban transportation network; the spatial differentiation of residence, commerce, and industry; and patterns of migration and social mobility. Blacks (about 4 percent of the population) and members of households headed by persons born outside of the United States, Ireland, and Germany (about 5 percent of the population) are omitted from our tabulations. The blacks introduced thorny problems of household definition we preferred to sidestep; the others omitted were for substantive reasons never a part of the Project sample.

We have been able to make the most thorough comparisons for marriage and work-force participation. In the former, Philadelphia's pattern of age by marital status essentially resembles that for Boston in 1945, Rhode Island in 1875, United States cities in 1890, and all United States in 1890. Philadelphia's age-pattern of work-force participation is similar to that for Massachusetts in 1885 and the United States in 1890. Finer analysis of the Massachusetts materials reveals that age at entrance to the work force did not vary widely there by urban/rural distinctions; while data from the United States census of 1910 shows minor differences in this regard. We feel entirely justified distinguishing "nineteenth century" patterns (which Philadelphia shared) from "contemporary" ones. We include supplementary nineteenth-century material in Table 1, but for subsequent presentation of data, we rely on Philadelphia in 1880. since only for Philadelphia are our data uniform and useful for examining individual-level relationships.
based on age-by-status data available for other nineteenth-century American populations, for the sake of comparison. In the broad terms in which we cast our argument, these data validate the general applicability of our Philadelphia materials, though of course there are differences of detail. Where interpolation is necessary, we have interpolated linearly, unless the result is absurd. Where we have had to smooth, we have used the simplest arithmetic methods that seemed to give reasonable figures. For the most part, we have been able to make our categories for 1880 line up pretty well with those for 1970, although we do not know precisely how often a person in the nineteenth-century census lacking an “occupation” was really out of the work force. There is no reason to believe, however, that the distribution by age is seriously biased.

As much as possible, we have tried to use techniques of data analysis which remain intuitively comprehensible, and to remain close enough to the data so that the approximativeness of our procedures will not be forgotten. Thus, we rely heavily in Section III upon calculating the approximate ages at which increasing cumulative deciles of the population had completed certain transitions—when the first 10 percent were married, the next 10 percent, and so on—and deriving measures from this. These will be described in detail below. Only one measure could not be accomplished with this intuitive simplicity: the measure of the inter-relatedness of a pair of statuses. Here we required a measure which would be applicable across agegroups in which marginal distributions for each of the statuses varied widely; a measure of association in which the effects of both sets of marginal frequencies are eliminated. Accordingly, we have computed Goodman’s λ for the interaction of the two variables.

The concepts we are developing are, perhaps, more complicated than our measurements. This is especially the case because the thrust of our argument is moving toward seeing experience as longitudinal and understood in cohort form. The ideal ending-point of this inquiry would be a distribution of careers, which might be categorized by starting age, sequence of transitions, and intervals among transitions. To know this distribution of careers would permit us substantial insight into how they were constructed. But our data permit us only to compare cross-sections, in order to draw implications for patterns of events within individual life courses.

The concepts we will introduce here are designed to begin to bridge our present capabilities and our ambitions. We shall discuss five dimensions of status transitions. A sixth, reversibility, has not been introduced for methodological reasons. Within certain logical limits, these several dimensions of status passage are independent of one another. In reality, however, they form a coherent configuration linked to other features of a social system. Of these five dimensions, the first three are simple, referring to a property of a single status transition. The last two are complex, referring to the interrelationship of two or more status transitions. All five measures are meaningful at the aggregate level of analysis only.

(1) The prevalence of a transition is the measure of the proportion of a population (ignoring mortality) which experiences a given transition. Some transitions are quite rare, others almost universal.

(2) Timing, when considered in the aggregate, refers to typical points in the life course at which transitions occur. We shall employ three measures of timing: the age at

---

8 The statistic is a by-product of the ECTA program for iteratively fitting different “models” to a given set of cell frequencies, and, for our purposes, are derived from the “fully-saturated” model in which all the marginal frequencies are determined by the given data.

9 Were the distribution of such careers known, we would of course know also the distribution of the component transition ages; but, equally obviously, the reverse is not the case. The connectedness of information about careers is considerably greater than that of information about a set of transitions examined singly.

10 Saveland and Glick (1969) anticipate our measure of "spread" in their discussion of marriage.
which half the population has experienced the transition under question, and the ages at which the first and fifth deciles make the transition (the latter two based only on those who ever make the transition). Timing may be early or late.

(3) **Spread** is the period of time required for a fixed proportion in a population to undergo a particular transition. As our measure of spread, we use the central 80 percent of those who make the transition, but some other figure would be equally appropriate. A transition can have a brief or protracted spread.\(^3\)

(4) The **age-congruity** of a pair of transitions refers to the degree of overlap of their spreads. A population will undergo a pair of congruous transitions over the same period. If the transitions are incongruous, the population first accomplishes one transition, then the next. This dimension is a joint property of a pair of aggregate distributions, and does not refer to the closeness in time of transitions of the individual level.

(5) **Integration**, on the other hand, is a summary measure of individual-level relationships. The dimension refers to the degree to which status transitions are contingent upon one another at the individual level, apart from their degree of agecongruity. (Without longitudinal data, we cannot measure directly the contingency of transitions, but we can measure the contingency of statuses. Goodman's A, mentioned above, measures this interaction for narrow age-groups.) A pair of transitions may be consistently integrated or unintegrated, or its integration may vary with age.\(^4\)

### III. The Pace of Transition to Adulthood

In the analysis which follows, we take up several different ways of assessing whether the timetable for coming of age has changed. For each method of assessment, we shall consider the five events which we identified earlier as important transitions in the early life course.

#### Prevalence

We can assume even in the absence of data that a fraction of the population will not make certain transitions at any point in their lives. Some individuals (even ignoring mortality in youth or before) never enter and thus never leave school, never go to work, marry, or depart from the households of their families of origin. To the extent that these transitions have become more prevalent, we may conclude the social timetable of becoming an adult may have become more rigidly prescribed.\(^5\)

Table I presents prevalence estimates for the five events at different points in time for males and females separately. Considering the fact that the census data from the nineteenth century are more likely to omit information, and hence fall to record occupancy of a status, the figures do not reveal striking differences. In both centuries most individuals attended school, entered the work force, married, and ultimately left their household of origin to establish one of their own. The drift of the figures, however, is toward generally greater prevalence.

Not surprisingly, the greatest difference occurs in the proportion showing up as school attenders. In the twentieth century, we discover patterns, noting that by comparison with the American experience for the 1920-40 period, "the 'spread' of age at first marriage tended to become narrower by 1958-60." The authors draw no conclusions about trends, however, explaining the observed narrowing by the Depression.\(^6\)

11These dimensions do not exhaust all aspects of the scheduling of transitions. For the moment, we should list two more dimensions: (1) **Reversibility**, already discussed. and (2) **Order**, referring to the time-sequence of two or more transitions, summed over a population. The order of a pair of transitions may be relatively fixed or relatively variable.

\(^{12}\)Unfortunately, census data from the nineteenth century, lacking retrospective items, do not indicate the proportion of individuals within a given cohort who ever went to school, worked, married, left home, or set up a separate household. Since some of these statuses are "reversible" it is difficult to ascertain exact prevalence estimates from cross-sectional data. As a rough approximation, we shall measure the prevalence by the maximum proportion achieving the transition in any age group. Needless to say, this is a conservative measure of prevalence because it does not take into account individuals who had achieved the transition by the age at which most other members of the population had "retired." Yet, it is most unlikely that these limitations do great violence to the comparisons we are drawing since in both instances we are relying on similar types of census material.
that virtually all youth attend school at some age. The figure (99.7 percent) is identical for both males and females. The rates for the two sexes are similar, too, in the nineteenth century, but the figure is lower—between 80 and 90 percent. Again, we should caution the reader that the nineteenth century data undoubtedly understate the proportion of individuals who ever attended school, but even so, few would dispute the claim that what is today virtually universal was in the nineteenth century merely commonplace. In that sense, we now see greater uniformity in the process of growing up.

Entrance to the work force reveals a similar pattern for females though it is questionable whether gainful employment for women has been a relevant part of the transition to adulthood. In both centuries nearly all males—over 95 percent—enter the work force at some point, while by contrast the figures for females are dramatically lower. Given the temporary nature of female participation in the work force, at least up until the present era, we must regard these prevalence estimates with some suspicion. Nevertheless, it does seem likely that a higher proportion of women in the nineteenth century never had another occupation than housewife.

Looking at the departure from home, again we find greater uniformity in the twentieth century. According to the 1970 census, there are ages when virtually everyone lives as a child in a family. The pattern in the nineteenth century suggests that even at very early ages (under eight), nearly a tenth of the sample were not living in the households of their parents, presumably the result of orphanhood, separation from both parents, or residence in more complex households which their parents did not head.

For the other two statuses which we examined, marriage and household headship, we discovered little or no variation in prevalence between the pattern of a century ago and the contemporary mode. Roughly the same proportion—over 90 percent—married at some point in the life course. Males and females differed little in this respect. Headship rates were also almost identical over time. Again, our estimate certainly understates the actual prevalence, yet indicates that in both centuries at least 86 percent of surviving individuals in the population set up their own household at some point.

With the exception of female participation in the work force, the prevalence data presented in Table I indicate that both males and females today more uniformly experience the five transitions. While this fact in itself does not necessarily imply a greater degree of determinacy in the process of entering adulthood, it is at least consistent with this interpretation.

**Spread**

Many commentators on the problem of youth in contemporary society have remarked on the extended nature of the transition to adulthood. It seems to take longer to grow up today than it did in times past. We have examined this supposition by looking at the typical ages at which most individuals have entered adulthood, but we must also measure the length of the transition process as it occurred in both centuries. Here we are not referring to the time it takes any one individual to pass from childhood, but the period of years it requires for an entire cohort to make the transition. In short, we want to know how many years it takes a cohort to leave school, enter the work force—and so on.

The spread of the five transitions we are discussing—exit from school, entrance to the work force, departure from home, marriage, and establishing a household—changes a bit in the nineteenth century, but it is minor in comparison to the historical trends we shall discuss below. In other words, cohort behavior in the previous century was probably relatively stable. A good deal of variation always occurs at the extremes—the points at which the transition begins and concludes—and, in order not to give undue weight to these two tails, we shall define the spread as the period it takes for 80 percent of a given population to

---

13In reporting these differences, we are choosing to ignore the fact that at certain points the prevalence of marriage in the past was slightly lower. We prefer to disregard minor variations, concentrating instead on gross differentials.
achieve a particular transition. Since the prevalence figures are generally quite high at both periods, this causes no problem in comparing the transition spreads within or between periods.

As the figures in Table 1 reveal, the trend toward extended schooling is evident in the larger spread in the period during which the 1970 youth exit from school. It took 6.5 years for the central 80 percent of the population to complete the process of transition in 1970 whereas the comparable figure in the nineteenth-century Philadelphia was only 4.3 years. Though the estimates of spread square with our intuitions about the prolongation of this transition, they are not quite as dramatic as we might have expected. Even in the nineteenth century, the transition from schooling was not sudden or abrupt in the sense that most individuals left school at just the same age. We have reason to believe that in certain localities, the transition was quite gradual; indeed, the spread was hardly different from what we find today. For example, in Dutchess County, New York in 1850, it took 7.5 years for the central 80 percent of the males to make the transition from schooling. Although schooling is more prevalent today and extends over a far greater proportion of the life span, the length of time required by individuals to depart from schooling was not very much more concentrated during the last century. Despite the greater institutional pressures to attend school today, the spread in the transition out of school has only been extended by about two years.

Turning to entrance to the work force, the historical trend in spread is less obvious, though Table I shows a slight increase for males. During the nineteenth century, the entrance to work revealed a great deal of variation. Some individuals had occupations listed while quite young, while others acquired them only in their late teens or early twenties. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the time required to enter the work force was more extended in the past than now. In fact, there is some indication that the spread for males decreased in the mid-twentieth century, as entrance was delayed by child labor legislation but not deferred to the extent that it is today by prolonged schooling and the inability of young people to find work. In other words, the transition may have been more concentrated in the near past than the more distant past, when economic conditions both prescribed and favored the entrance of young people into the work force.

In the three familial transitions, there is a clear trend in the evidence we have assembled. Unquestionably, it now takes less time for young people to move out of their parents' household, marry, and set up their own home. Among both males and females there is a decidedly shorter pattern of departure from the family of origin. This corresponds to a strikingly different spread in the period over which marriage occurred. For both sexes the period in which 80 percent of the population marry is about half as long as was once the case. Finally, setting up a separate household also occurs with more alacrity. Young people complete this transition in about two-thirds the time it took a century ago.

The narrowing of the spread in the years that it takes youth to make the transition from the family of orientation to the family of procreation is unmistakable. Like the figures presented earlier on prevalence, these findings reinforce the notion that the passage to adulthood has become more determinate, at least in respect to the familial transitions. In contrast to a century ago, young people today are more likely to be similar to one another in the age at which they leave home, enter marriage, and set up their own households. The greater rapidity of this transition is somewhat inconsistent with our notion that the stage of youth has become more protracted, though it is consonant with the view that this period of life has become more routinized.

---

14 While our “modern” picture could undoubtedly be improved by working out cohort-based figures really representing the experience of a given birth cohort, once again the differences would not be so substantial as to vitiate our major point: that the age-based organization of the process of transition to adulthood changed markedly over the century.

15 Carter and Glick (1970:78-80) note that “first marriages have (in the past few decades) been increas-
Timing

The question of whether or not the period of youth has become more prolonged during the twentieth century cannot be completely settled by our measure of spread. Transitions may be concentrated into fewer years, as we have found, but that period in which the transition occurs may come later in the life course. In other words, most individuals may not arrive as early even if the passage takes less time because, in effect, they begin the movement later. Thus, the timing of the entrance to adulthood may be independent of the length of the period in which the transition takes place.

Certainly, what we know about the extension of schooling supports the supposition that entrance to adulthood has been delayed. Formal education has become more protracted for most young people today as compared to their forbearers. Table I presents two sets of figures on the timing of the departure from school. The first is the age at which the first decile of the school population has left, broken down by historical period and sex. The second is the median point for leaving school, correcting for the fact that not all individuals in the population attend school. The figures in the table are all ages in years.

Regardless of which figure we examine, there is little doubt that the age of departure from school has risen dramatically during the past century. The median age of school departure for both males and females is roughly four-and-a-half years later today-19.1 in 1970 as compared to 14.4 in the nineteenth century. The same degree of variation is evident at the first decile.

It is easy to understand why so many observers have been persuaded that the extension of schooling has delayed the entrance to adulthood. Yet if we look at the other transitions, the picture is different. Not surprisingly, as schooling has lengthened, entrance to the work force has occurred later. The differences over time, however, are less than impressive. The census data reveal that entrance to the work force occurs only one to two years later today than it did in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Clearly, there are certain problems in making these inferences. The concept and measurement of occupational status have changed, and, more importantly, the significance of entrance to the work force has altered. Part-time work may well have proliferated among youths. While we need to take note of these differences, we should not exaggerate them. Like their counterparts today, most working youth in the nineteenth century were not economically independent, but were contributing to the family economy. To be sure, their contribution may have been more substantial and more necessary than is now the case. Not only economic independence, but also the establishment of a family were portrayed in literary sources as essential components of adulthood in the late nineteenth century. 11

As Table I reveals, the age pattern of family formation in the nineteenth century was markedly different from current practice. As implied by our figures on the spread, many individuals delayed departure from the home a century ago. Although the pattern of boarding and lodging was quite common, most young people did not leave home until their early 20s, several years later than is the custom today. Even more disparity is apparent at the extremes. A fifth of the young people in the nineteenth century remained in the household of their family of origin until their late 20s; this pattern is extremely unusual today.
Age of marriage changed even more over the time period we are studying. Whereas at the present time, most of those who eventually marry do so by their early 20s, a century ago a substantial proportion of the females and most of the males did not wed until their late 20s or early 30s. There are, of course, certain variations according to the time and region, but the figures presented in Table I point to distinctly different configurations from those today.

Underscoring these patterns of family formation are the data on household establishment. Again, we discover sharp contrasts in the age at which most individuals formed separate residential units. At the median point, this event occurred several years later in the previous century, and at the extremes the differences were far more pronounced. Frequently, household formation did not occur until the early 30s for nineteenth-century males, and a delay between marriage and the establishment of a separate household was frequent. During this period, the newlyweds resided in the home of parents or boarded with another family. From the source material we have examined, there is good reason to suspect that many young people did not feel prepared to marry until after they had discharged obligations to their family as well as accumulated some resources to support a family of their own. In that particular sense, the period of preparation for adult responsibility was extensive and often was characterized by a good deal of uncertainty.

We can summarize some of these differences by creating an overall measure of the period of youth, examining the time elapsed between the point when the first quintile passed through the first status transition (leaving school, or entering the work force) and the last quintile arrived at the final status transition-headship of a household. This measure reveals the degree to which the transition to adulthood has become more concentrated. For males, the period was reduced by a third, taking 21.7 years in 1880, but only 14.4 years in 1970. While most of this concentration resulted from a truncation of the end of the period of "youth" some is attributable to a slightly later point of entrance to "youth" today. For nineteenth-century Philadelphia males, the period of youth extended from 12.6 years to 34.3 years. Their counterparts in 1970 entered youth at 14.2 and completed the series of transitions at 28.6. For females the duration was and is shorter (because it ends earlier) though the increase in concentration is nearly as great.

When looked at from this vantage point, it would be difficult to substantiate the position that growing up in contemporary America has become more problematic because it takes a longer period of time or because the expectations for becoming an adult are more blurred than was once the case. If anything, the information of the pacing of the transition to adulthood suggests that the process of growing up has become more prevalent, less prolonged, and more concentrated than it was a century ago.

IV. Complex Measures:
Age Congruity and Integration

There are two additional measures-age congruity and integration—which can be used to discover whether the transition to adulthood has become increasingly determinate over the last century. Unlike the “simple” measures, which dealt with the different dimensions of each status transition separately, these complex measures deal with two status transitions considered in conjunction.

Age congruity indicates the degree of overlap between the spreads of two transitions. To

---

16 Six students under the direction of Frank Furstenberg examined a variety of forms of literature from the late nineteenth-century-including marriage manuals, popular fiction, journalism, and sermons-seeking information about the timing of transitional events. The literatures (which shared a middle-class bias) included almost nothing about leaving school or entering the work force. The decision to leave the family of origin was discussed occasionally, as was also headship. Marriage was a favorite topic, a fact suggesting the importance of the event for the entrance to adulthood.
provide a summary measure, we have constructed an index of age congruity (Table 2). A value of 0.00 indicates complete incongruity or no overlap between spreads. In such an instance, almost all members of a cohort have completed one transition before beginning the other. A value (if 1.00 indicates the opposite, complete congruity or overlap of spreads, or the simultaneous occurrence of the two transitions.

In our discussion of the five statuses considered separately, we noted that although the proportion of persons experiencing the statuses (prevalence) remained roughly the same in both centuries, there were significant changes in the spread and timing of the transitions. Two major findings emerged: the two non-familial status transitions (school leaving and work force entry) started earlier in the nineteenth century (timing) and required slightly less time to reach completion (spread); second, the three familial transitions started later, and required considerably more years for completion.

Prior to these changes, significant age congruity for males and females was found in 1880 only in the three wholly familial or wholly non-familial type transitions. All six mixed pairs of transitions (involving statuses from both the non-familial and familial categories) were quite age incongruous, with the slight exception of work force entry and leaving home (0.14 for males and 0.08 for females). Logic suggests that shorter spreads in 1970 should have resulted in reduced age overlap, yet we find the opposite: shorter spreads in the twentieth century were accompanied by increased overlap in spreads. What explains this apparent paradox is that the changes in spread did not occur in a vacuum. The reduction in spreads was more than offset by changes in timing which moved the spreads toward each other.

The movement toward each other of spreads in the mixed-pair category was brought about by legislation affecting the spread and timing of school leaving and work force entry, and economic forces, which affected the spread and timing of leaving home, marriage, and headship. Yet it is important to note that these same forces did not produce a significant increase by 1970 in the degree of overlap of wholly non-familial or of wholly familial pairs of transitions. These remained age-congruous to roughly the same extent as they had been in the last century. In summary, family transitions are now. (as they were not a century ago), mixed with nonfamilial aspects of the complex transition to adulthood. No longer do youth segregate into distinct phases the entrance into the world of work climaxed by the entrance into the family world of adults. Graphs la and lb show how the development of rather massive overlap between marriage and labor-force entrance has at least formally complicated the sequencing decisions faced by contemporary youths.

The changes in spread and timing, then, had the effect by 1970 of collapsing or concentrating the transition to adulthood into a smaller number of years situated earlier in life. These changes raise questions about the nature of the organization of the life course today. Life-course organization in the nineteenth century was substantially the product of age-congruity. Most members of a cohort left one status before any entered another. Individuals today are forced to make more complex career decisions in a briefier period of time because increased age-congruity, in theory, makes possible the holding of several statuses simultaneously. Considered in the abstract, increased age-congruity is not necessarily accompanied by greater determinacy in the life course. Age congruity only makes possible simultaneous occupancy of statuses; it does not by itself tell if or how status transitions will be coordinated with each other. We wish to learn, therefore, whether the process of decision making has become more helter-skelter or more orderly. Is the high degree of age-congruity today associated with a reduction in the determinacy of the path to adulthood; that is, with large numbers of individuals holding once incompatible statuses simultaneously?

This question bears directly on our understanding of the turmoil of youth today. To answer it we use a measure which we call integration. Here we are concerned with the degree to which pairs of statuses affect each
other. Do they complement each other as do marriage and headship? conflict with each other as do school and marriage? or are they unrelated? Integration, in other words, indicates the degree of interaction--of contingency--between statuses.

To demonstrate how integration is measured, consider two age-congruous transition spreads, such as marriage and headship of household. Each of the variables is dichotomous (single/married and head/non-head) and can be displayed in a 2 by 2 table. Here we discover that statuses at given ages can be compatible or incompatible. Incompatibility is manifested by a cell frequency which is significantly below what would be expected from the marginal distributions for the incidence of the two statuses.

Our measure of integration is Goodman's $\lambda$. This measure indicates the degree to which cell frequencies in an N by N table can be explained solely by the interaction between two variables entirely apart from the size and distribution of either set of marginal frequencies. When $\lambda$ is high, we can better predict holding of one status by knowing the holding of another. Since we have calculated $\lambda$ values for specific ages, we are also able to see whether the interaction between statuses varied with age for each sex, and how this interaction changed between 1880 and 1970.

Let us now consider the interaction between status pairs in the three categories: non-familial, familial, and mixed. In the one non-familial pair (school leaving and work-force entry), being in school, as one would expect, consistently and strongly precluded labor force participation. (Graphs 2a and 2b portray this visually.)\textsuperscript{17} while this was true in both centuries, the interaction was considerably stronger than in 1970. This relationship weakened decidedly with age for 1880, and for females in 1970.

In the first familial pair of transitions, marriage and leaving home, we find a strong negative relationship; that is, knowing if someone was married increased significantly our ability to predict that he longer resided in his parents' home. This was true in both centuries for both sexes, with contemporary patterns showing slightly greater predictive value. For the other wholly familial pair, marriage and headship, the two were related positively and strongly. Holding one status much increased the likelihood of holding the other; slightly more so in 1970 than in 1880. In addition, the interaction for males was sharply age-graded in both centuries, that is, predictive value declined with age, while for females the strength of the interaction increased until roughly 28-29, falling thereafter. In the instances noted above, both age-congruity and integration were found in both centuries, but while the degree of congruity remained constant over time, the degree of integration increased to an even greater peak in the twentieth century. We conclude that family decisions are highly orchestrated, especially through a very tight pattern of status integration.

Let us now consider the degree of integration found in the mixed category, among the six pairs each of which includes a non-familial and a familial status. The high congruity between school departure and marriage is one of the most dramatic instances of the increased complexity of transition to adulthood today. Since this pair of transitions was age-incongruous in the nineteenth century, thus obviating the need for, or possibility of, integration, it is especially interesting to discover whether the transitions have by now become integrated. The two transitions might not now interact, even though they are simultaneous. What we in fact find to a significant degree is conflict between school and marriage in 1970 (though by no means so much as in some other pairs, like marriage and "child" family status). There is a striking difference between the sexes

\textsuperscript{17} the trend lines are simply drawn in freehand between single-year-of-age observations to suggest a sense of ordniless. Economies of space preclude printing graphs for all relationships, and a simple summary measure has eluded our imaginations.
in integration: the degree of integration for women is generally twice as high as it is for men, though for both sexes $\lambda$ declines steadily with age. For contemporary women (especially those at younger ages) school must be tightly meshed into the schedule of family transitions. For contemporary men, while school and marriage are still integrated, the greater instrumental worth of continued education to men means that more is to be gained by staying in school even when married. A common expression of this pattern is for a newly-married wife to leave school and go to work, in order to permit her husband to remain in school.

The nature of integration between headship and school, and its change over the century, is sufficiently like that between marriage and school departure that we need not discuss it at length. School attendance and departure from the family of origin is another question. Indeed, the patterns shown for this pair of transitions are as perplexing as any revealed by our data. What is especially striking is that lambda is generally low, and unstable over the relevant age ranges. In 1880, there is something of a predominance of positive $\lambda$ values, indicating that those youth not yet departed from their parents’ households (most often into statuses like "'boarder" or servant" rather than to headship) were more likely to be in school. But these positive figures were low. In 1970, the strongest generalization possible is that at the central transition ages, departure from family origin was almost unrelated to school attendance, although extreme ages show signs of a relationship. Residence at school may explain this in part.

Turning to the relationship between entrance into the work force and family transitions, it is important to remember that for women, work-force entry is by no means irreversible. Predictably, the patterns of integration break down quite differently by sex. For males, "child" status in 1880 had a rather unstable integration with work-force participation. In 1880, at all ages but the youngest (where sons were less prone to work) the relationship is small and essentially insignificant. For females, the pattern is consistent both by age and over time: daughters were more likely to work than women who had left their families of origin.

The degree of integration between the two statuses is roughly similar over time.

Among males, integration between marriage and work-force entrance was almost absent in 1880 (Graphs 3a and 3b). By 1970, a strong and significant positive relationship between marriage and workforce participation existed. The responsibilities of marriage typically include employment for men; a greater proportion of young men's work-force participation can now be attributed to marriage than was formerly the case. Our supposition is that work-force participation in 1880 was so general by the age when people began to marry that nonworkers were usually disabled or disinclined men, conditions rarely affected by a change in marital status.

Similar patterns can be seen in the other family and work-force transitions for males. Headship and work-force participation were to a great extent age-incongruous in 1880, but unlike the marriage/work force relationship just examined, even at that early date there are some signs that the statuses were contingent upon each other. By 1970, this relationship between the two appears to have become even stronger, and is consistently more impressive than the marriage/work force relationship. It would appear that the 1970 pattern was foreshadowed in 1880. Integration between work and family formation has been facilitated by institutional innovations. Thus, for example, for those in the work force, housing (rented as well as owned) is now easier to come by, making family headship more feasible.

Headship of household is the last of our transitions in sequence, and in that sense for males usually the culmination of a series of earlier moves. For women in 1880, by contrast, departure from the work force was often seen as the culmination of the transition to adulthood following marriage and household formation. Accordingly, in 1880, females displayed a strong integration between marriage and work-force
participation, and between headship (most often "wife" status) and work-force participation, but in the opposite direction from that for males. The relationship, moreover, was remarkably stable across a wide band of ages. In 1970, major fragments of this convention remained, but it was not intact. The negative relationship is markedly weaker than in 1880, and is presently primarily at the younger ages. As women in 1970 entered their 30s, a new configuration took shape and a positive trend emerged between the married state and work-force participation.\textsuperscript{18}

Leaving aside specific considerations, overall there is no doubt that the concentration of transition decisions in a briefer period of time has not resulted in a random or helter-skelter response. In contrast to the age-incongruity of the nineteenth century, an integrated mode has emerged in the twentieth century.

V. Conclusions

The burden of this paper has been to present evidence suggesting that over the last century there has been change in the pattern of the transition to adulthood. As a result, the early life course today is to an important degree organized differently, with different consequences for youth. Our quantitative evidence expands and refines Kett's argument that the broad latitude of choice that characterized growing up in the nineteenth century has been replaced today by a more prescribed and tightly defined schedule of life course organization. The prevalence of the usual transitions has increased somewhat, and for most of the transitions, the spread has narrowed, sometimes markedly. The relative timing of the several statuses—notably the moving together of the familial and the non-familial transitions—has created a situation of far greater age-congruity. A far larger proportion of a cohort growing up today is faced with choices about sequencing and combining statuses.

We can perhaps understand the slight increase of prevalence and the narrowing of spread as an aspect of the homogenizing over time of the regional, urban/rural, and ethnic differences in this country, each subgroup in the nineteenth century putatively living within its own age-graded system. Only further research into the sources of variation of age-norming can determine to what degree this was actually the case. Surely, however, young people today face more complex sequencing decisions, rendered stressful by their very individuation and preferential basis. Our use of the individual level Philadelphia data (regionally and ecologically homogeneous), demonstrates that the change in the mechanisms of life course organization from the age-incongruity of the nineteenth century to the integration of the twentieth century represents a real historical development.

The distinction between familial and non-familial transitions has appeared in all our discussions to this point. Our understanding of how growing up has changed is bound lip with this dichotomy. Characteristics of familial and nonfamilial transitions, distinct from each other in the nineteenth century, today have become increasingly alike. They resemble each other in spread and timing, and they are more age-congruous and integrated with one another. No longer are the family transitions the predominately consequential ones: today school departure and work-force entry are far more important in shaping the subsequent work career than a century ago. And today the familial transitions are not so enduring as was once the case. In the nineteenth century, the family was a unique institution, standing alone; in the twentieth, it is one of many; or rather, one of the many in and out of which individuals have to thread their way.

The past century witnessed a radical alteration in the nature and functioning of the household economy as the family passed through its developmental cycle. Notable in regard to the transition to adulthood we are discussing has been a major change in the function of the labor of "dependents." In the nineteenth century, most urban American families were able to operate with a margin of comfort to the degree that they could count on a steady contribution from their laboring children of both sexes. A young man or woman in 1880 Philadelphia typically would
enter the work force and contribute to a family income for about seven years (barring mortality). By contrast, the 1970 family economy depends upon husband and wife alone. Children, while they are briefly (2.5 years) of working age but still living with their parents, either spend the money they earn on consumption goods, or accumulate for their own subsequent families (usually by investing in their own education), rather than contributing their earnings to their families of origin.

Michael Anderson (1971) describes well the predictably unpredictable quality of nineteenth-century urban family life which made the family such a special institution. His focus, rightly we feel, is on the exigencies brought on by pre-modern urban morbidity and mortality, and by the narrow economic marginality which characterized family life as early industrialization transformed society. Sudden death, maiming accidents, frequent and extended layoffs, sickness, and other such devastating events made it essential for families to have a reserve of obligations to aid at times of such calamities. If the family, with its small knowledge and limited risk pool, were to perform as actuary, it needed the ability to call upon able members. over many years. This period extended beyond what "youth" subsumes today and would be incompatible with current standards of adult independence."

A major historical development of the past century has been the creation of nonfamilial responses to meet the material exigencies of life. Public health clinics, workmen's compensation, unemployment insurance, pensions, and the like have rendered life far more predictable and the risk-balancing role of the family far less important. At the same time, the affluence of industrial society has created a surplus that frees families from dependence on the labor of their "dependents."

Individuals now find that their course to adulthood is far more involved than before with non-familial institutions, especially those concerned with training and occupation, and relatively free from familial obligations. In short, affluence has made participation in the family economy unnecessary and children have the luxury of leaving home earlier and hence can afford to set up their own family at a much earlier point in the life course. Here we are not arguing the desirability of an earlier schedule for family formation, but stating that what was once uncommon in the nineteenth century has today become more nearly normative.

It is important to bear in mind that the legislation which raised the ages of leaving school and entering the work force was not accompanied by other legislation governing the age-graded sequence of status decisions which constitute a social career. Indeed, if anything, to a larger extent than before, the career is for the individual to determine. Career decisions have in many cases become criteria for social evaluation, placing greater pressure on the individual to choose correctly.

Transitions are today more contingent, more integrated, because they are constrained by a set of formal institutions. The institutions with which individuals must increasingly deal call for and reward precise behavior. By contrast, the nineteenth-century family allowed for far greater latitude, providing individuals were prepared to satisfy their familial obligations. "Timely" action to nineteenth century families consisted of helpful response in times of trouble; in the twentieth century, timeliness connotes adherence to a schedule.

Whatever the sources for the change in the mode of the transitions, it should be obvious enough that the shift to the contemporary pattern of allocation, the "integrated mode," has not been without stress. While we can make a case that in certain respects the current pattern of transition both allows more individual discretion and seems
to display more articulation between statuses, the integrated mode does not in our way of thinking imply the reduction of strain. Growing up, as a process, has become briefer, more normful, bounded, and consequential\(^\text{19}\) and thereby more demanding on the individual participants.

Scholars who see today's period of youth as extended, normless, lacking bounds, and without consequential decisions are responding—we believe—not to its essential characteristics, but to the expressions of those experiencing the phase of life. They reflect rather than analyze turmoil.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**

Anderson, Michael

Becker, Howard S.

Berger, Bennett M.

\(^{19}\) The other side of the coin, however, was a necessarily tolerant outlook upon individual and situational variation in behavior, unusually high by our current standards. The nineteenth-century family could ill-afford to exact precise behavior, since what it needed most was emergency backing. The study of transitions, seen in this light, fits neatly into our understanding of larger themes of family behavior.

\(^{20}\) The data below are excerpted from a remarkably rich table presented in Carter and Glick (1970: 107), based on 1960 census compilations. By controlling for age (men 45 to 54 years old only are included), educational background, occupational type, and race. we are enabled to document the assertion that timing has substantial consequences, though we cannot with single-observation data specify the routes. The table, at any rate, shows that age at first marriage, within a single occupational stratum, has an effect on subsequent income twenty or more years later. Very crudely put, to marry early was about as consequential for income prospects as to marry late; and for this occupational stratum, the scheduling of marriage rightly was worth about as much as continuing on into high school, or entering college.

Carter, Hugh and Paul C. Glick

Coale, Ansley J.

Coleman, James S.

Davis, James A.


Demos, John and Virginia Demos

Elder, Glen

Flacks, Richard
1971 *Youth and Social Change*. Chicago: Markham.

Glick, Paul C.


Glick, Paul C. and Robert Parke
1845 Census of the City of Boston, 1845.

Calhoun, Daniel Hovey

Mean earning in 1959 for White men 45-54 years old who are operatives and kindred workers, by educational level and age at first marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Married</th>
<th>Married</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14-20</td>
<td>21-26</td>
<td>27-33</td>
<td>34+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0-8 years edu.</td>
<td>$4384</td>
<td>$4600</td>
<td>$4339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some H.S.</td>
<td>$5131</td>
<td>$5302</td>
<td>$5283</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>finish H.S.</td>
<td>$5407</td>
<td>$5686</td>
<td>$5513</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>some college</td>
<td>$5394</td>
<td>$6151</td>
<td>$5733</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Hajnal, John

Katz, Michael

Keniston, Kenneth

Massachusetts, Bureau of the Statistics of Labor
1887 Census of Massachusetts: 1885. Volume 1, parts 1 and 2.

Musgrove, F.

Neugarten, Bernice L., (ed.)

Panel on Youth of the President's Science Advisory Committee

Riley, Matilda White, Marilyn Johnson, and Anne Foner

Riley, Matilda White, et al.

Ryder, Norman B.

Saveland, Walt and Paul C. Glick

Uhlenberg, Peter R.

United States, Bureau of the Census
1906 Fifteenth Census of the United States: 1900. Special Reports. Supplementary Analysis and Derivative Tables.

United States, Department of the Interior, Division of the Eleventh Census

Wells, Robert V.

Wilensky, Harold
**Table 1. Prevalence, spread, timing of first and fifth deciles, and population median timing of transitions, by sex, 1880 and 1970.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Leaving School</th>
<th>Entering Workforce</th>
<th>Leaving Household of Origin</th>
<th>Marriage</th>
<th>Household Establishing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
<td>1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence</td>
<td>86.6%</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
<td>95.4%</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>88.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>12.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing: 1st decile</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>25.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing: 5th decile</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing: Median</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEMALES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>other</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td></td>
<td>1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevalence</td>
<td>88.0%</td>
<td>99.7%</td>
<td>82.0%</td>
<td>58.3%</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spread</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing: 1st decile</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>20.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing: 5th decile</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>25.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timing: Median</td>
<td>g</td>
<td>15.7</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>26.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Selected areas of Dutches county, New York, From Calhoun (1973:348).

b the prevalence figure for Philadelphia is probably somewhat low because a small number of rare occupations had not yet received a code at the time we made our calculations. Persons thus occupied were temporarily recorded as though not in the work force. Occurrence of these miscoded people was essentially random by age (though not by sex).

c All United States, 1890, US Department of the Interior (1896:21).

d “Child” prevalence is a function of orphanhood, not of abandonment of child status in the process of becoming an adult. In a trivial sense, everyone surviving his parents ceases being a “child.” No figures are presented.

e All United States, 1890. US Census bureau (1906:832).

f Massachusetts, 1885. (Massachusetts bureau of Statistics Labor, 1887, I, part 1:482-83.) the unfortunately broad age groups available in this publication for household status by age and sex did not permit the calculation of sufficiently precise spread and timing figures to justify the enterprise. As nearly as can be seen, however, the figures conform to the Philadelphia nineteenth-century pattern, and diverge markedly from the twentieth-century pattern.

g The notion of half a population leaving a status which not all of them have ever occupied is self-contradictory. No figures are presented.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Males</th>
<th></th>
<th>Females</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1970</td>
<td>1880</td>
<td>1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonfamily transition:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/workforce</td>
<td>.76</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family transitions:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Child”/ marriage</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>.73</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marriage/head-spouse</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.69</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed transitions:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/ “child”</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.75</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/marriage</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.59</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School/head spouse</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work force/ “child”</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work force/ marriage</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work force/ head-spouse</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.51</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.27</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Computing formula:** \[\text{congruity} = 2 \times \text{years overlapped (central 80\%)} \text{ between two transitions} = \text{transition}_a + \text{transition}_b\]

**sources:** see table 1. All 1880 figures based on Philadelphia data.

Graph showing the age at completion of first through ninth deciles for males in 1880 and 1970, with lines representing transition spread, work force, and marriage.
GRAPH 1B. AGE AT COMPLETION OF FIRST THROUGH NINTH DECILES: TRANSITION SPREAD, WORK FORCE, AND MARRIAGE, FEMALES, 1880 AND 1970
GRAPH 2A. INTEGRATION BETWEEN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION, MALES, 1880 AND 1970 (NEGATIVE LAMBDA INDICATED SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MAKES WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION LESS LIKELY)
GRAPH 2B. INTEGRATION BETWEEN SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION. FEMALES, 1880 AND 1970. (NEGATIVE LAMBDA INDICATES SCHOOL ATTENDANCE MAKES WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION LESS LIKELY.)
GRAPH 3A. INTEGRATION BETWEEN MARRIAGE AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION, MALES, 1880 AND 1970. (POSITIVE LAMBDA INDICATES MARRIAGE MAKES WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION MORE LIKELY.)
GRAPH 3B. INTEGRATION BETWEEN MARRIAGE AND WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION, FEMALES, 1880 AND 1970. (POSITIVE LAMBDA INDICATES MARRIAGE WORKFORCE PARTICIPATION MORE LIKELY.)